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SAAB AERO X: BRAND BUILDING ROLE



Saab Aero X
Strictly Embargoed until February 27th 2006 at 17.00 CET



The Saab Aero X is a radical demonstration of the power of the Saab brand to inspire design themes and features that could appear in the Saab cars of tomorrow. It is the latest in a series of concepts from Saab.

The Aero X was created as a graphic answer to a simple question: what would happen if an entire car was dedicated to expressing Saab's heritage in a new way? The question was posed just over a year ago by Bryan Nesbitt, Executive Director of Design for GME. He wanted to explore the potential for developing a bolder, more distinctive design language for Saab products.



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Saab designers in Sweden drew up a number of outline proposals. An exciting sports concept that would bring Saab's aviation and Scandinavian roots into sharper focus was quickly chosen.

The Aero X shows how deep roots can inspire new design directions that remain faithful to the brand's core values. It is the latest step in a series of concepts that have each highlighted different facets of the Saab brand.

The Saab 9X, exhibited at the IAA Frankfurt Show in 2001, demonstrated the multi-dynamic, versatile qualities of the Saab brand. Its innovative, 'four dimensional' format incorporated features typical of a coupe, roadster, wagon and even a pick-up. It was followed at the 2002 Detroit Show by the 9-3X 'cross-over coupe' concept, which combined four-wheel drive, off-road capabilities with a sporty, three-door body format.



At the 2003 Frankfurt show, Saab then revealed the 9-3 Sport-Hatch concept, previewing its move last year into the medium-size, premium estate car segment with the 9-3 SportWagon.

Now, with the Aero X, Saab has turned the dial marked 'performance' right up for the first time. And it does so in a way only Saab can - by leveraging the potential of a turbocharged BioPower engine and its own aviation heritage.

By using BioPower, the Saab Aero X gives an environmental dimension to the phrase 'performance with responsibility' and expresses a strong Scandinavian tradition of respect for the environment. And it would not be a Saab without using turbocharging to maximise the performance potential of bio-ethanol fuel.

In looks, the Aero X is focused outside and inside on echoing the performance-driven character of a jet aircraft. In being devoted to expressing this theme, it is the most visually committed design to be shown by Saab.

"The Aero X is an extreme brand statement," says Knut Simonsson, Saab's Executive Director of Global Brand and Sales Operations. "It puts a clear emphasis on using Saab's aviation heritage to express sporty design.

"All our concept cars share the core values of the brand: progressive design, sporty driving and surprising functionality. These are the results of Saab's heritage, its story, which is about roots in aviation, Scandinavian culture and innovative thinking.

"The Aero X clearly emphasises sportiness more than previous concepts, but it does so in a Saabish way, drawing on the potential of the brand's story. However, even in such a focused car as this, there is an element of surprising functionality with the twin storage facility.

"The Aero name itself, which we also use for our high performance production cars, shows how much we value the brand's aviation roots in expressing sporty performance. The Aero X opens up new possibilities for doing this with future products in an even more exciting way."

WINGSUITS FOR SAAB AERO X DRIVERS

Saab is utilising the power of its aircraft heritage to inspire the design of the Aero X concept. And in imagining the Aero X driver and passenger during their recreational time, it has equipped the show car with Salomon Wingsuits destined for 'free flyers'.

Saab and Salomon, the leading sports equipment supplier, have already created a global partnership in the fast-growing field of action and outdoor sports, sponsoring



international championships and teams in the Raid Series, Crossmax skiing, In-line skating and Freeriding. Now they are backing the exhilarating new genre of 'free-flying', a development of sky diving in which Wingsuits are worn to enable participants to soar and manoeuvre in the air.

The four-strong Salomon Soul Flyers team are the leading exponents of this exciting new sport. Their Wingsuits feature extending gussets between the legs and the arms and body that are designed to harness the power of the wind during freefall, allowing the Soul Flyers to glide around in the sky as they descend. Whereas a skilled sky diver can achieve only half a metre of lateral movement for every metre of descent, a Wingsuited-Soul Flyer can challenge gravity by soaring three metres laterally for every metre of downward travel. "It's like flying by using your own body," says team member Loic Jean-Albert.

To achieve such a remarkable performance, Salomon has developed strong, lightweight materials for its Wingsuit, with special seams and stitching to withstand immense air pressures as the wearer descends at speeds up to 115 mph. Techniques derived from meeting such an extreme design challenge are being used by Salomon to innovate in other sportswear products in their range. In a similar way, Saab anticipates adopting technical solutions and design themes from the Aero X in future products.

The Saab and Salomon brands share a natural synergy in delivering premium quality, innovative products for individualistic customers. In taking inspiration from the world of flight, the Salomon Wingsuit and Saab Aero X take this synergy to a new level.