

For Immediate Release

Infiniti Essence Concept Previews Future Design and Technology Direction

- 592-Horsepower Hybrid Supercar Makes North American Debut at Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance -

The essence of the Infiniti brand distilled into one car and then taken to the extremes to satisfy the world's most demanding car enthusiasts – this is the Infiniti Essence. The dramatically designed 592-horsepower rear-wheel drive gasoline/electric hybrid coupe also represents an inspiring exploration into the Infiniti's future design and technology direction.

"The Essence Concept showcases many of the technologies and design cues that will distinguish Infiniti production cars of the coming years," said Ben Poore, vice president, Infiniti Business Unit. "This dramatic Essence luxury super-coupe concept reaffirms Infiniti's place among the world's most exclusive and vibrant car brands."

Initially presented at the 79th International Motor Show of Geneva in March 2009, Essence makes its North America debut at the Concours d'Elegance in Pebble Beach, Calif., August 12 – 16. Following the Concours, Essence will go on display at a number of other cities throughout the United States in the summer and fall.

Essence Design: "Dynamic Adeyaka"

With breathtaking good looks and perfect proportions, Essence utilizes a fresh design language – featuring details that bring a very modern take to some very old Japanese traditions. "Adeyaka," a concept containing the notions of grace and vibrant sensuality, is combined with modern, progressive luxury. Infiniti's "Dynamic Adeyaka" attitude ensures that Essence is single-minded, but also inviting, sophisticated and born of inspiration from both the human and natural worlds.

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The designers' aim was to merge all existing Infiniti design cues with a fresh approach, resulting in a shape that is highly sculptural, yet also very delicate. Essence speaks of power, but not intimidation.

The Essence hood, as expected of an Infiniti, is long – suggesting the power within – while the rear deck is short, providing classic Infiniti proportions. Together with a flowing “wave” profile between muscular front and rear wheel arches, Essence at first appears to be in the classic sports car mold, yet there is nothing retro about Essence.

The side window graphics bring a particularly innovative and distinctive edge to the styling. The window appears to be resting on a ledge, its razor sharp line in contrast to the concave sweep of the upper body just below it. The rear section also features complex surfacing with concave “scoops” that flow down the rear pillars from one of Essence's most distinctive design cues: a C-shaped kink to the side windows' trailing edge. Outlined by a wide flourish of stainless steel, it adds instant movement to the car even when it is standing still.

One of the most distinctive details is the trim around the side air vents. The simple yet delicate shape, finely finished in aluminium, is based on the “kanzash,” a hairpin used by women when wearing the kimono. Other lines and details are inspired by the wide brush strokes of Japanese calligraphy. Essence represents a successful merging of iconic cultural cues with automotive aesthetics.

Essence's front is characterised by Infiniti's signature double-arch grille, set at an angle that suggests the car is about to leap forward. There is an illuminated Infiniti badge at its heart. Rounded corners effectively hide the front overhang and make this 185-inch-long car (15.4 feet) appear anything but big in the flesh.

At the front, as over the rest of the car, Essence eschews superfluous body embellishments that could interrupt the graceful strength of the whole. The grille is framed by subtle strips of stainless steel, but there's little other trim and no other grilles or intakes, not even fog lights. The door handles are slivers of push buttons flush with the body, while even the rearview mirrors must make way for minuscule cameras teased out of the A-pillars.

Familiar Infiniti cues include the lights – at the front, the signature L-shaped modules taper back on to the bulging guards, picked out at their top edge by a row of LEDs. Slender fillets of red light curve around the car at the back, overlapping with the trunk opening and framing the spoiler, which appears to have been pushed out from within the car.

Essence Interior: Driver-Focused

A driver's car demands the perfect driver's cabin. Essence's interior is minimalist, ergonomic and totally focused on giving the driver a feeling of absolute control – while the passenger area is dominated by comfort, calm and elegance to offer the kind of hospitality that is so important to Essence. The asymmetrical cabin is divided into two areas separated by a large curving console between the seats that sweeps around to merge with the center of the dashboard. The driver's side is themed black, the passenger's "cocoon" an earthy red.

A flat-bottomed steering wheel, chronometer-style dials, bright red engine start button, and short, alloy-topped gear selector announce to the driver this is a serious performance machine. Other interior features include larger paddle shifters behind the wheel and a signature Infiniti analog clock. With the materials used – leather, Alcantara, hand-painted wood inspired by traditional Japanese lacquerware – the cabin exudes a rich and inviting warmth. Essence's interior promotes a sense of well being, which is key to the Infiniti driving experience.

