

Chicago Auto Show trends

Kyle Stanevich
STAFF WRITER

The McCormick Place is buzzing this week as the Auto Show circuit takes a stop in Chicago. There are many cars to check out at this year's show, including the latest models, concept cars, and even some in the one million dollar range.

Growing in popularity lately are the smaller, more fuel-efficient cars. Most car companies have their lineup of hybrids and other electric vehicles. One of the most prominent is Toyota's Prius line, expanding this year to larger and smaller variations to fit almost everyone's needs. In addition, the Chevy Volt and Nissan Leaf are trying to make a breakthrough as cheaper alternatives to battery

powered cars such as the Tesla. Many companies are making their gas engines smaller and fine tuning them to get fantastic performance and gas mileage. One example is Mazda's Skyactiv technology featuring high compression ratio engines which will be available in most of their vehicles, gas and diesel. Two new competitors for the small car market will be showing off their latest models, Fiat and Smart. While they do fill a niche market for ultra-compact cars, to many they seem unreasonably small without featuring some incentive that makes them stand out besides their quirky look. There are plenty of other options for small fuel-efficient cars that also provide more space and features.

On the other side of the spectrum are the sport and muscle cars. Every year, they continue to get faster and faster while

also becoming more luxurious on the inside. Chevrolet's Corvette Stingray Z06 will be something to look out for, featuring over 625 horsepower and still within a reasonable budget. Back again are the usual Mustang, Charger, Challenger and Camaro, featuring new sleek looks, each competing to be the best muscle car available.

While these cars are nice, the next price level brings even faster and more exotic cars, such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, and Bugatti, but due to their extreme price tag, are not available for the public to sit in.

Finally, there are many concept cars that will be interesting to check out. Toyota, despite being known for their small fuel-efficient cars, will be jumping into the sports car industry with the introduction of the FT-1.

Along with that, Toyota will be displaying two more concept cars, both extremely small, and defining the future of personal transportation. Honda will be displaying a hydrogen fuel cell concept, which will pave the future for zero emission cars. Finally, Ford will have their C-MAX Solar Energi, one of the first cars to feature solar panels on its roof that will charge the battery while driving. While these cars are not yet available, they provide a glimpse into the future of transportation.

The Auto Show is a great activity in Chicago, featuring every car imaginable, test drive tracks, indoor off-roading, driving simulators, and much more. There is something for everyone there. If you have some free time, swing on by the Auto Show at the McCormick Place and have a look around.

