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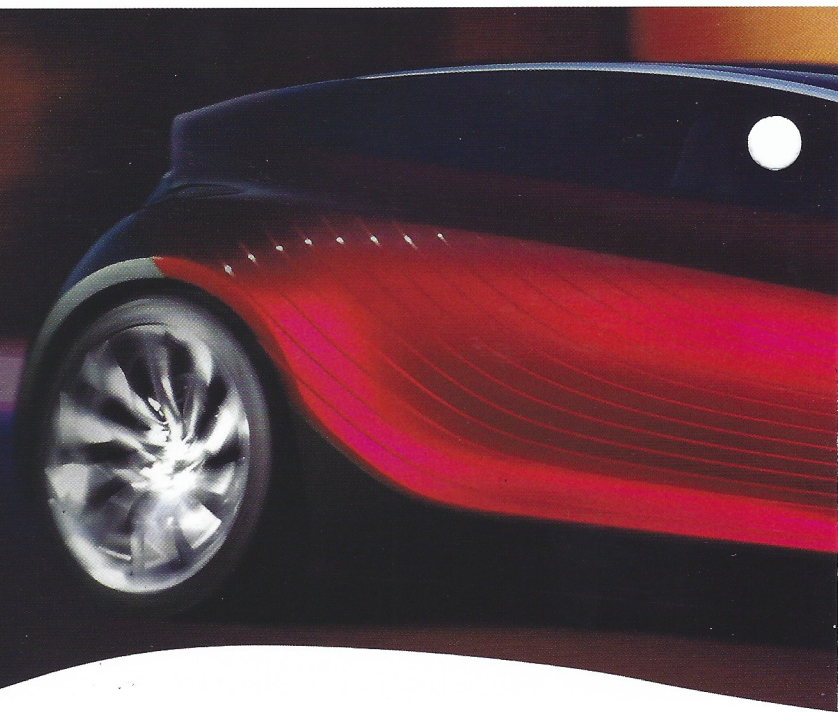
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THE EDSSEL & ELEANOR FORD HOUSE | GROSSE POINTE SHORES, MICHIGAN

CARS AS ART

**Great auto designs are
true rolling sculptures**

story by
Gary Witzenburg



"EyesOn Design" has always been about fine automotive design, and great auto design is about talented designers treating their critically important work as more art form than occupation. We interviewed three of today's top design leaders on "Cars as Art," and each was happy to expound on the subject using a recent especially artful concept car to illustrate.

Franz von Holzhausen, Design Director, Mazda North America on the Mazda Ryuga Concept:

The 2008 Louis Vuitton Classic Awards honor two cars as fantastic pieces of art. One, a 1938 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900 Touring, is automotive art from the past. The other, our 2007 Mazda Ryuga concept, is art from the future.

The Alfa, which was Best of Show at the 2007 Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance, shows the craftsmanship and love that went into fashioning it. The detailing, the brightwork, the form language exudes Italian romance and passion. The Ryuga is an expression of where proportions and character can go in the future. It's about character and dynamic gesture, a glimpse of future proportions for our sports cars inspired by textures found in the desert floor.

We're striving to visually communicate "Zoom-Zoom," which is an expressive way to communicate a feeling and a great tag line...but what does it look like? Ryuga has a very expressive, powerful, characterful face and very dynamic surfacing, with taut lines and fluid surfaces between them. Its back is powerful, with a great stance and a lot of energy; very concise, with no excess fat, like it should be a rear-drive car. We want Mazdas to be known as athletic cars, and athletes are shrink-wrapped, with no fat.

The strokes on its side are an exploration of texture and nature, with flow coming from air moving across the desert sand, or water moving across the ocean floor. Or imagine a rake going through the sand of a Japanese zen garden. A big mouth is a key element of a sports car...a big air intake for power and performance. We're continuing to evolve the five-point grille as a key element of the Mazda face and exploring ways of doing it other than a big empty hole. In this case, it is a chrome piece that reflects the environment back into that mouth.

Art in my mind is about craftsmanship, expression and the ability to create that expression.

When I look at a vehicle, I see a combination of multiple disciplines --

architecture, fashion, product design, sculpture. Successful auto designers are like successful conductors and song composers with multiple layers to bring together.

Any time people are attracted to a vehicle for something more than its practicality, I think you can call that art. If someone buys a car that pulls an emotional string, they're buying it because they want it. It's a reflection of their personality and lifestyle, and that's what art is about. People hang certain artists on their walls because they reflect their tastes. People buy certain cars because they reflect their tastes. In that sense, it is art, and it's important for us to recognize that we are creating art for a customer.

Among modern cars, I would call an Aston Martin DB9 art. I see that as more an exquisite, beautiful sculptural piece and a beautiful harmony of disciplines, than an automobile. And I see some of my favorite cars from the past, Ferraris and Jaguars, absolutely as art -- although, in its heart and soul, a Ferrari is designed to be a car first, then a piece of art.



Franz von Holzhausen



Mazda Ryuga Concept

Ed Welburn, General Motors Vice President, Global Design on the Buick Riviera Concept:

The shape of a vehicle is art that influences how you feel about it. There are a couple of levels: the overall shape, and the details.

Brand differentiation is extremely important. Take Cadillac design language vs. Buick. Both are luxury vehicles, but expressed in very different ways. "Art and science," the form vocabulary for Cadillac, is angular and edgy, with real direction and forward thrust. Cadillacs are bold, dynamic, directional, contemporary and international in size and execution. They have a real edge, inspired by stealth fighters.

