

Shutter Snappers Lead to Creativity in New Buicks

DETROIT – The debut of the new 2013 Buick Enclave luxury crossover in April, according to GM, defined a new course for Buick design language while completing a full circle of design cohesion now evident across the brand's products.

"Sculpted, graceful design is part of the Buick brand identity," said Dave Lyon, executive director for Design.

"Each model has details that make it unique, but a Buick can be recognized by its elegant waterfall grille, flowing lines, and complementary interior colors and materials."

Blue translucent headlight rings, LED lighting inside and out, and soft-touch interior materials continue to stress the brand's attention to detail, say GM officials.

Following the debut of the Encore luxury crossover earlier this year, *Automobile* magazine wrote that "Buick has pulled a complete 180 in the past five years, revitalizing its lineup with well-crafted models and attracting younger buyers."

Behind Buick's new sedans and crossovers are creative minds whose personal hobbies inspire their professions. A trio of photography enthusiasts applies their shared hobby to unique pursuits on Buick's staff.

John Puskar, Alikhan Kuljanov, and Craig Zinser are three photographers whose backgrounds and work differ greatly, but whose shared passion creates a common bond.

"Everyone has something they aspire to be at an early age," said John Puskar, director of strategic design.

"At one point, in first or second grade, I spilled some ink on one of my art class projects. Rather than throw it out and start over, I used the spill to my advantage and incorporated it into part of a painting that went on to win art shows.

"That made me realize I wanted to grow up to be an artist making beautiful things. Now, some of those things include Buicks.

"I'm intrigued by subtlety and nuance in my photography. Right now, my passion is night photography and trying to find detail in the black and white cre-

ated by darkness.

"The play on contrast and values creates such a challenge. I've also been photographing my daughters doing gymnastics, and the low light and motion combine to make getting the right shot a real challenge.

"I love being able to freeze an experience in time for everyone to go back and relive that moment as if they were there. I also love being able to turn an image into a piece of art."

Puskar sees a common thread between the challenges of photography and those of designing new vehicles.

"Technology has opened up new opportunities to manipulate images and create something truly unique.

"Our Buick customers also require a certain form and structure that must be achieved. Size, shape – that all matters. Harmony is a part of a Buick owner's life, and for me, finding it has become an obsession."

Kuljanov, a lead creative designer for Buick, developed his creativity as a child surrounded by challenging conditions in the former Soviet Union.

"My mother encouraged me to become an artist and to define the beauty in our world.

"My interest in landscapes comes from the warmth of sunsets and sunrises, or the colors of an expansive vineyard in October.

"But, at the same time, I love the character of black-and-white portraits. Removing color brings out a subject's true character and simplifies the surroundings. As a designer, I love simplifying my environment."

Kuljanov says when he first looks at a car design, he imagines he's looking through a lens. "Luxury is defined by the details, especially today in a simpler, cost-efficient industry. I think of photography when I encounter those details. When I look at a line of stitching, everything other than that stitch is out of focus in my mind.

"When designing a vehicle, my goal is to bring those details into focus for our customers.

"Buick represents warmth and simplicity overlaid with fine luxury detail. Wood, leather, suede – these are all simple-

looking materials with complex design forms that must be set within the vehicle's defined structure.

"Items I photograph, like a glass of cognac or a colorful autumn setting, for example, affect the warm colors we've brought to the Buick brand."

Zinser's passion for photography contributes to his work at Buick in a different way as an engineering group manager for infotainment systems.

"Photography allows an engineer like me to have a creative side," he noted. "That's something engineers aren't really known for, but I think it helps me look at things from different perspectives, allowing me to find unique solutions to problems I face."

Zinser's passion evolved out of another love: travel. Basic photos from his vacations around the world evolved into a greater passion for photography and a drive to capture the most important details and feelings of a location.

"When we travel, we love to visit historic locations. I am al-



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ways amazed by the architecture and landscapes. But it is difficult to capture the true beauty in a picture, so I take a lot of photos from different angles. Details, lighting and perspective are all important to me. I'm always looking for that one shot which captures a location and has that 'wow' factor."

