

This Kia GT concept appeared in 2011. Will it see life as the new Stinger?

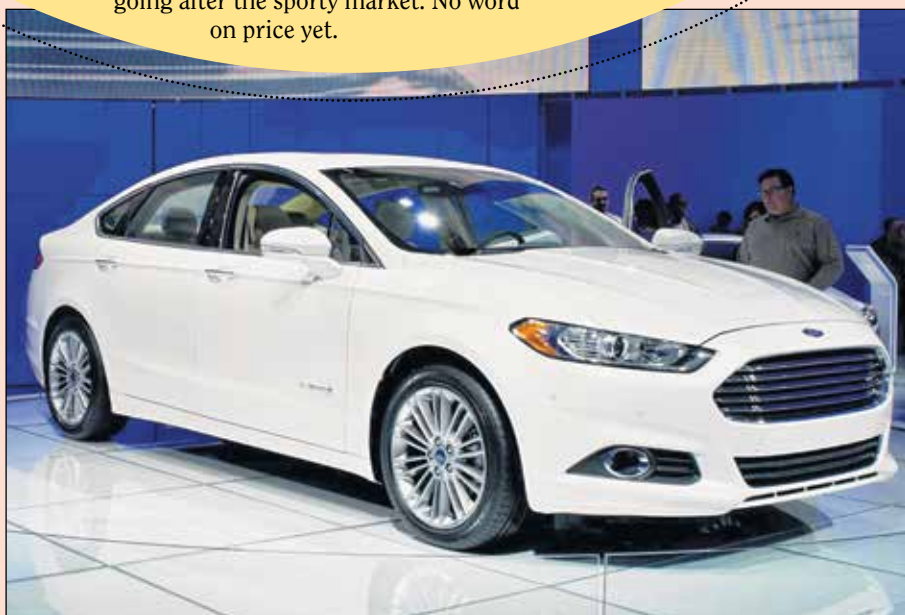


Kia gets its Stinger on

We see this Hyundai subsidiary as becoming all things to more people and that includes buyers with decidedly sporting intentions. Hopes were cruelly stoked when Kia showed off its Kia GT concept in 2011, and never followed up. (The name Stinger was also used for a 2014 concept.) But that side of the Korea-based car maker's offerings will be revealed early this fall with the **Stinger**, where it will likely be debuted at the September Paris Auto Show.

The four-door coupe, which is set to arrive for the 2018 model year, will be loosely based on that GT concept and will sit on a version of the new Hyundai Genesis rear-wheel-drive platform. The Stinger will also get the same 365-horsepower twin-turbocharged 3.3-liter V-6 engine as the new Genesis sedans, but more modest four-cylinder and V-6 engines will likely be available as well.

Though Hyundai has decided to target the profitable upscale market with its new Genesis division, it appears Kia is going after the sporty market. No word on price yet.



A high-powered (325 horsepower) Fusion sedan seems like a no-brainer. Good idea, Ford.

End of the line for the SHO?

That's we think, now that word has leaked out concerning the upcoming **2017 Ford Fusion Sport**. That model will be fitted with a Mustang-based turbocharged 2.7-liter V-6 that makes 325 horsepower and an impressive 380 pound-feet of torque.



2016 Ford Taurus SHO

That's 30 extra pound-feet over the Taurus-based **SHO's** twin-turbo 3.5-liter V-6, although the SHO makes 40 more horsepower.

But when you consider the SHO's slow sales, the smaller and much lighter Sport, which is expected to sell in the mid-\$35,000 range, could easily take over as a more affordable performance option.

Jaguar's 1957 XKSS continuation series

Talk about procrastination! In 1957, the British automaker planned to make 25 special roadsters based on the successful **D-Type** racing car. A fire inside the factory destroyed the last nine vehicles that were in various stages of completion. After nearly 60 years, Jaguar will complete the final nine **XKSS** models that list for \$1.5 million per copy. And in case you were wondering, all nine have been spoken for.



We think that Jaguar should just keep continue on making the XKSS continuation series, since they're building nine anyway. Carry on.



Skoda's offerings include this Yeti crossover. Rumor is that VW might get creative and bring some Skodas to North America.

VW might bring in less-expensive Skodas

One of our juicier tidbits concerns **Volkswagen's** interest in bringing the **Skoda** brand to North America. Skoda was founded in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia) back in 1895 and was acquired by the Germany-based VW in 1991.

With U.S. VW sales having slowed recently due to the diesel-emissions scandal, the automaker is considering a trio of Skoda vehicles for its dealers to sell.

They include the **Superb** sedan, **Octavia** hatchback and wagon and the **Yeti** all-wheel-drive tall wagon. All three are popular in Europe and elsewhere and generally sell for less money than their German-made counterparts. That would likely be the case on this side of the ocean as well.

Volkswagen recently trade-marked Skoda's brands with the U.S. Patent Office, leading these peach-colored pages to believe that their introduction here could come sooner rather than later.



Skoda Superb sedan



Skoda Octavia hatchback

TEST DRIVE

2017 Acura RDX AWD ADV

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Owing to weight, ride height and balance issues, few are the crossovers with truly sporty handling. RDX corners well for the breed, and the smoothness of ride should suit any passenger.

All-wheel-drive is an obvious winter confidence builder in climates like ours. It adds \$1,500 to the bottom line of comparably equipped models, and with little resulting parasitic loss in fuel economy (just one mpg less in city and highway modes).

The interior presents well, with class appropriate looks, fit and finish. It's reasonably roomy inside (bearing in mind that this is a compact crossover), with space for six-footers in both rows. Cargo capacity, as noted, ranges from 26-61 cu.-ft., with a low lift over height and a not-quite-flat load floor (with rear seatbacks lowered). The main dash cluster is clean

and crisp looking.

Interior features are collected in packages, which the buyer stacks onto either an FWD or AWD platform. "Base" models are well equipped, sporting a moon roof, heated seats, 7-speaker sound system, keyless entry/ignition and LED headlights, among other things. The AcuraWatch Plus package (\$1,300) adds lane keeping assist, collision mitigation braking, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, a color meter display screen and forward collision warning. My experience with the latter is that it's too quick to sound the alarm, resulting in a preferred setting of "off", which defeats the purpose.

The Technology package (\$2,400) tacks on navigation with voice recognition and real-time traffic information, HD radio, rearview camera, secondary touch screen, blind spot information system, automatic



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

dual zone climate control, an 8-way power seat for the front passenger, rear cross traffic alert and a 10-speaker ELS sound system. With design input from sound engineering guru Elliot Scheiner, the ELS systems are typically fine performers. This version sounded noticeably better than the recent Acura ILX I drove in large part, I suspect, because there's more cabin space here for the sound engineer to work with, and it employs larger speakers.

The Tech package brings with it dual display screens on the center stack. Here as found elsewhere, it isn't an idea I'm keen on. Drivers are already having a hard time ignoring their smart phones, sitting in the consoles, whispering sweet nothings via Bluetooth. Adding another

touchscreen doubles the potential for display distractions, with relatively little gained in return.

Finally, the Advance package (\$1,650) includes AcuraWatch Plus, remote engine start, parking sensors, ventilated front seats auto-dimming side mirrors, fog lights and rain sensing wipers.

RDX set an all-time annual sales record last year, suggesting that the segment veteran still knows how to fill the bill as a value pick in the high-end crossover class.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 170calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews online anytime at Timesunion.com/vehiclereviews.