Essence Drivetrain: Power With Responsibility

Essence's drivetrain is designed to meet the highest expectations of owners by delivering the one thing everyone expects of an Infiniti – sheer driving pleasure. In Essence, that pleasure is taken to new heights, at the same time as previewing an innovative green hybrid engine. Essence is unusual even in the rarefied atmosphere of the world's fastest road cars by being able to call on a mighty 592 horsepower.

Like the design, the performance is designed to be sophisticated and unobtrusive – performance with a human touch. The hybrid system is a logical extension of the Infiniti parent group's groundbreaking green commitments.

It offers power with efficiency, and high performance with zero-emissions running, by combining a gasoline engine with an electric motor. These can work independently or together as a “parallel” hybrid system. In congested urban areas, the electric motor alone is all that is needed for Essence to glide silently between stoplights, with no tailpipe emissions. When the traffic clears, Essence responds with a highway performance that few cars could match. In “power assist” mode the full 592 horsepower is unleashed with both gasoline and electric power working together.

A key difference over some other hybrid systems is that both the V6 and the electric motor feed their power only to the rear wheels. Infiniti’s 3.7-liter DOHC V6 gasoline engine is fitted with twin turbochargers and a new, efficient direct-injection fuel system, boosting power to 434 horsepower.

Essence previews a new type of electric motor, called 3D Motor, that was designed to meet tough requirements on size and power output. The result is a particularly slim, disk-shaped motor that has twice the torque of a conventional unit. Its design was achieved by 3D magnetic field analysis to optimize the layout of the electromagnetic coils and permanent magnets. For use in the Essence, the motor is positioned between the engine and transmission and provides 158 horsepower, drawing power from a compact lithium-ion battery pack in the trunk area. Because the 3D Motor operates in both propulsion and power regeneration modes, the battery pack is kept charged up.

Optimized energy usage across the widest possible range of driving conditions is guaranteed by two separate clutches, which “switch in” the motors as required. It is a system that needs no torque converter, further enhancing responsiveness and driving pleasure.

Essence Safety: Envisioning a Collision-Free Future

On a global level, Infiniti is committed to building safe vehicles equipped with advanced safety technologies. Essence previews some of the next-generation safety features that will ensure Infiniti cars remain among the safest on the road, adding two new technologies to the Distance Control Assist (DCA) and Lane Departure Prevention (LDP) systems that are available in today’s production Infinitis.

Side Collision Prevention (SCP) and Back-up Collision Prevention (BCP) extend the anti-collision shield all the way around the car. With SCP, when the driver decides to change lanes, side-mounted sensors activate a warning if an approaching vehicle is detected in the driver's intended lane. A yaw mechanism is then activated through brake control of individual wheels to help prevent a potential collision. Back-up Collision Prevention works in a similar way, sensing a vehicle behind, giving the driver a warning but then, if the warning is not heeded, activating the brakes automatically. The warning system and pre-emptive safety features are designed to help support the driver in an intuitive manner with minimal intervention.

Essence Practicality: A Specially Made Solution

The team behind Essence harkened back to an early motoring era to find the right solution for carrying luggage. The result is surprisingly practical and romantic. It also re-establishes the historic ties between a carmaker and one of the best-known names in luxury goods – Louis Vuitton. Vuitton first worked with a coachbuilder – the famous Kellner Company – in 1908, equipping one of their early luxury limousines with a set of bespoke luggage. Other coachbuilders quickly beat a path to Vuitton's door in Paris. Made-to-measure Vuitton trunks were an integral feature of some of the greatest cars of the first part of the 20th century.

The collaboration between Infiniti and Vuitton revives the idea of a set of the highest quality luggage made to fit exactly a car's trunk area. In Essence, there are three rigid pieces: a matched pair of slender briefcases atop a large trunk. All are made in the new Damier Graphite canvas and feature sleekly integrated handles and an overall design in harmony with the car itself. In addition, a button on the key fob electrically opens the trunk lid, allowing the trunk floor to slide silently rearwards.

About Infiniti

Infiniti offers a full-line of luxury performance automobiles that inspire at every turn, including the G Coupe, Sedan and first-ever Convertible, M sedan, EX and FX crossovers, and the QX full-size SUV. More information about Infiniti and its Total Ownership Experience[®] can be found at www.InfinitiUSA.com.

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