

Arizona International Auto Show

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Less is more in Phoenix

by John Miller & Ken Pett

Images by Lee Lichtenstein and D. Massarik

A not-quite-full lineup of new cars and trucks for 2009, as well as concept cars and show cars, were on display at the Arizona International Auto Show at the Phoenix Convention Center this weekend. The Arizona Auto Show is produced by Motor Trend Auto Shows and was not subject to the cutbacks and threatened pull-outs at auto shows sponsored by the manufacturers. Although all the brands were represented here, many of the exhibitors limited the displays to just one copy of each model.



Attendees were invited to open the doors, inspect engines, and sit inside and get the feel of nearly every new vehicle making its appearance this model year in dealer showrooms. Highlights included chances to test drive several vehicles including the new Chevy Traverse crossover, the Ford Flex, Fusion, Focus, F-150 and revised 2009 Mustang. New and redesigned vehicles being shown included the Chevrolet

Camaro, the Audi A3, the Chevrolet Corvette ZR-1, the Hummer H3T, the Infiniti FX, the Mazda 6, the Mercedes-Benz M-Class, Nissan Maxima and 370Z, plus a variety of hybrid models from Cadillac, Chevrolet, and Lexus/Toyota.

The 'Green Trail' at the Arizona Auto Show gave show-goers the opportunity to learn about the latest trends in alternative fuel vehicles. Green directional arrows were scattered throughout the show to help attendees find fuel-efficient and alternative fuel models as well as showcase new technology that will help save money at the fuel pump and promote a safer, cleaner environment.



One of the more interesting displays that didn't overtly promote GREEN, but truly exemplifies the **Less-is-More** concept was the debut of the 2009 Nissan 370Z,

the first redesign of the roadster since its reintroduction as the 2003 350z model. Through greater use of new, lightweight body materials, the new model is lighter by almost 100 pounds.



It sports a shorter wheelbase than its predecessor, has a larger 3.7-liter V-6 engine producing 332 horsepower--26 more than the last model, and yet it still is more fuel-efficient. The new 370Z and the Z Touring are scheduled to go on sale in North America in January 2009 with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$29,990 (compared to the 2008 350Z MSRP of \$28,510). A roadster will follow in the 2010 model year.

