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## Edsel Ford's '34 Speedster Races Through Time

DETROIT – Edsel Ford's 1934 Model 40 Special Speedster has taken the stage alongside Lincoln's stunning new vehicles for the 2012 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit.

The Speedster offers a glimpse into the early years of Edsel Ford's design and automotive styling vision, and provides a historical link to his lasting impact on Lincoln.

"My grandfather's contributions to Ford Motor Company were immense, but one of the most significant was his role in the acquisition of Lincoln 90 years ago," said Edsel B. Ford II.

"He had a true eye for styling and understood the power of a beautifully elegant design, which guided his development of the brand. It's a tremendous pleasure to see his vision and influence carried forward."

As president of Ford Motor Company and its luxury brand Lincoln, Edsel Ford initiated and formed the first design department at the company. His collaboration with E.T. "Bob" Gregorie, who became the company's first chief designer, allowed this approach to art to take shape in automobiles, which became especially visible through the Lincoln brand.

Under Edsel's direction, Lincoln became one of America's top-tier luxury brands. His desire to reflect art in everyday objects had a distinct impact on the style revolution of the 1930s.

Ford and Gregorie designed and built a number of one-off vehicles. Each helped to bring Ford's personal design vision to life.

The Speedster's story is remarkable not just as a fore-runner to future designs, including production vehicles like the 1941 Lincoln Continental Cabriolet, which Frank Lloyd Wright called "the most beautiful car in the world," but for the journey it took over the last 77 years, including the 40-year span when the car disappeared and was presumed destroyed.

The inclusion of the Speedster at NAIAS underscores the legacy of Lincoln while highlighting the new era for the brand.

"The Speedster's simple design language and beautiful proportions reflect an unadorned, restrained elegance," said Max Wolff, Lincoln Design director.

"It was ahead of its time with integrated headlamps, a one-piece hood, enclosed radiator with a concealed cap, and no running boards.

"It foreshadowed future design. The Speedster is very distinctive, very elegant, and actually, very Lincoln."

In 1932, upon returning from a European trip, Edsel asked Gregorie, who had previously worked at Harley Earl's GM Art and Colour studio, to design and supervise the construction of a personal roadster similar to those he'd seen on the European continent.

The first design reportedly disappointed Edsel, who wanted something lower and racier. Gregorie created a more dramatic, streamlined design.

This "continental" roadster may have started with a stock 1934 Ford (aka Model 40) frame, but its subsequent chassis was radically altered. The Model 40 Special Speedster was unlike anything Ford Motor Company had built up to that time.

After Edsel's death in 1943, the Speedster crisscrossed the U.S. and in 1958 was purchased by a U.S. Navy sailor in Florida for \$603 . . . then it disappeared. Forty years later, Bill Warner, founder of the Amelia Island Concours, discovered the Speedster was still in Florida and bought it.



Ford's Alan Mullaly talks to Phil LeBeau of CNBC.

## Lincoln Takes a Peek into the Future with MKZ

by Irena Granaas  
Special Writer

Following an elegant, catered breakfast suited to the brand image, reporters crowded up close to the cloth-covered vehicle on the center platform at the Lincoln display area at the North American International Auto Show main floor Jan. 10.

To the accompaniment of a suspenseful, upbeat soundtrack, the cloth fell away, revealing the future of Ford Motor Co.'s luxury brand – the Lincoln MKZ Concept.

Sleekly beautiful in a warm, rich Cognac-colored exterior, the sedan is true to brand visual cues such as its striking split-wing grille, first introduced on the 1938 Lincoln Zephyr.

Here, it's elegantly reinterpreted with horizontal bars providing a focal point. The concept's panoramic glass roof, which spans the windshield to the top of the car's backlight, also draws the eye and declares that this vehicle is something special.

It needs to be. As Ford Motor Co. Group Vice President for Global Marketing Jim Farley explained at the early morning unveiling, the MKZ Concept represents nothing less than the reinvention of the Lincoln brand.

"We understand that for Lincoln to succeed with today's luxury car clientele, we need to reinvent every part of this business, from the vehicle to the ownership experience," he said.

## Dart's Return to Aim at Compact Car Bull's-Eye

by Jim Stickford  
Special Writer

Dodge's big announcement at the recent North American International Auto Show was the return of the Dart.

The automaker ceased production of the Dart in 1976, meaning several generations of car buyers have entered the marketplace unaware of the model.

Mike Merlo, Dodge Dart chief engineer, said work on the new Dart started about two years ago. It's based on the Alfa Romeo Giulietta platform.

He said the idea behind naming the new Dodge subcompact was to emphasize its sleekness and aerodynamic qualities. The name Dart has been out of the marketplace so long, he said, that there's not a whole lot of heritage associated with the name.

The announcement was made by Reid Bigland, Dodge brand president and CEO, on Monday, Jan. 9. He said that 2011 was a great year for Dodge and for Chrysler, but it's difficult to move forward by looking in one's rearview mirror.

Chrysler saw a 26 percent sales increase in 2011 compared with the previous year, Bigland said. This was despite not having a vehicle in the compact category, which he said at 15 percent comprises a huge portion of the North American auto market.

"We've seen 21 straight

months of year-over-year sales growth," Bigland said. "That's both here and in Canada. We've gained market share and in Canada we're the fastest-growing car company."

"On the corporate front, we've repaid the government loans, with \$1 billion in interest, six years earlier. We're proud and grateful for the second chance."

"We've been through a lot and we're not looking to go back. There's still a lot of work ahead," he added.

Bigland said part of that work is introducing a compact. The Dart, which is expected to enter the marketplace sometime in the second quarter of 2012, has no track record in North America, which is both good and bad.

He said there is no bad reputation to overcome, such as compacts being boring or bland, but then there's no positive history that consumers can tap into.

