

Camaro Comeback

**Camaro concept enters production for 2009
Newer Camaro convertible concept arrives later in 2009**



The Chevrolet Camaro concept was the celebrated star of last year's auto show season. GM set out to top that by literally and figuratively blowing the top off in the 2007 shows, and that's exactly what their designers and engineers did to create the Camaro convertible concept. The introduction of the Camaro convertible concept was on the eve of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit earlier this year.

The Camaro convertible concept, wrapped in Huger Orange pearl tri-coat paint with twin gunmetal gray sport stripes, is based on the original Camaro concept, with only minor changes required to accommodate the

convertible body style.

As with the original Camaro concept, the Camaro convertible concept is intended to embody strong heritage, while appealing to a new generation of customers. It is not as direct a descendant of its forebears as the new Mustang; the essence is brought forward, but with a more comprehensive restyling.

"For some of us, an emotional bond was formed when we introduced the Camaro coupe last year," said Ed Peper, Chevrolet general manager. "It is magnificent. But now this

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year, if this Camaro convertible doesn't make your heart beat faster, you should see either your optometrist or your cardiologist, because you have a problem."

Chevrolet has announced production plans for the Camaro, which will go on sale in 2009. A production convertible model will be added later that year.

Fun spirit

Like the Camaro concept coupe, the Camaro convertible concept brings a dramatic, forward-looking design, still mindful of the brand's storied heritage. This includes classic long hood/short deck pony car proportions and a wide, wheels-at-the-corners stance that gives the vehicle the look of hugging corners even when stationary.

The Camaro convertible concept is motivated by a torquey V-8 engine that rightly sends power to the rear wheels via a manual transmission. It also features a four-wheel independent suspension system and four-wheel disc brakes. Despite persistent questions from enthusiasts and potential buyers, GM has yet to confirm that the production car will indeed be powered

by a V-8, though if not, they promise it will equal or outperform the V-8 enthusiast's expectations.

The Camaro convertible concept shares exterior dimensions with the Camaro concept, although the convertible concept's windshield surround, which features a bright anodized finish, is changed slightly to accommodate the convertible top.

Additional design details include:

- Tonneau cover over the folded top
- "Halo" headlamps
- LED taillamps
- Rear spoiler with LED-lit CHMSL
- Racing-inspired fuel filler door
- Front-inlet hood scoop, inspired by the Corvette Z06
- Heritage-inspired rear fender gills
- Anodized aluminum door handles
- Bold 21-inch (front) and 22-inch (rear) wheels, with accent color

The Camaro convertible concept's Hugger Orange pearl tri-coat color is a contemporary update of the classic hue, which was originally offered in 1969. It is complemented with twin gunmetal gray sport stripes. As with the design overall, this new interpretation of a classic color and stripes seek to reflect the Camaro's

heritage while delivering a contemporary appearance.

The Camaro convertible concept rides on 21-inch front wheels and 22-inch rear wheels. The wheels have a deep-dish, five-spoke design and feature charcoal center sections with bright outer edges and a red outline on the wheel edge. The charcoal wheels complement the gunmetal gray stripes on the body.

Inspired cockpit

The Camaro convertible features a simple yet purposeful interior that reflects design elements inspired by the muscle car era, including the first-generation Camaro. A new, light-and-dark color scheme enhances the airy feel of the convertible, particularly when the top is lowered.

The seats' fronts feature platinum-tone leather surrounding suede-like Alcantara® inserts, with black, sculpted seatbacks. The use of light color only on the seating surface is reminiscent of vintage houndstooth interiors, while a matching, tri-coat platinum paint is used to accent the door panels and instru-

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ment panel, giving a modern, bold feel to the interior.

As with the Camaro coupe concept, the convertible concept features an instrument panel inspired by first-generation Camaros, including an intricate "round-gauges-in-square-holes" design. The gauges have a deep, three-dimensional appearance, with white faces and red pointers.

"The instrument panel – including the four auxiliary gauges mounted in front of the shifter – pays homage to first-generation Camaros, while achieving a modern appearance through its refined integration of components," said Micah Jones, Chevrolet interior designer.

Attention to detail includes a smoke satin aluminum finish on trim plates, vents, seat handles and seatbelt buckles. The shifter and pedals are billet aluminum. The steering wheel has a detailed, deep-dish three-spoke design, and the front seats are hinged at the center—rather than the sides—for an integrated appearance. A separate ignition button is used to start the engine, and the speedometer and tachometer needles complete full-sweep indexing when the engine

rumbles to life.

A "spine" motif runs through the center of the vehicle and on the seatbacks, including a prominent center console that stretches to the rear seat. The spine reinforces the symmetry of the Camaro convertible, as well as communicating an image of engineering precision.

An attainable icon

The original Camaro was introduced to the Baby Boomer generation, a large group of young, individualistic and mobile Americans who drove fundamental changes in the auto industry. The Camaro was personal, sporty and powerful—attributes that were typically found on more expensive, smaller (and often foreign) sports cars. The Camaro represented a real, life-sized, sporty car that was attainable for just about everyone. An almost endless list of optional features, colors and trim combinations ensured owners could tailor their Camaro to their exact taste.

As Boomers transitioned into larger vehicles to accommodate growing families, younger drivers embraced used Camaros as their first cars; third- and

fourth-generation Camaros continued to deliver affordable fun and performance to a new generation of enthusiasts. Indeed, hundreds of thousands of owners of all walks of life have found driving fun in a Camaro during the past 40 years.

The new Camaro concepts draw on their namesakes' heritage, but also the global, youthful influences of the 21st century. These influences are seen in the Camaro convertible concept's strong proportions, tailored wheel-to-body relationship and detailed interior—including the multi-dimensional instruments. It's a design that is already resonating with a generation of younger car buyers influenced by highly stylized tuner cars and imported sports cars.

Along with style and performance, a timeless spirit of fun is woven into the new Camaro concepts.

"Camaro has always represented the American ethic that style and performance don't belong exclusively to the wealthy," said Brian Smith, exterior designer. "Camaro has always been everybody's sports car, and these new concepts demonstrate its spirit is relevant for a new generation." ■