The Buick brand is a terrific opportunity for us to do bold, expressive, premium design in a very different way compared to Cadillac. Buicks are more romantic, powerful designs with a certain grace. Look at the great Buicks in history – Roadmasters, Supers, Skylarks, Wildcats, Electras, Rivas – very bold and expressive, yet graceful in their execution. They are also premium vehicles, but quite different from Cadillacs. There are no parallel lines on a Buick. Their lines are like brush strokes, going from thick to thin.

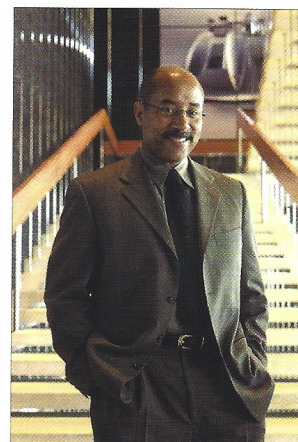
There was a series of concept vehicles -- Evoq, Cien, Imaj -- that signaled the direction and helped develop the form vocabulary for the production Cadillac CTS and XLR. The first of a comparable series for Buick was a great concept car called Velite. When it was introduced, I said it may never go to production, but it will have a very healthy influence on vehicles that do. It did have a huge influence on the Enclave, and you can see that the form vocabulary continues to evolve

and become better defined with this Riviera concept -- very powerful, flowing lines, graceful body side shape, strong front end, tremendous flair, and far more expressive, exterior and interior, than what we've shown with other vehicles.

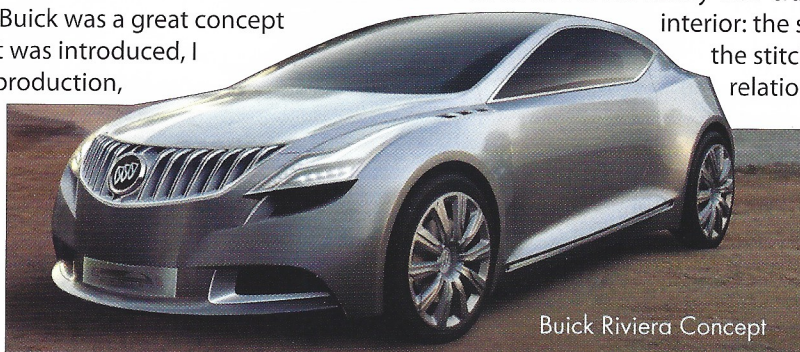
Rivieras have always been bold, overt expressions of the Buick brand, very sporty yet elegant. They were designers' cars, real design statements, that [legendary former GM Design VP] Bill Mitchell took very personally, and he was very involved in development of the first few generations of them. We don't take putting that name on a vehicle at General Motors lightly, because it is such a sacred design statement.

Harmony is also a big part of cars as art. Exterior harmony is in the proportions. Interior harmony is proportions to some degree but also relationships: one material against another. Look at the incredibly well-crafted details in the Enclave

interior: the shifter, the steering wheel, the stitching, the materials and the relationships between them. All of that is art. The challenge in an interior is that you are taking textures, some hard, some soft, and placing them next to each other, and they have to be in harmony.



Ed Welburn



Buick Riviera Concept

continued on next page

Peter Horbury, Executive Director, North American Design, Ford Motor Co. on the Lincoln MKT Concept:

Cars are art in that they are three-dimension objects, sculptured pieces, rather than paintings. That's what we do. We sculpt forms into beautiful three-dimensional pieces.

Looking back to Lincoln's history for inspiration, Lincoln was the antidote to Cadillac. Where Cadillac was almost always a lot of chrome and details, Lincoln was more self-confident for the self-confident owner who didn't need that ostentatiousness. So we're bringing that back.

Our challenge is how best to take the key design elements we picked from Lincoln's heritage and present them in a modern way, not to create retro designs, but to bring them up-to-date: the grille from the '41 Continental, which translates into this double wing, the chamfered shoulder running along the side and over the rear wheel, the side to side taillamps.

The executive jet is an icon for luxury, and this MKT in some cases can substitute for that. It's a long-distance tourer, fully equipped for video conferencing on the move or families going to the beach. It's versatile, and the luxury is not just in the interior appointments but also in its profile, very much a limo look with a bustle back that harkens back to historic limousines, presented in a modern way. It's a graceful look, very yacht-like. The elegant line down the bustle back is rather like one on a spectacular sailing yacht of the past.

There are sculpted elements in the interior. The instrument panel is a beautiful, flowing sculpted form, the door handle is a beautiful work of art, and the engraving on it, and on the scuff plates, is really at home in this very elegant interior -- the first time I've seen that in a car.



Above: Peter Horbury.
Below: Lincoln MKT Concept



Beyond merely allowing a driver to see the road in front of him, glass is an integral and exciting part of vehicle design. Since the earliest days of closed cars, PPG Industries has supported great design by developing innovative glazing technologies that enhance performance and aesthetics.

But that's not all. PPG also supports designers and events celebrating automotive styling. For eight years, two dozen College for Creative Studies students have received scholarships as part of the PPG Design Challenge at the North American International Auto Show. For 2008, PPG has added the PPG Best-in-Class awards for EyesOn Design to be presented at the awards ceremony on June 15.

So, during EyesOn Design, look for the PPG vehicle display with innovative technology, but also think of the designers who use technologies to create these automotive masterpieces. Together, we can see more than road ahead, we can see the future.



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