



THE CARS OF CES 2017

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The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is the largest platform for tech companies to show off their wares. Most companies use it to display proof of concepts, generally driving the market towards their visions of the future. Automakers are relatively under-represented at CES, but that's all set to change as the line between tech and automobiles get blurrier as autonomous cars and AI are all the rage in 2017.



Faraday Future FF91

The Silicon Valley startup automaker Faraday Future unveiled the FF91 crossover vehicle, which is slated for production in 2018. It'll apparently do 0-60 MPH in a mind-numbing 2.4 seconds, with a maximum range of 435 miles. It can also recharge its fully-electric 1050 BHP power unit in just an hour. All of that sounds promising, but actual on-road viability depends on a lot of factors, not least Faraday Future's financial solvency. Kudos to the designers though, as the FF91 is honestly one of the best looking concept cars we've seen in recent times, chalk full of brilliant detailing touches.



Ford adopts Amazon Alexa AI and shows off Fusion Autonomous Vehicle

Ford is teaming up with Amazon to incorporate their Alexa AI and voice control system into on-road cars in the near future. With Ford Europe going strong, the Alexa system is set to change the way even a basic hatchback communicates with its user. At the same time, Ford has its sights on autonomous vehicles, opting to display the self-driving Fusion Hybrid development vehicle to the crowd at Las Vegas CES.

