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These are the highlights from each end of the auto spectrum in LA

THE Los Angeles motor show is increasingly becoming an event of two extremes. On one hand LA is the home of Pimp My Ride and chromed bling, on the other it's the spiritual home of the hybrid (the technology was pioneered in Japan but US drivers embraced it in the **millions**).

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These are the highlights from the frugal and lavish ends of the automotive spectrum, from the Los Angeles motor show.

TOYOTA MIRAI It looks like a catfish but it's a genius piece of work.

It can be fuelled by garbage, generates enough electricity to power your house for a week, emits only water — and will be in showrooms next year.

Almost 20 years after Toyota launched the first Prius — and more than seven **million** hybrid sales later — the Mirai promises to be a hydrogen-powered car for the masses that takes over where the Prius leaves off.

It has an unusual appearance because its hi-tech hydrogen system needs special cooling; sharp creases in the bodywork help it slip through the air more efficiently.

Unlike pure electric cars, the Mirai can be refuelled in less than five minutes and travel 480km on one tank, about the same as a regular car.

"Hydrogen can be made from virtually anything, even garbage," says Akio Toyoda, the grandson of the **company** founder.

There is a significant hurdle. Hydrogen refuelling stations are scarce in the US, Japan and Europe and there are none in Australia.

The Mirai will go on **sale** in the US for \$57,500 or on a \$499 a month lease. HONDA FCX Honda's latest concept also uses fuel cell technology and will go on **sale** in the US and Japan in March 2016. Honda says its latest hydrogen car (right) packs 60 per cent more **energy** than previously into a fuel cell that's 33 per cent smaller and is also good for 480km. The Honda will be the first hydrogen car with the entire fuel cell setup under the bonnet.

MERCEDES-BENZ MAYBACH The preferred ride of gangsta rappers, Middle East **oil** tycoons, and super-rich **Chinese** business types, the Maybach brand was withdrawn from **sale** in Australia three years before it was axed globally.

Now it's back as a stretched, super-long S-Class limousine powered by a 6.0-litre V12 (390kW/830Nm).

The extra 200mm of leg room, unique styling and hush-quiet interior will cost about \$700,000 in Australia — \$300,000 more than the dearest S-Class — but it's an order-only proposition. You'll have to fly overseas if you want to test drive one.

PORSCHE The fastest Porsche 911 with a manual gearbox will go on **sale** in Australia with prices ranging from \$268,000-\$313,000.

The 911 GTS uses a tweaked version of the Carrera S's 3.8-litre boxer six-cylinder engine to generate 316kW and will be sold as a 2+2 coupe and cabriolet in rear-wheel and all-wheel drive.

A seven-speed manual transmission is standard, though the dual-clutch seven-speed auto is an option.

All GTS models are fitted with Porsche's Chrono performance package and active suspension management and the GTS coupe has a claimed 100km/h sprint time of 4.0 seconds flat.

Meanwhile, V8 propulsion has been ditched in favour of a twin-turbo V6 for the new Cayenne GTS (left) that goes on **sale** in Australia from February, starting from \$154,600.

The good news is the drop in cylinders doesn't correspond to decreased performance, with the new GTS pumping out 323kW/660Nm. That's backed up by better fuel economy, with the official rating dropping by almost a litre to 9.8L/100km.

The GTS takes its front bumper and red brake calipers from the Turbo model, along with a revised rear bumper and spoiler and a 20mm lower ride height, courtesy of active suspension.

Key elements are blacked out, or black-painted, including the 20-inch rims, light surrounds and exhaust tips.

CHRYSLER C-shaped daytime running lights and a bigger, bolder grille are the signature cues to Chrysler's updated 300 large sedan (right).

To improve fuel economy for both the 3.6-litre V6 and 5.7-litre V8, all 300s will be fitted with an eight-speed auto as standard when they arrive in Australia next year.

Interior updates include a customisable seven-inch driver's display, rotary transmission control and updates to the Uconnect infotainment with 8.4-inch touch screen.

Prices are not expected to differ much from today, starting at \$43,000 for the 300 up to \$66,000 for the high-performance SRT8.

BMW X5M /X6M SUVs are stealing sales away from sports cars, says BMW. So it has an answer for that: a super-fast SUV. The X5M is the answer to the Porsche Cayenne Turbo and promises blistering performance from a family-sized SUV, presumably to get the kids to school on time.

The turtle-shaped X6M is an answer to a question no one asked but BMW says it designed it to appeal to younger buyers who don't like the look of the family-sized SUV. BMW marketing experts reckon the X6M says "I'm single and don't have kids". With an X6M you may be single for longer than you think. Prices are yet to be confirmed but bank on close to \$200,000.

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