

Five insanely cool Japanese concepts supercars

RAHBAR AL HAQ



Toyota Alessandro Volta

Toyota has been shaking things up recently. They have rolled out the GT-86, worked with BMW to develop an alleged successor to the Supra, and are working to introduce a road-going version of their Le Mans GR010 hybrid race car. However, as they prepared to introduce their new hybrid supercar, we take a brief look at the last time the company had a go at it. Designed by Italdesign Giugiaro, the beautiful Alessandro Volta concept was named after Alessandro Giuseppe Antonio Anastasio Volta, the inventor of the electric battery. Unveiled at the 2004 Geneva Motor Show, the car had a hybrid 3.3-liter V6 gasoline engine paired to two electric motors which sent a combined 402 HP to all four of its wheels. 0-100 was possible in 4 seconds, with the top speed was electronically limited to 250 kph. Despite its timeless design and extremely forward-thinking drivetrain, the car was simply too ahead of its time, and Toyota never put it into production.

Mitsubishi HSR-II

Before the company was reduced into building nothing but CVT-driven econoboxes, Mitsubishi made concepts that were quite simply out of this world. Shown off at the 1989 Tokyo Motor

Show, the car's name stood for Highly Sophisticated-transport Research 2, and for its time, it really was Sophisticated. In addition to the fighter jet-like interior, backup camera, and previously unheard of drag coefficient of 0.2, the car's body was covered in six active aero panels designed to keep the pinned-on road at high speed. Said high speed was



achieved with a 3.0 liter twin-turbo V6 making 350 HP delivering power to all four wheels, with a 0-100 of just under five seconds. Much like all other concept cars on this list, the car was far too advanced for mass production. However, technologies derived from this car did make it to production models, such as the Mitsubishi GTO.

Nissan MID4 Type II

The folks at Mitsubishi always had an itch for performance and a habit of



punching above their weight. In the '80s, the company quietly worked on a car designed to dethrone the Ferrari Testarossa, which at that time was considered to be the best performance car money can buy. The result of their effort was the MID4 Type II, with the MID being short for "Mid-Engine Four Wheel Drive". Powering the sleek and beautiful mid-engine sports car was a Biturbo 3.0 litre V6 engine making 330 hp, sent to all four wheels through a five-speed manual gearbox. Unlike other cars on the list, the MID4 Type II was pretty much ready for production by the time it made its debut at the 1989 Chicago Auto Show. Sadly, Nissan ultimately decided not to put the car into production, thinking it would be too expensive to make.

Yamaha OX99-II



When you think of supercars, the name Yamaha is not one that immediately jumps into mind. Yet the motorcycle manufacturer did dabble in the world of four-wheel performance in 1992, and what they came up with was glorious. They took an F1-derived naturally aspirated 3.5-liter V12 engine, gave it a slight detune, and merged it to a carbon fibre and aluminium body weighing only 1,150 KG. What came about was an

extremely lightweight single-seat car with a 400 Hp engine, capable of revving up to an amazing 10,000 rpm. 0-100 was possible under 3.2 seconds, and the car could achieve a theoretical top speed of 350 kph. Yamaha intended to put the car into production, with a projected price of \$800,000 per car. However, internal issues and the Japanese recession effectively put an end to those ambitious plans.

Mazda RX-500



Although Mazda's RX7 and RX8 rotary sports car are well known among enthusiasts, their ultra-light, mid-engine shooting brake from the '70s with a rotary engine is less well known. Shown off at the 1970 Tokyo Motor Show, the RX-500 was extremely lightweight, weighing only 850 KG thanks to its plastic body panels. The heart of the car was an air-cooled 491-cc Wankel rotary engine producing 247 HP and capable of revving up to 14,000 rpm. Let that sink in for a moment. The car weighed less than a ton and had a motorcycle seized engine that made more power than a Toyota GT-86. Naturally, the car was fast, capable of reaching a maximum of 241 kph. As with all the cars on this list, the car never went past its concept stage, much to our dismay.

Taming the 'Savage Mountain': How a team of Nepalese climbers claimed mountaineering's last greatest prize

ZARIF FAIAZ



It's known as the 'Savage Mountain'. "It tries to kill you," said George Bell, an American climber, in 1953. Located on the China-Pakistan border, K2, the highest point of the Karakoram mountain range and the second highest mountain in the world, is known as the deadliest of all; approximately one dies for every four who reach the summit.

