

Miss these and you'll be sorry!

The Province

We begin our extensive coverage of this weekend's Vancouver International auto Show with a look at three must-see exhibits. The nine-day show opens in B.C. Place Stadium on Saturday, March 29.

- The all-new 2009 Honda Fit, set to go on sale this fall, makes its Canadian debut under the dome.

The revamp of the popular subcompact gives it a sportier appearance but the improvements are more than skin deep.

Notable is what is described as one-motion, fold-flat, dive-down rear seats enabling owners to switch from a five-seat passenger wagon to cargo carrier in no time.

On the tech front, the Fit Sport edition features a USB audio interface compatible with current generation iPods and many USB storage devices.

Dual-stage, dual-threshold front airbags, dual front-side airbags with passenger-side Occupant Position Detection System (OPDS) and side-curtain airbags are standard equipment on all Fit models.

Under the hood the power comes from a new 1.5-litre i-VTEC four-cylinder engine connected to either a five-speed manual transmission or an available, segment-unique five-speed automatic transmission.

- You don't need to own a luxurious 2008 Bentley Continental GT Speed to drive one around town.

A new Vancouver-based premier car club, Empire One, will launch at the auto show, offering members a chance to get behind the wheel of a variety of luxury vehicles.

"Our vision is to turn car lovers' dreams of driving the finest in luxury vehicles into a reality," says Empire One founder and president, Harvey Sanghera.

Empire One members pay \$2,995 monthly, or \$32,998 annually, following a one-time membership fee of \$7,500 plus taxes.

The program works by offering a combination of points and kilometres to be used toward driving days throughout the year.

Dependent on the car's category and day of the week, members will enjoy anywhere from 55 to 70 days a year of driving.

Cars are delivered and picked up at a member's home or place of work and all insurance, maintenance, and storage costs are covered by Empire One.

In addition to the Bentley on display at the show, the Empire One collection will include such cars as the Ferrari F430 Spyder, Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera, Audi R8 and Aston Martin Vantage. More info at www.empireone.ca

- The Best-of-the-Best display is expected to draw interest from every generation of car lover visiting this year's show.

It will feature an example from each of the top summer collector-car shows including a 1936 Lagonda LG 45 representing Gastown's Steamworks Concours d' Elegance Classic Car show, a very rare 1906 Züst representing the Langley Good Times Cruise-in and a 1936 Ford Club Cab representing the annual Downtown Port Coquitlam Car show.

Visitors will have an opportunity to vote for their favourites and the car with the most votes will be named the Best of the Best on the last day of the Show.

And this year's Classic Drive-up on Sunday, April 6, the show's final day, will be a salute



CREDIT: CNW Group/Honda Canada Inc.
The all-new 2009 Honda Fit, set to go on sale this fall, makes its Canadian debut at the Vancouver International Auto Show.

on Terry Fox Plaza to the venerable Ford Mustang.

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