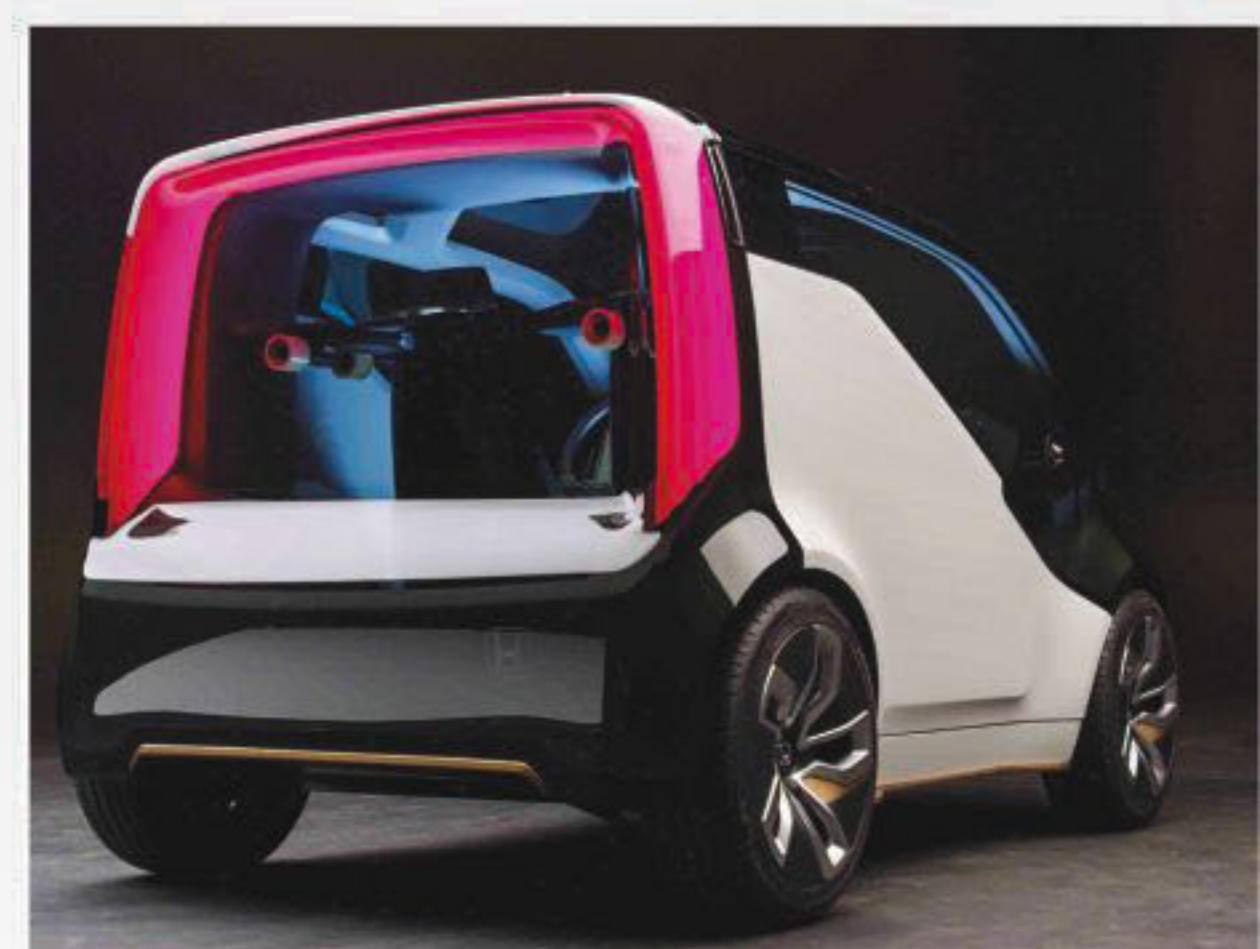


Toyota Concept-i

Toyota's Concept-i was the highlight of the car manufacturers at CES, complete with its own artificial intelligence agent called Yui. With Yui on-board, the car will learn the habits of the user and optimise the experience automatically. It'll also communicate with the user via audio and lighting, and has the ability to warn drivers of traffic, impending doom and other useful things.

Honda's self-balancing motorbike

No one will ever fall off a motorbike ever again, unless they're quite adamant - as long as they ride Honda's ride-assist technology equipped motorbike. The self-balancing bike doesn't require a kickstand to stand upright, and comes with a feature that lets the bike follow the owner around. Why anyone would want a pet motorbike that doesn't fall over but follows you around is a question we're yet to ask.



Honda's ride sharing city car

Alongside the self-balancing bike, Honda displayed the NeuV, which might just be the worst name ever tagged onto a concept car. Name stands for "New Electric Urban Vehicle", and it's designed in a way that minimises the number of cars on the road. It does this by picking up and dropping off passengers when the owner isn't using it - we see a lot of issues with this model but then Honda won't actually bring it to production before humans finally stop being nasty to each other and can actually get along. So...never.

BMW's HoloActive Touch system

As if BMW's i-Drive system wasn't complicated enough already, the German marque is thinking of making it even more complicated. The HoloActive control system uses an advanced version of the gesture control system found in the current 7 series and expands it to controlling every aspect of the car. BMW says it'll make driving safer as well, since the driver won't have to look away to increase the volume.



Audi and Nvidia join forces to develop AI platform

Nvidia usually makes computer chips for graphic units for PCs, but they're now expanding into developing Artificial Intelligence for specific applications. Audi, Mercedes Benz and a couple of Chinese manufacturers have signed on with the chip maker to develop AI platforms that learn users' preferences and adjust the vehicle settings accordingly. With so many manufacturers signing up with Nvidia, we can expect the platform to be dynamic and somewhat open-source, sort of like Android for cars.



Bosch shows off a "connected" automobile

The connected car sector's potential value to the auto industry is supposedly more than US \$128 billion, and Bosch, the largest auto-parts supplier in the world, wants in on the business. Their "connected car" concept at this year's CES has facial recognition that can identify owners and adjust preferences, and can be connected to other smart appliances such as mobile devices and even homes. The on-board human machine interface also recognises more phrases and expressions than current systems, making life much easier for occupants.

BOOK BY CADILLAC REVOLUTIONISING CAR OWNERSHIP?



Cadillac is bringing what seems to be the bargain of the century to millennials tired of driving the same car for year after year. You can now get a booking deal from Cadillac whereby you can cycle through six Cadillac models upto 18 times a year, all for a subscription fee of US \$1,500 a month.

That might seem like a lot, and indeed it is - the cost associated is similar to the cost of leasing a fully decked out luxury car for a year, but where the bargain comes in is the variety of vehicles you can switch to within the subscription period. Plus, leasing a car in the US means you have to keep driving that car till you either pay for it entirely, or pass on the lease to the new owner - obviously more hassle than

walking into a Cadillac dealership 18 times a year and going "I want that one."

This presents quite an interesting prospect. Moving from one city to another? Get an Escalade ESV and transport huge amount of stuff in complete comfort, all the while pretending you're in the secret service. Going to a track day? Take the supremely capable CTS-V or the larger ATS-V, exchange for the soft XT5 crossover after you're done.

This is obviously a way for Cadillac to drive demand and get people more invested in their model range. Its ingenious, and might revolutionise the way manufacturers offer their cars to customers for trial. Who wouldn't want a subscription to Jaguar's lovely lineup?