Bigland said that Dodge has worked hard to make the Dart more than just an appliance that takes the driver from point A to point B. He said Dodge wants the Dart to be a car that is affordable. It's starting price is \$15,995, and offers great fuel economy – they're still in the testing phase and are aiming for about 40 mpg highway – and is still fun to drive and offers a premium motoring experience, he said.

To that end, Bigland said they combined the DNA of the

## 'We're Back,' Say Detroit 3

by Gerald Scott  
News Dept.

The proverbial breath of fresh air emanating from Cobo Center last week has nothing to do with ongoing renovations to the air conditioning and infrastructure at the aging convention hall.

Rather, let's say it was the Detroit auto industry and its collective exhale following three tumultuous years – years that saw the corporate bankruptcies of two of the Big Three automakers and related financial turbulence.

Last week, however, on

press days, Jan. 9-10, something new and bright and different was emerging as Cobo Center, the North American International Auto Show and the Big Three carmakers all have a brighter future – indeed, they sure now have something to crow about.

With its head down in a foxhole the past three years, Detroit hadn't had much to shout about as it fought for survival. Now, however, fresh winds are blowing through Cobo and the industry itself.

"I swear, it was like a morgue in here back in 2009, like somebody had died," ob-

served Russ Shelton, car dealer and owner of Shelton Buick-GMC in Rochester.

"Monday was ecstatic – all of the smiles and positive energy are a welcome change from before."

Indeed, if anybody had something to brag about at the outset of the auto show it was Shelton, who enjoyed the fresh optimism of the show floor on Monday, witnessed the debut of the Buick Encore small SUV (dubbed by some the "baby Enclave") on Tuesday, and then on Wednesday,

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## Auto Show Ed. Day Is Jan. 18 at Cobo

DETROIT – The North American International Auto Show last week announced that plans are in place for its annual Education Day, scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Cobo Center in Detroit.

Show executives also announced that for the first time, Education Day would be open to students of all ages, including college level. The PNC Foundation, which specializes in early childhood education, is supporting NAIAS Education Day.

"It's never too early to educate our young people about the many opportunities that exist within the automotive industry," said Bill Perkins, chairman of the NAIAS 2012.



PHOTO: IRENA GRANAAS

Lincoln Design Director Max Wolff details the Lincoln MKZ Concept's traditional design cues and the refinements and innovations that are slated to lead the Ford luxury brand successfully into the future.

For the Lincoln brand, it's not just about how the cars look, it's how they're crafted, he added.

"For the first time since the 1970s, we've opened a Lincoln design studio here in Dearborn, where 180 stylists and engineers are creating the distinct (product) for the luxury crowd . . . We have started on a journey (with) a more contemporary, more individual basis with a vehicle, and personal experience to match. And today, we are willing to offer you a glimpse of our future – the Lincoln challenger, the Lincoln MKZ concept," he said.

Max Wolff, Lincoln design director, took center stage to talk about the sedan's look

and feel. He talked about the sleek and sweeping roofline, the car's spaciousness, and its flowing, more aerodynamic appearance.

"The Lincoln MKZ Concept (has) artistic, yet thoughtful, design touches our customers will notice and appreciate," he said.

In an interview, Wolff said the concept vehicle's most significant departure is the silhouette of the vehicle, "and then as you get closer to the car just the detailing, obviously the surface language, strong yet refined, and some of the little personal touches on things like the mirror base, things like the grille bars and the way in which they are sculptured."



PHOTO: JEFF KOWALSKY

Mary Andringa of the National Association of Manufacturers discussed the auto industry's comeback in her speech. Andringa said that in her travels across the U.S. and the globe, the image of the Detroit automakers is up due in part to the improved quality of the cars they are selling today.

## NAM's Chief: Image Is Up

by Gerald Scott  
News Dept.

Mary Andringa, chair of the National Association of Manufacturers, came calling to Detroit last week for both the auto show and a speech to the Detroit Economic Club.

Andringa runs a small family manufacturing business in Iowa and is the first woman to chair NAM's lobby group, based in Washington, D.C.

She was asked during Q&A with the media whether the Detroit auto industry's image has improved from three years ago, when the Big Three CEOs were begging for money from Congress just to stay afloat.

"It is a global world . . . but I think most (consumers) are pretty proud to be part of the American economy and American manufacturing and I think they absolutely want to see the Detroit automakers do well and come back on top and be leaders," she said.

"And to be leaders in innovative new products, that's probably why there is so much buzz at this show, over the new products . . ."

Andringa also correlated what the Motor City knows instinctively – when actual car quality is up, Detroit's national image goes up, too.



Reid Bigland, president and CEO of the Dodge brand, introduces the 2013 Dodge Dart at the Detroit auto show last week.

Alfa Romeo with the Dodge passion for driving.

The vehicle will be manufactured in Chrysler's Belvedere, Ill., factory. It will have 10 airbags, making it a very safe vehicle to drive, he said, and it is very customizable.

It comes with 14 interiors, five model levels in 12 colors, making it possible to come up with more than 100,000 combinations. Mopar will also offer a segment-best vehicle.

The result, Bigland said, is a vehicle that gives the driver pride in his or her ride.

Merlo said adapting the Giulietta platform to the North American marketplace required some changes. They stretched and widened the

platform – the wheelbase by three inches, a half-an-inch on the track and added an inch-and-a-half to the overall width.

"We did this for a couple of reasons," Merlo said. "From a purely U.S. market perspective, these adjustments give us a wider variety of interior packages, which is important."

"We can now provide D sedan interior volume to a vehicle with C sedan exterior dimensions. The other reason is that we can be more flexible in designs for other vehicles using this platform."

The Dart will be a sedan, Merlo said, because North Americans, for the most part, prefer sedans over hatchbacks.