

Dodge Intros Rally Car Version of Its Soon-to-Debut 2013 Production Dart

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

Dodge introduced its latest Rally Car – and its driver – and it’s difficult to say which is going to generate more horsepower and enthusiasm. That’s because Dodge and SRT Motorsports (Street and Racing Technology) last week debuted an all-new 2013 Dodge Dart Rally Car and it will be piloted by four-time Rally America Champion and 17-time X Games Gold Medalist Travis Pastrana in the upcoming 2012 Global RallyCross Championship (GRC) Series.

“At Dodge, racing is an integral part of our heritage and embodies our competitive spirit, so we’re very excited to announce the next chapter in racing for Dodge with our all-new Dodge Dart,” said Reid Bigland, president and CEO of Dodge Brand.

“The new Dart Global RallyCross Championship car with 600 horsepower and driver Travis Pastrana takes our passion for performance to new heights.”

Last week, the Motor City got its first up-close look at hot driver Pastrana and in person he comes across as a marketer’s dream.

The GRC Series, with first race in Charlotte May 26, appeals greatly to the 18-to-34-year-old age group and there’s Pastrana, just 28, and looking like, if he wasn’t a car driver, maybe he should be lead guitarist in a Seattle grunge band.

Right guy for right part, in other words – and right enthusiasm for this job, too, apparently.

“When I first heard about GRC, I was really interested, and after watching some of the rounds last year and then actually competing in the X Games, I was hooked!” he said.

“Now to be able to partner with Dodge to field my own program this year is a dream come true. The new Dodge



Concept drawing of the 2013 Dodge Dart Rally Car, which Chrysler had built in Sweden and shipped to the U.S. last week in preparation for the first 2012 Global RallyCross Championship Series race in the U.S. in May.

Dart offers the perfect platform for rally cross, and I look forward to putting it on the podium all season long.”

Indeed, Pastrana will be competing in a rally-race version of the Dart, a vehicle so unique that Dodge had it built in Sweden and shipped to the U.S. for trials just last week.

The street Dart debuted to positive reviews at the De-

troit auto show back in January and otherwise it’s scheduled to begin production at Chrysler’s Belvidere, Ill., factory later this year.

Meanwhile, Ralph Gilles, president and CEO – Street and Racing Technology Brand and Motorsports, Chrysler Group, attended the briefing with Pastrana at the Hard Rock Cafe in Detroit last week and he likes what



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Four-time Rally America Champion driver Travis Pastrana, center, makes a point as he’s introduced as the new driver of the 2013 Dodge Dart Rally Car at a briefing at the Hard Rock Cafe in Detroit. Looking on are SRT executive Ralph Gilles, left, and Dodge executive Reid Bigland, right.

he sees in both the driver and the vehicle at hand.

“Travis is a living example of what action sports activities are all about, so he fits in perfectly with the youthfulness and passion for performance of the Dodge Brand and the SRT Motorsports team,” Gilles said.

“He’s proven that he can handle just about anything with wheels, so it’s going to be great to watch him pilot our new Dodge Dart in Global RallyCross.”

Indeed, the Dart rally car is custom-built specifically for

the newer motorsport of Global RallyCross racing, but share a few traits with the production Dodge Dart.

Gilles said both vehicles have exceptional aerodynamics, are agile and fun to drive and will add a little excitement to their segments.

Powered by a 2.0L, 4-cylinder, 16-valve turbocharged 600 h.p. engine mated to a Sedav, 4-wheel-drive gearbox that puts out more than 550 lb. ft. of torque such as the vehicle is raring to go.

Note that the production version of the Dodge Dart

features three state-of-the-art powertrains that produce up to 184 h.p. and an equal 184 lb. ft. of torque and what is described as a sporty, fun-to-drive road handling experience.

The Dart figures to put Dodge back on the compact-car segment map, even though its interior space is actually larger than some mid-size cars.

Now, add the Rally version of the car and an equally enthusiastic driver and Dodge may be on to something hot after all.

Visteon Sells Lighting End of Its Car Business

VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) – Auto parts maker Visteon Corp. is selling its automotive lighting business to Indian automotive parts supplier Varroc Group for \$92 million.

Visteon said the sale announced last week will allow it to concentrate on making climate-control and electronics products for vehicle manufacturers and on its joint ventures.

The business being sold accounted for \$531 million in revenue last year and employs about 4,200 workers. That’s about 16 percent of Visteon’s current workforce of about 26,000 employees.

Visteon had \$8.05 billion in total revenue in 2011.

The operations being sold make front and rear lighting systems, auxiliary lamps and

subcomponents such as projectors and electronic modules. The business has operations in Europe, North America and Asia.

The agreement is also expected to include Visteon’s equity stake in Visteon TYC Corp., a China-based lighting joint venture.

Plants involved in the sale include those in Novy Jicin and Rychvald, Czech Republic; Monterrey, Mexico, and Pune, India.

Visteon, which is based in Van Buren Township, Mich., expects to complete the deal in the third quarter.

Visteon was spun off from Ford Motor Co. in 2000. It filed for bankruptcy protection in 2009 and emerged in 2010 after shedding billions in debt and pension costs.

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