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Moscow Auto-show revs up

by *Evgeniya Chaykovskaya* at 27/08/2010 18:00

The glamour and glitz of the Moscow International Auto Show has brought the latest Porsche and Bentley models to town.

But while many of the marques are out of reach of most motorists, organisers say the man in the mid-range hasn't been overlooked.

The luxury treats

It's the big names which grab the attention though, with the latest Porsche 911 getting petrolheads panting with excitement. The Porsche 911 GT2 RS is the fastest in the history of 911s, reaching 100 kph in just 3.5 seconds with a 3.6 liter engine packing 620 horsepower. The car, on sale from September, will make the lucky owner's pocket 11.5 million roubles (\$375,000) lighter. The manufacturer plans to sell 500 of the new 911, and claims that half the cars have already been pre-ordered.

Another luxury arrival is the Bentley Mulsanne, even though it has already been shown in the US auto-show early in 2010. However, it is a Russian debut of a car that is bound to catch the eye of numerous Moscow millionaires. Mulsanne, which is literally handmade in 400 hours (170 of them are spent on the interior) costs upwards of €400,000.

One of the announced world premieres at the show is Jaguar's XJ Sentinel – a bullet-proof vehicle capable of withstanding a blast equivalent to 15 kg of TNT – just the thing for a nervous oligarch.

Cars for the masses

The first world premier of the show was the renewed Ford Mondeo, followed closely by Ford Focus III, which will be assembled in Vsevolzhsk starting from next year, Gzt.ru reported. Ford is a popular car brand in Russia, so the premier attracted a lot of journalists, despite the early start.

Nissan, whose sales in Russia in 2010 are expected to double from last year's 100,000 cars, will offer Russians a first look at its small crossover Juke. The starting price for the Japanese manufacturer's latest effort is 625,000 roubles (\$20,350).

Local produce

Russian ailing auto-giant AvtoVAZ offers a first glimpse of its Renault-inspired R90. The seven-seater is already being produced in a Romanian Dacia factory under the name Dacia MVP. Its Russian roll-out was expected last year, but the still nameless local edition is not now expected until spring 2012.

Another Russian car on the show is the shortened version of UAZ's 4x4 Patriot. The car is 360mm shorter than the previous version, and is aimed at young and active consumers, according to the manufacturer. Prices for the new UAZ start at 420,000 roubles (\$13,700), but the owner would get the most basic model. A Patriot with air-con, electric window lift, fog headlights and other options will cost 505,000 roubles (\$16,500).

AvtoVAZ is also to introduce the Lada Kalina and Priora equipped with Russian GLONASS navigation system, which is build into the dashboard. The navigator also supports GPS, which will help prevent the signal loss – if the car can connect to two Russian and two American satellites, it will not get lost. The in-built navigation will cost the consumer 10-12,000 roubles (\$325-390) extra.

Highest praise

At the same time Vladimir Putin was one of the first to try the new Lada Kalina and the new road in Russian Far East. The Russian PM called the new sport version of Kalina and said: "Unexpectedly, it turned out to be a very comfortable and reliable car," RIA Novosti reported.

The auto-show is opened to the public on Friday, Aug. 27 at Crocus Expo.