

20 Years of Viper to be Featured at Employee Show

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

Cruisers unite!
Unite at the 2012 CEMA Car Show at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum in Auburn Hills on Saturday, June 9, that is.

All makes and models of cars and motorcycles are welcome to visit the CEMA show, which stands for Chrysler Employee Motorsports Association.

The event runs at the Museum from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine, and a special event at 10 a.m. will open the new Viper Café.

The public is invited to come see the grand opening of the Viper Café exhibit at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum.

The Viper is one of Chrysler's most iconic performance vehicles – and now it's getting its own special place at the museum.

That is to say, the old 1930s "Chrysler dealership showroom" on the garage level of the museum has been completely remodeled into a very contemporary, Viper-themed room.

This project was spearheaded by Maurice Liang, founder president of the Viper Club of America (VCA), and completely funded by donations from VCA members.

Visitors will learn about the history of the Viper sports car as well as of the Viper Club of America itself. Visitors will al-



The annual CEMA (Chrysler Employee Motorsports Association) car show at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum on June 9 will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Viper. Pictured is the 2013 Viper GTS.

so see a wonderful collection of Viper memorabilia, a hand-painted donor mural, and of course, a Viper.

Also, Ralph Gilles, president and CEO of Chrysler's SRT Brand & Motorsports, and the senior vice president of Design, will be on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Viper Café at 10 a.m.

This year marks the 23rd annual CEMA car show, which benefits the Walter P. Chrysler Museum Foundation, a non-profit entity.

Those interested in attending

can register their car at www.cemaclub.org. After June 1 and on the day of the show, vehicle registration is \$20.

The first 200 paid car registrations receive a goody bag and dash plaque, plus all paid registrations receive one free admission pass to the museum.

The outdoor car show is free to spectators while museum admission for spectators will be just \$4.

Local car clubs, regardless of make, are also welcome to participate. There will be food

available all day and Jammin' Jerry will serve as event disk jockey.

The overall theme will be the 20-year anniversary celebration of the original Dodge Viper, which was first seen at the 1989 Detroit auto show and became a production vehicle for the 1992 model year. Auto mogul Bob Lutz shepherded development of the Viper at Chrysler in that era.

Expect to see dozens and dozens of Chrysler employee- and retiree-owned Vipers at the show.



Ford wants to put the Focus ST tuner car in front of as many customers as possible this summer, so it's organizing an Academy, a national tour that will allow the public to test-drive the car in a stadium parking lot on Saturdays during June-July-August.

Ford Offers Focus ST Fans Chance to Drive Hot Laps

DEARBORN – For sport compact fans, the only thing is better than driving the new Ford Focus ST, say Ford officials, is driving the Focus ST on a course with professional instruction and timed autocross hot laps.

That, and more, is what Ford is bringing to driving enthusiasts in New York; Washington, D.C.; Boston; San Francisco, and Los Angeles this summer, beginning June 30 in New York.

The events will happen on Saturdays in June, July and August in each market. Events will include 48-foot race trailers, a fleet of Focus STs for training, timed competition, as well as pre-event racing instruction.

Events will open at 9 a.m. and run all day through 6 p.m. Locations and dates are:

- New York, IZOD Center, June 30
- Washington, D.C., FedEx Field, July 14
- Boston, Gillette Stadium, July 21
- San Francisco, Candlestick Park, Aug. 4
- Los Angeles, Dodgers Stadium, Aug. 11.

Pre-registration is live at <http://www.drivefocusst.com/>.

Participation will be limited and will be honored on a first-registered, first-served basis.

"Our fans have expressed

extremely high interest in this car, but we know the proof is in the pudding," said Lisa Schoder, Ford Focus ST Marketing manager.

"We want ST fans, as well as drivers of competitive vehicles, to be able to taste this car firsthand.

"What better way to do it," she added, "than to bring the car to the people with the help of professional driver instruction on closed courses."

Focus ST, Ford's first global performance car, will integrate a collection of advanced and sport-oriented technologies previously unavailable to North American customers.

The combination of these technologies into a high-performance sport compact will elevate the category.

Among the more visible options will be the Tangerine Scream metallic color that will be offered exclusively on Focus ST, as well as race-inspired Recaro seats with matching color accents.

