

Homage Done Properly: The Koenigsegg CC850

By Caden Wright

The year is 2000. Sony has just released the PlayStation 2, the first resident astronaut crew has entered the International Space Station, and Tom Brady has just been drafted by the New England Patriots. The world is buzzing with excitement to see what the new millennium has in store for them. All the while, a Swedish man with a very difficult-to-pronounce name was about to shock the world. That name was Christian Von Koenigsegg.



The 90's had no shortage of illustrious supercars. Ferrari was rightfully proud of their Formula-One-derived F50, which packed 512 horsepower. Jaguar's XJ220 was no slouch with its 542-horsepower twin-turbo V6. Pagani had just burst on the scene with the Zonda, of which, the highest trim (the Zonda C12-S) pumped out a whopping 550 horsepower. All fantastic supercars – and come October of 2000, all were about to be decimated.

At the 2000 Paris Motor Show, Christian Von Koenigsegg unveiled his first car: the Koenigsegg CC8S. Suffice to say, the CC8S did not arrive quietly. Equipped with a 4.7L supercharged V8 based on the Ford modular engine design, the CC8S produced an absurd 655 horsepower, setting a new world record for the most powerful production engine in the world. It quickly became clear that Christian Von Koenigsegg was not to be taken lightly. He was out for blood, and more importantly, he was fast. Koenigsegg had established itself as a leader in the frontier of automotive excellence – a position they have not yet lost.

Fortunately for the genius Swedes behind the savage supercar, the CC8S was far from the last time that the Koenigsegg name would leave the world with its jaw on the floor. In the two decades that have followed the release of the CC8S, Koenigsegg has produced some of the most mind-numbingly wild supercars and hypercars that have scorched the earth. The CCX, Agera, Regera, Jesko, and more have solidified Koenigsegg's death grip on the pursuit of speed.

Their newest creation is no less intense. It's called the CC850, and despite it being their newest creation, it's quite similar to their oldest creation: the CC8S. The CC850 looks like the CC8S, sounds like the CC8S, and goes like hell. So, is it new? Is it old?

The answer is yes and yes. The CC850 is a proper restomod; a revival of the spirit of the original CC8S infused with the accumulation of two decades of groundbreaking automotive technology. It is a wolf in a slightly-older-wolf's clothing. I say "slightly older wolf" because, despite the CC850 adopting the body of the 23-year-old CC8S with minimal updates, it still looks strikingly contemporary, if not futuristic. It surely is no sheep. Instead, the CC850 is a reaffirmation of the timelessness of Koenigsegg's design. It still looks as good today as it did in the year 2000.

But as with all Koenigsegg models, it is what's underneath the shiny skin that really, truly has enthusiasts excited. You may have expected that, being essentially a glorified restomod, Koenigsegg might have taken the opportunity to get a bit lazy. The formula for a restomod is simple: Take an old design, update the exterior slightly, add modern creature comforts and technology, drop in a new engine or maybe an electric motor and you're done. No need to innovate. After all, the whole point is to revive the past, not push the boundaries of the future, right?

Wrong. That is, assuming the restomod you are building wears a "Koenigsegg" badge on its rear bumper. In that case, it is your duty (apparently) to force those boundaries to the side and keep pushing forward, which is exactly what the Ghost Squadron has done with the CC850. Lodged just behind the headrests is a 5.0L twin-turbo V8 producing 1185 horsepower on your standard pump gas, and 1385 horsepower on E85. It also makes 1385 newton-meters (1020 foot-pounds) of torque and revs to screaming 8500 RPM redline.

Impressive as all that is, none of it is exactly new for Koenigsegg, or the elite few auto manufacturers they compete with. Naturally, that means it wasn't enough. Paired to the mighty

V8 is a transmission – but not just any transmission. It is easily the most interesting transmission of the 2000's, and perhaps the most interesting transmission *ever*. The past few Koenigsegg models have come with the revolutionary 9-speed "Light Speed Transmission" (LST); the CC850 has the same transmission with one large caveat. The transmission in the CC850 possesses a feature called the Engage Shifter System (ESS) which lets the



driver turn the transmission from a 9-speed automatic to a 6-speed gated manual with a third pedal.

This isn't just your standard "shiftronic" mode that can be found in most econoboxes these days, nor is it an automated manual with flappy paddles as found in the hero cars of the 2000s. The ESS feature essentially allows the transmission to select 6 gear ratios from the 9-speed LST and makes them available to the driver via a traditional manual setup, including a clutch and the potential to stall the car. Yes, you read that right: In the year 2023, Koenigsegg is offering a 1385-horsepower hypercar with a manual transmission that can be stalled. Deal with it.

Or don't. In fact, most of us, except for a very, very lucky few, will never experience this wondrous automotive creation. It has been limited to just 70 units (all of which have sold already) and the reported MSRP is \$3.65 million USD making it a bit out of the reach of the average Joe. But we can dream, can't we?

After having the privilege to see and hear the CC850 in person, I can confidently say that it is the paramount example of an automotive revival. In an era where manufacturers are constantly reviving their most prestigious namesakes in the form of dull crossovers or soulless EVs, Koenigsegg has provided a guiding light for lower-tier brands hoping to imbue a sense of passion into their own popular recreations.