



At the 80th Geneva International Motor Show new colours and concepts were given pride of place as **Montaha Hidefi** reports

Riding the trends

Ever wondered how much auto shows and fashion shows have in common? Revealing new concepts, featuring new designs, and involving buyers are some aspects of commonalities, but the most evident yet underestimated similarity lies on colour and material parades setting the trends for the next season.

In the past, industrial designers, engineers and architects in the automotive, electronics, building, consumer goods and other industries glanced at fashion shows as a source for inspiration for colour trends.

Nowadays, the makers and shakers of colours and trends in all industries are getting inspired and influenced by each other. It is not surprising to run into fashion designers and architects roving auto shows or industrial designers and electronic engineers sitting at front rows' runways; after all consumer electronics have turned into fashion accessories, buildings are being converted into social living spaces, and automobiles are an expression of individuality.

Although a vehicle life cycle is twenty times longer than a fashion accessory and ten times shorter than a living space, the influences under-

ing the colour choice and trends are shared among all industries.

ALTERNATIVE SUSTAINABILITY

When it comes to colour, material and design, the automotive industry is becoming among the top trendsetters. Due to environmental legislations the industry is undoubtedly showing commitment to a future less dependent on fossil fuels to ensure its sustainability. Hit by lower consumer demand, the industry has to bank on the move towards concepts that rely on alternative energy sources yet strike a string on consumer emotions.

Last September, at the IAA Auto Show in Frankfurt, the industry flung a pearlescent white trend to communicate its commitment to protecting the environment. This was surprising since, while in countries like Japan and South Korea white is a predominant colour for cars, in Europe white has traditionally been considered as the colour of fleet cars.

This year, at the Geneva International Motor Show held in March, the industry beamed a blue electrifying trend to convey the same message. Whether consumers will select white or blue for their next car



Kia's Sportage in Sunset Orange with a metallic copper finish

purchase will remain a matter of individual taste, cultural diversity and perceived resale value, but the trend is definitely out of the blue.

BLUE, THE NEW GREEN?

The green ecological megatrend towards a future less dependent on fossil fuels was represented not only through concepts such as Blue Drive, Blue Car and BlueTech, but as the names imply it, also through a hefty display of blue cars, blue interiors/trimmings and blue LED indicators and headlights.

As a cool colour, blue has calming and relaxing effects; it encourages communication, and is associated with freedom, strength and new beginnings. Perhaps the automotive industry is sending a message to relax about future alternative energy.

Whether with no effects or incorporating special effect pigments, the expression of sustainability through the colour blue was a head turner. Some of the most optically engaging finishes were Blue Earth (Nissan's Leaf); a light petrol blue with a shimmering pearlescent effect giving the impression of swimming in a sea of oyster shells. Blue Tuanake (Peugeot's 5 By); a dark metallic marine blue

inspired by the Tuanake Atoll in French Polynesia. Kawasemi Blue (Mitsubishi's ASX); a metallic blue inspired by the king fisher bird, 'kawasemi' in Japanese. Blue Boticelli (Citroen's new C3); a light powder blue reminiscent of Italian painter Boticelli.

Also noteworthy, Electric Blue Boracay (Chevrolet's Aveo RS); a metallic finish, Blue Malte (Renault's Clio Giordini RS), and Midnight Indigo (Fiat's 500 by Diesel); a metallic dark blue developed in collaboration with Diesel.

RED, BROWN & EARTHY TONES

Some new introductions were displayed in bright red pearlescent or metallic finishes (Alpha Romeo's Giulietta, Seat's Ibiza ST and Audi's A1). Mustard and brown earthy tones with high sparkle effects were seen on Ford's Focus wagon next generation, Audi's R8 Spyder, Tata's Indo Manza and Dacia's Duster. The most spectacular earthy tones were sported by Nissan's 370Z Roadster with a highly sparkling brown reddish Quartz metallic finish and Jaguar's XKR new Caviar, also a highly sparkling metallic finish.

GOLD AND COPPER EFFECTS

Gold and copper effect pigments are gaining popularity in the industry.

The Bentley Mansory had a gold finish on its trim



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Worth mentioning were Sunset Orange (Kia's Sportage) with a metallic copper finish, and Vibrant Copper and Electrum Gold (Volvo's S60); both new metallic effect finishes. Even Mansory sported a gold finish to trim the Bentley.

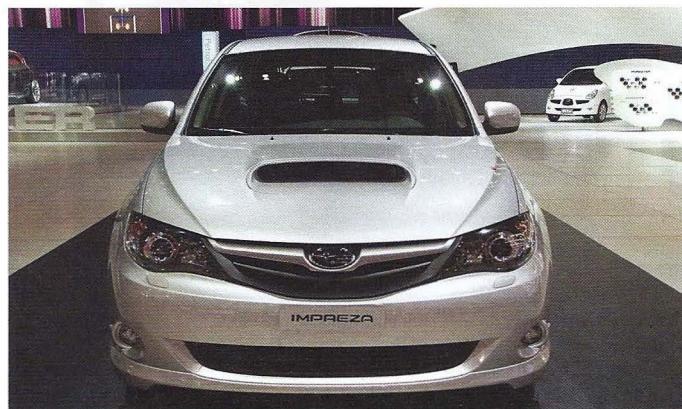
BOTANICAL GREEN

Ferrari surprised visitors with the Hykers experimental sport car coated in bright apple green pearlescent finish. A feminine green blue metallic fin-

ish, inspired by the Saudi flag, was chosen by King Saud University for their Gazal 1. An astonishing high gloss sparkling metallic lemon green was used on Chevrolet's Spark, perhaps this choice of colour is a direct relation to the current trend in fashion.

The 'UC?' electric concept car by Rinspeed was spinning heads with its bright apple green finished with interference gold effect pigments. The car changed colours from green to gold-ish yellow depending on the view angle.

White pearlescent was also evident among the many eye-catching colours to be seen around the Geneva International Motor Show.



Ferrari's apple green pearlescent finish attracted the visitors

BLACK AND WHITE

One emerging trend worth keeping an eye on is a striking and eye-catching black matt finish with a satin or silky feel and look displayed by Lancia's Delta, Dodge's SRT and Porsche. A high gloss non metallic black finish that exuded a passionate and feminine elegance was used on Lancia's Musa 5th Avenue and Ypsilon.

On the other end of the spectrum, a large number of white pearlescent finished cars provided a distinctive shine and twinkle'. White was also

seen on luxury and sport cars (new Jaguar XKR, Renault's Megane coupe-cabriolet).

SILVER DEATH?

There was a display shortage of silver metallic coated cars. To conclude this as an anticipated move away from a finish that dominated the industry for over a decade might be too early. However, at least the industry is showing a direction towards the adoption of more chromatic and cheerful colours.