The attention to detail is contributing to a series of successes. Enclave, the industry's best-selling three-row luxury crossover, saw record sales in

2011. Kelly Blue Book recently named the LaCrosse midsize luxury sedan one of the "10 Best Luxury Cars under \$40,000" and the 2012 Verano luxury sedan one of the "Best Sedans Under \$25,000."

"Photography is a brotherhood, we see each other and wave," said Puskar. "We recognize people using good cameras. We can be anywhere in the world and know one another as photography enthusiasts and have that connection."

Fisker Boosts Karma Recall

WASHINGTON (AP) – Fisker Automotive is expanding a recall of its 2012 plug-in hybrid Karma because of potential problems with the electric car's battery.

The automaker initially recalled 50 of the \$100,000 cars in December. It said improperly installed hose clamps in the model's battery pack could cause coolant to leak, potentially starting a fire.

Fisker has added 19 cars to that recall, 10 of which it believes were delivered to customers.

The Irvine, Calif.-based hybrid automaker says no incidents have been reported by customers or retailers. The company says it will replace the battery pack.

Fisker, founded in 2007, is privately held.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration investigated Chevrolet Volt battery fires earlier this year. It determined that the car was no riskier than vehicles with conventional gasoline engines in terms of road safety.

Verano Fitting of Luxury Sedan with a Refined Side

DETROIT – Buick has announced the 2013 Verano Turbo luxury sedan will be powered by an Ecotec 2.0L turbocharged engine with direct injection and continuously variable valve timing that produces an SAE-certified 250 horsepower at 5300 rpm and 260 lb.-ft. of torque at 2000 rpm. Acceleration from 0-60 mph is an estimated 6.2 seconds.

The Verano Turbo goes on sale later this year.

More than 90 percent of the Verano Turbo's peak torque – more than 234 lb.-ft. – is available between 1700 and 5500 rpm.

Its closest competitor, the 2013 Acura ILX 2.4L, offers a peak of 170 lb.-ft. of torque.

"The 2.0L turbo engine was designed for refinement, higher output capabilities and reduced noise," said Amy Joss, Ecotec 2.0L assistant chief engineer.

"The way it sounds, the pow-

er delivery and the refined character are all fitting of a luxury sedan with a fun side."

In December, Buick's 2.0L turbocharged Ecotec engine was named one of *Ward's Auto World's* 2012 10 Best Engines for North America.

At the time, the publication's editor-in-chief, Drew Winter, said: "This engine delivers a level of power and sophistication that redefines Buick."

The choice to use a small-displacement turbocharged engine for a more powerful Verano model is consistent with Buick's effort to downsize its powertrains without sacrificing performance.

Verano and the Regal luxury sport sedan are available exclusively with four-cylinder engines, while the LaCrosse luxury sedan comes standard with a four-cylinder engine paired with eAssist technology, which uses an electric motor and battery to boost both performance and fuel economy.

The standard 2013 Regal four-cylinder engine also is equipped with eAssist.

"Buick's engine strategy continues to be driven by intelligent performance," said Tony DiSalle, vice president of Buick Marketing.

"Four-cylinder engines, turbocharging and eAssist are all the right solutions for today's market.

"With these advanced technologies, Buicks are more efficient without sacrificing their smooth, quiet character."

According to IHS Automotive, use of four-cylinder engines in North American vehicles will grow 74 percent from 6.9 million to 12.2 million units over the next 10 years.

The Verano Turbo will be available with a choice of a six-speed automatic transmission or a six-speed manual gearbox. According to GM, including Regal Turbo and Regal GS, the Buick brand offers more manual transmissions than Fer-



"The 2.0L turbo engine was designed for refinement" – Joss.

rari and Lamborghini combined.

Acceleration performance is expected to be consistent between the two transmissions.

Fuel economy numbers are not final, but the Verano Turbo is expected to be in line with Buick's other turbocharged models.

Pricing will be announced closer to the start of production in late 2012.

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