

## Concept Cars: The Future Is Here Today

(NAPSA)—It's auto show season. That means it's also time for comparison-shopping if you're in the market for a new car or truck, or want to gawk at the latest concept cars from here and abroad.

Concept-car styling exercises have been stars of the show circuit since the '50s, when GM put bubble-topped, jet-fighter-inspired dream machines in its "Motorama" exhibits. Back then some dream cars became real—the Corvette was a Motorama car—but more often they were used to introduce styling elements that might appear on later models.

Concept cars have changed over the years. Many of today's dream cars are thinly disguised prototypes of eventual production models. That this new breed of concept cars is more "real" is both a blessing and a curse. If you're



**Ford brought its 2005 Mustang GT concept car to SEMA Show 2003.**



**Some Hummers at SEMA Show 2003 were so low they scraped the ground.**

really turned on by a prototype, you may be able to drive one some day.

Well, you don't have to wait. There were 1,500 "concept" vehicles on display at SEMA Show 2003 in Las Vegas. Some, like Ford's Mustang GT and the Hummer SUT, were factory-built sneak peeks of future models. But others were grassroots dream machines based on current production vehicles. These cars could be built right now, not sometime in the future, using performance parts and accessories available today.

For example, American Racing Equipment mounted its newest wheels—measuring 28 inches in diameter—on a Hummer H2 and earned the distinction of having the biggest production rims at the show. Other Hummers were so radically low they literally scraped the ground.

Sports cars more to your taste? The SEMA Show was full of winged Nissan 350Zs, turbocharged Mazda Miatas, and a V-8 powered Ford Focus that previewed an engine conversion kit coming next year.

Sport-compact performance is the hottest automotive enthusiast segment going, and on the cutting



**Sports cars grew wings, like this Nissan 350 at SEMA Show 2003.**

edge of this trend-setting group were cars modified for drifting, a popular Japanese motorsport that's making big dust clouds here in the States. A special drifting demonstration drew huge crowds at the SEMA Show.

Unlike your local auto show, the annual SEMA Show is open to the industry only. However, SEMA, the Special Equipment Market Association, has posted many images from the SEMA Show for consumers to enjoy at [www.enjoythedrive.com](http://www.enjoythedrive.com).