



• Nissan 370Z NISMO Roadster concept

# CHICAGO SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

CHICAGO AUTO SHOW | FEBRUARY 2015

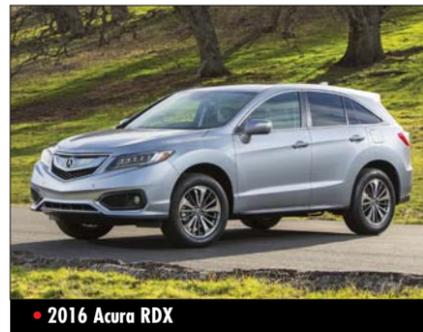
Hosted by the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, the Chicago Auto Show is of a stature short of the big internationals in New York, Geneva, Shanghai and their ilk, yet much greater than the regional shows in Denver, Portland, Phoenix and such. It is the longest-running show in the US and fills over one million square feet of exhibit space. Taking place after LA and Detroit but before New York, the manufacturers always save something for Chicago. The show ran from February 14-22; media preview days were February 12-13. Here are some highlights (alphabetically, with exceptions for big photos):

- Crossovers are popular in the upper Midwest, and there were a number of them at the show. The **2016 Acura RDX** is a refresh, with a new LED projector lamp headlight cluster and LED taillights, and a more powerful 3.5L V6 under the hood. Safety and driver assistance technologies are expanded, along with a few luxury touches. A new Advance Package tops the lineup.

- The **2016 Chevrolet Equinox** is the latest version of a crossover whose US sales have grown every year for five years, since the 2010 model was introduced, now holding nine percent of the industry's largest segment. This update has new styling accents, new wheels and new available safety features, as well as a larger color touchscreen and standard backup camera even on the base model. It goes on sale this fall.

- A modification with 45 years' heritage, the cold-air-intake Shaker hood from Dodge does as its name suggests: it pokes through the hood and will rock and roll with the powertrain's dynamics. A highly functional satin black scoop identifies this variant, available with the 5.7-liter HEMI V8 in the **2015 Dodge Challenger R/T Shaker** and now also with the 6.4-liter (392 cu.in.) HEMI V8 in the **R/T Plus Shaker**. Both are available to order now.

- The first RS to be marketed globally, the **Ford Focus RS** in its third generation will be its first sold in the US (see also page 10). The car features



• 2016 Acura RDX



• 2016 Chevrolet Equinox



• 2015 Dodge Challenger R/T Plus Shaker



• Ford Focus RS



• 2016 Honda Pilot



• 2015 Ram Laramie Limited

performance all-wheel-drive with torque vectoring, behind a potent 2.3-liter EcoBoost four. Styling is functional and aggressive, inside and out. The car was developed in consultation with professional rally driver and *Gymkhana* film star Ken Block.

- The **2016 Honda Pilot** three-row midsize SUV adds premium finishes and safety features, plus ups its fuel mileage, but is most notable for its significant restyling, tip to tail. It may not be as distinctive as its predecessor, but it falls into line better with its smaller CR-V and new HR-V stablemates. Honda also revealed a preview sketch of their next *Ridgeline* alternative pickup.

- A new **2016 Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition** adds performance suspension, RAYS lightweight wheels and wide tires, carbon-fiber-look aero accents, special badging and other highlights, building upon the Turbo R-Spec. The 1200-unit limited production Rally Edition comes in exclusive Matte Blue paint. The 2016 Veloster hits dealers in May 2015. The Turbo model adds 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, machined-finish wheels, sportier seats, electroluminescent gauges and black headliner. Non-turbo Velosters get new wheels and available black seats with yellow accents.

- We hope to see the **Kia Trail'ster concept** hit production. Based on the popular Kia Soul (and Soul EV), it features an innovative gasoline-electric hybrid system. Trail'ster takes the Soul's urban flavor outdoors, with suspension raised 2.5 inches, armored skidplates, all-wheel drive and a full canvas sunroof. Primary propulsion is from a 1.6L turbo four, with an electric drive system biased to the rear axle for launches and acceleration, and all four wheels for bad weather or off-road uses.

- The **2016 Mazda MX-5 Miata accessories design concept** boosts interest in the new roadster as it approaches its summer arrival. Painted Ceramic Metallic, the concept adds a front dam, side sill, rear skirt and spoiler aero kit, forged black BBS wheels, Brembo brakes with red

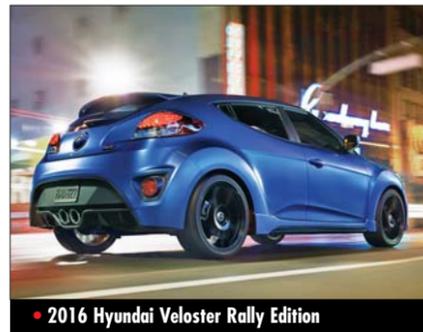
calipers, and an under-two-pound carbon fiber luggage rack with integrated center brake lamp.

- With the promise of big things coming to market, meet the **Mitsubishi GC-PHEV concept**—"a glimpse at the brand's new design language applied to a large vehicle." Beneath its dramatic sheetmetal is a plug-in hybrid system with 335-hp V6 and electric motor, an 8-speed automatic and S-AWC full-time all-wheel drive. The new Tactical Table information system provides electronic feature interactivity for everyone, front and rear.

- The **Nissan 370Z NISMO Roadster concept** (top of facing page) starts with a 350-hp 3.7L V6 and NISMO performance suspension. If built, this would add something new to the NISMO lineup of GT-R, 370Z coupe and Juke—extreme performance in an open-air sports car. Style points include GT-R-inspired aerodynamics, hyper-LED DRLs, black headlight bezels, NISMO emblems and red stripe accents, all riding on super-lightweight 19-inch aluminum-alloy RAYS performance wheels.

- Ram has been a standalone division since 2009, but its Dodge-echoing crosshair grille has managed to linger. Not so on the new **2015 Ram Laramie Limited** (top of this page), which introduces a radically new grille and a host of other new features. This premium model has all-black full-leather seating and real wood interior finishes, a luxury alternative to the more outdoorsy Laramie Longhorn pickup. Laramie Limited is available on Ram 1500, 2500 and 3500 models.

- The **2015 Toyota Corolla Special Edition** adds aggressive touches to this year's redesigned model, including paddle shifters, a sport driving mode and rear disc brakes. Based on the Corolla S Plus, it adds 17-inch gloss black alloy wheels, black interior with red accents and stitching, keyless entry and start, all in three exclusive paint choices. The Corolla Special Edition will be produced from August till December, limited to 8,000 units. There is also a *Camry Special Edition*. ■



• 2016 Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition



• Kia Trail'ster concept



• Mazda MX-5 Miata accessories design concept



• Mitsubishi GC-PHEV concept



• 2015 Toyota Corolla Special Edition