

A busy year for testing

This year has started off with manufacturers sending test models all over the world. Mercedes is one of the busiest. This year its performance division, AMG, celebrates its 50th birthday and so what better way than to develop the GT C Edition 50. It is basically the same as the GT C Roadster unveiled in 2016, featuring a 4.0l biturbo V8.

Performance is also key to another model that Mercedes is testing, although this time it is not a sports car, but the G-Class bakkie. With the company set to launch the new G-Class in 2019, it is developing a couple of end of era models including the G500 4x4-2. Unlike the six-wheeled monster, this model has just four wheels and a full-size cab as well as a small load bay at the back. It is unlikely to make it to SA.



It has also been testing a new AMG C43. The big news is that it is the first model to be seen testing that features the facelift details that will be rolled out across the C-Class range. A local spokesperson advised that the facelift is not in the planning for 2017, so expect it early in 2018. The new C will adopt some of the styling cues of the latest E-Class, particularly in the front and rear LED lights. Inside, our sources are expecting dual screens to display the latest connectivity options that also debuted in the new E-Class.

Porsche out in the cold

Porsche is camped out at Volkswagen's secret testing facility in Finland where cold weather testing is taking place on the Mission E. The Mission E is Porsche's full electric vehicle that is promising a range of more than 500km combined with the level of performance we expect of a Porsche.

Interestingly, the company is also switching to an 800V charging facility instead of the 400V system that companies such as BMW and Nissan use. Porsche expects to be the first to introduce this new system which could charge the Mission E to 80% in just 15 minutes.

New sedan for Lexus

There were some serious stars unveiled at the Detroit Auto Show. After driving the new Lexus LC in 2016, the company has revealed its new flagship LS sedan which adopts some of the platform of the LC as well as a number of components including the 10-speed gearbox. The interior also shows a big step forward.

Kia is thinking big

Kia showed that it is serious about being more than a small car and SUV manufacturer with its stunning Stinger. It follows the GT concept that it showed previously, but this is a production model that should hit SA in 2018. It follows the traditional looks of a GT with the cab rear design and long bonnet and while it moves Kia into a new and undoubtedly competitive segment, it will definitely make people look at the Korean brand in a new way.



Hefty Golf price tag

Last year Volkswagen launched its Golf GTi Clubsport, a vehicle which wowed anyone who was fortunate enough to drive it. The firm was not planning to bring the hotter Clubsport S, but then it brought 47 of the limited run of 400 to SA. Boasting 228kW it has only two doors and two seats, a manual gearbox and reduced weight. Unless you got your order in early and picked one up for the R742,000 price tag, then second-hand examples are being seen in showrooms for almost R1.5m. Yes, we are talking about a Golf GTi for 911 Carrera money here.

Fiat Chrysler claims

On the subject of money, Fiat Chrysler is facing a multibillion dollar fine over allegations that it has done a Volkswagen and cheated on its vehicle emissions. More than 100,000 vehicles are in question including the popular Jeep Grand Cherokee. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has accused the company of using software to cheat the emissions, but Fiat Chrysler says the software is there to protect the engine. The EPA says the company did not advise regulators of the software and this is the same as cheating.

All aboard for Lexus

Lexus has another new model, one which has not one, but two 5.0l V8 engines. It is not a car, with Lexus following the likes of Mercedes-AMG in designing a yacht. The concept is all about pushing the design envelope for the brand though, with no plans for production.



Source: Business Day

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