The K2 was first conquered in 1954. But it remains one of the least climbed mountains in the world due to its dangerous climbing conditions. More people have been to space than have reached its summit and each of the six winter expeditions to reach the summit has ended in failure. Until January 16 this year when a group of Nepalese mountaineers, led by Nirmal Purja, reached the summit of K2 in the harsh, unforgiving winter cold to claim mountaineering's last greatest feat.

For years, ever since Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary conquered the Everest, the Nepalese Sherpa people have assisted mostly wealthy western mountaineers in numerous glorified expeditions where their clients have claimed the prizes for themselves, rendering the Sherpas invisible. The Sherpas were never credited with first ascends, never given their due shares of credits.

Yet, when around noon on Saturday the team of ten climbers set foot on

the apex of the gleaming, snow covered 'Savage Mountain', they were all Nepalese. It was a summit of their own; the glory was only theirs to claim.

Their team leader, Nirmal "Nims" Purja, grew up in Nepal's flatlands and was a former Gurkha and British Special Forces soldier. He quit the military in 2018 and in 2019, he climbed all 14 8000-metre peaks in six months and six days, setting a new world record of mountaineering binge.

His team of bravehearts included Geljen Sherpa, Nirma's long time climbing companion, Mingma David Sherpa – famously known for rescuing 52 climbers from the slopes of Everest in 2016 and Mingma G, who climbed the Everest five times, K2 twice and was leading a separate team of Sherpa climbers.

They started their ascend in mid-December. On December 26, Purja and his team packed their bags and tents and started their four-day rotation to high altitude. They climbed to 20,012 feet to set up Camp I. The next day, they went up to set up Camp II at 21,982 feet where they halted to set up a paltry shelter.

Meanwhile, Mingma G's team went up to 23,000 feet to set up Camp III and on December 28, they called for help to Nirmal's team. Four of his team were already too spent and decided to descent down to the base camp. But Nirmal and Mingma Tenzi pushed on to lend a hand. When they returned to the base camp after the first round, Nirmal had frostbitten fingers.

On January 5, the weather changed. Winds started blowing on the K2 slopes at speeds up to 96 kms per hour. At the base camp, the climbers worried about their

already set up camps. And on January 10, when the weather cleared up, they reached Camp II to find out that their worst fears had come true.

The tents were gone. Along with them all the cooking gear, special clothing -- gloves, insoles and base layers and sleeping bags. There was no option for the climbers but to descend down to base camp to collect their backup gears. Luckily, Purja's mountaineering and military experience had prepared him for the worst.

On January 13, as the weather cleared up more, the climbers began their long, unrelenting foray into the unforgiving mountain. Carrying over 31 kgs of gear each, they climbed back up to Camp II, where they spent the night.

The next day, they climbed up to camp III at over 24,000 feet, traversing a section called the Black Pyramid and a deep chasm called the House Chimney. Setting up a base at Camp III, they went continued fixing lines up to Camp IV at 25,000 feet and once done, returned to Camp III where they would rest until Saturday, December 16.

At 2:30 AM local time on Saturday, the climbers began their final ascend to the summit. Under a spectacular starlit sky and in brutal cold of -24 degree Celsius, the climbers started their journey to the top. The cold cut through their four layers of clothing, the wind blew snow into their eyes, hitting their face with needle like sharpness and numbing their bodies. But they pressed on.

At 26,000 feet, the climbers reached a death zone known as the Bottleneck – an hourglass shaped small passage running beneath an unstable overhanging ice cliff that routinely sheds of enormous blocks of ice, some as big as a house.

Nirmal Purja didn't carry a supplementary oxygen bottle for the final push and took a calculated risk to make the climb without additional oxygen. It paid off. By 3 PM, the climbers cleared the bottleneck and slowly marched toward the top, towards their final prize.

With about 30 feet to go, the men grouped together and just before 5 PM, they stepped up to the summit together, all singing the Nepali national anthem. The mountains of Karakoram rising below them welcomed the climbers with a wintry view no one has ever seen before. Mountaineering's last greatest feat was achieved. K2 was summited in the cold, unforgiving winter.