Ford is offering drivers who preorder a 2013 Focus ST the GoPro HD Hero2 Motorsports Edition camera pack upon delivery.

Already a staple in the motorsports and action sport communities, a GoPro is the ideal camera to capture a spirited drive or Focus ST track day.

Big Three Enjoy Double-Digit Sales Gains in May

DETROIT (AP) – U.S. auto sales remained a bright spot in May even as the economy darkened.

Many of the biggest car-makers reported double-digit sales gains last month compared with a year earlier. Americans continued to replace their aging vehicles even though economic news was mostly downbeat.

Toyota, as expected, led sales increases with an 87 percent rise from a year earlier. In May of 2011, the company ran short of cars and trucks after an earthquake in Japan crippled its factories. But its showrooms have been stocked with vehicles again.

Chrysler reported a 30 percent increase, followed by VW at 28 percent and Nissan at 21 percent. Ford sales rose 13 percent and GM was up 11 percent.

The results show that pent-up demand is overpowering any fears about the economy, analysts say. Unemployment in May rose for the first time in 11 months, increasing slightly to 8.2 percent. The stock market had its worst month in two years, and consumer confidence was shaky.

But people are buying because they have to replace aging cars and trucks that they kept through the Great Recession. The average age of a vehicle on U.S. roads is now pushing 11 years, and they are simply wearing out.

"You have so many old vehicles on the road," said Tom Libby, lead analyst for the Polk automotive research firm. He sees auto sales continuing to grow through the next two or three years.

People also feel they have a bit more money because gasoline prices have tumbled. They now average \$3.61 a gallon – 33 cents below the peak of \$3.94 on April 6. Some experts say gas could fall as low as \$3.40 between now and Labor Day.

Pickup truck sales also appear to be rebounding. GM, Ford and Chrysler all reported that truck sales rose more than 20 percent last month.

Ford's F-Series pickups, the top-selling vehicle in the U.S., saw sales rise 29 percent over last May. Ford says demand for trucks has followed an increase in new home construction since the start of this year.

The strong sales of cars and trucks are a good sign for the economy, which has given off mixed signals of late. A survey released this week by the Conference Board suggested consumer confidence fell sharply in May, although a separate survey by Thompson Reuters and the University of Michigan showed consumer sentiment at its highest level in four-and-a-half years, partly because gasoline prices have dropped.

close watched by car companies, since consumers need to have faith in the economy before they're willing to spend on big-ticket items.

May's sales pace is so strong that forecasting firm LMC Automotive raised its 2012 forecast to 14.5 million, up from 14.3 million.

That pace, while above the dismal sales of 10.4 million in 2009, remains below what would be normal in a healthy economy, said Jeff Schuster, LMC's senior vice president of forecasting. The monthly pace should be between 15.5 million and 16 million based on the number of households and the country's population, Schuster said.

But LMC is predicting sales of 15.2 million next year, which is closer to the healthy economy number. Schuster said sales haven't recovered as quickly as they have historically after recessions. The Great Recession ended nearly three years ago in June of 2009.

Still, U.S. automakers can now break even when sales are in the 10 million range because they downsized dramatically during the recession. And with the pace of sales running at 14 million since the beginning of the year, profits have been strong. Schuster cautioned that

bad economic news can take a while to affect people's spending. But he also sees pent-up demand keeping auto sales strong through a sluggish economy.

"As long as there isn't a shock or a further deterioration of the economy on a broader scale, I think auto sales can power through right now," he said.

Meanwhile, Kelley Blue Book offered a unique perspective on the Big Three's May sales gains.

"As projected in Kelley Blue Book's May 23 report, sales in May were particularly strong due to an uptick in demand during Memorial Day weekend," said KBB senior market analyst Alec Guitierrez.

"Consumers traditionally flock to dealerships during the holiday weekend to take advantage of low interest rates and attractive incentive offers, especially on those vehicles expected to be redesigned later this year such as the Ford Fusion and Nissan Altima.

"Although incentives were only slightly above offers already available in April, savvy buyers opted to take advantage of still record high trade-in values.

"The timing couldn't have been better for those that bought in May since used-car

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