Nepal's greatest mountains were summited first by foreigners while the Sherpas were treated nothing better than mules for their wealthy clients. K2,



Nirmal "Nims" Purja, Dawa Tenji Sherpa (team MG), Mingma G, Dawa Temba Sherpa and Pem Chiri Sherpa, Mingma David Sherpa, Mingma Tenzi Sherpa, Nimsdai Purja and Gelje Sherpa are seen during the Puja ceremony before the winter attack on K2, Pakistan, January 5, 2021. Picture taken January 5, 2021. NIMSDAI/RED BULL CONTENT POOL/Handout via REUTERS. THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY A THIRD PARTY. MANDATORY CREDIT. NO RESALES. NO ARCHIVES. NO NEW USES AFTER SIX MONTHS. NO USE ON YOUTUBE. REFILE-CORRECTING CREDIT.

therefore, was Nepal's own. And the children of mountain finally claimed the place where they always belonged. At the top.

Photos: Red Bull Content Pull/Reuters

KTM Duke and RC all set to blow the riders' senses

Inspired by the notion of 'Ready To Race' and an unconditional passion for motorcycles, KTM is ready to hit the Bangladeshi bike market after earning accolades all over the world for its high-end bikes. With the launching of two of their premium models - KTM Duke and KTM RC, renowned Austrian motorcycle company KTM has recently begun its inspiring journey in Bangladesh.

KTM, predictably, will redefine the top-of-the-line performance motorcycles and premium biking experience for the Bangladesh market, which will eventually translate into an exhilarating riding experience with KTM Duke and KTM RC on the streets and knock the riders' socks off. Additionally, Keeping the safety as the highest priority for riders, KTM's new models both KTM Duke and KTM RC have been designed in such a way following the top of the line safety technology that these come equipped with additional safety measures. Features such as ABS braking, powerful brakes, and anti wheel lock sensors will ensure the bikers' safety in any critical situation.

One of KTM's most popular series is "Duke." Out of all the bikes in the Duke series, KTM Duke has been brought to Bangladesh taking the behavior, needs, and passion of Bangladeshi riders into account, through which "The Duke Attitude" will gain steam in the country. Its liquid-cooled, fuel-injected engine will ensure good mileage, speed, and quick response. Duke's 14.5 HP powered engine is known as a powerful racing engine. An updated ABS braking system ensures the safety of the biker. Next to the ABS, it has a special "anti-wheel lock" sensor that will prevent you from skidding while stopping in panic braking. The state-of-the-art sensor-rich TFT display compliments the Duke's modern and aggressive design with features like gear indicators, riding duration, trip distance, engine temperature, and vehicle status. Duke's signature LED headlights will ensure clear and continuous light output, and the light's intelligent controlling system provides maximum road visibility to the biker in any situation, which will

give you a lot of confidence during a long tour. KTM Duke is available in two variants with attractive color options.

On the other hand, KTM RC embodies their 'Ready To Race' mentality. In Europe, this bike is considered the perfect starting platform for a riding career for the youth. With a top-class ABS braking system, the biker will feel comfortable and confident of accelerating the speed and control situations like panic braking very easily. The 43mm upside-down fork will deliver the best adjustable capacity. KTM RC has S rated tires, which will give maximum grip and confidence even at high speed. Its liquid-cooled fuel-injected engine delivers 14.5 HP of power and 12 NM of torque, which provides the bike with an aggressive racing experience and durability. The RC series also comes with attractive color options.

It is mentionable that KTM has been one of the dominant names in the motorcycle sports industry for many decades. Engineer Johann Hans Trunkenpolz had set up his small venture of selling 'DKW' motorcycles and 'Opel'

cars at Mattighofen, Austria. With the R100, R125, and Trophy 125 models, KTM had started to gain the attention of the adrenaline bikers by the early '60s. In the later years, with spinning throttles and raging exhausts, KTM gradually made its way to the top in the off-road motorcycle industry by the '80s. And KTM motorcycles were bagging titles consecutively with an inborn fierceness. The stubborn gene running inside every KTM dirtbike has enabled KTM to hold the record of being dominant in all major forms of off-road motorcycle racing – the Enduro World Championship, Motocross World Championship, US race series, and the Dakar Rally – till the day. Also in recent years their dominance in MotoGP establishes their success in almost every major competitive racing platforms.

After establishing their supremacy in different countries of the world, Europe's biggest motorcycle brand has embarked on a journey in Bangladesh to offer the bike enthusiasts the same kind of precision and thrill they are committed to delivering.