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2018 NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW REPORT

We just got back from the 2018 North American International Auto Show here in Detroit, and Volkswagen made an impressive showing at this, one of the greatest auto shows in the world. Once again, NAIAS is focusing attention on vehicles and technologies for the future, calling it AutoMobili-D. The displays at NAIAS and discussions with manufacturers and high-tech suppliers are redefining how we will experience mobility in the future. We're talking zero emission electric autonomous driving.

Volkswagen is already planning to be a major player in this field. The I.D. Crozz, which debuted last fall, was prominently on display at their booth at NAIAS. The all-electric compact SUV is very high-tech, from its voice-activated doors and trunk to its autonomous driving capability. It combines an 83kWh lithium-ion battery pack with a pair of electric motors, one on each axle. The front motor generates 101hp and the rear 201hp, for a combined output of 302hp, with a range of up to 300 miles. The I.D. Crozz, along with the I.D. Buzz, the similarly-powered concept Bus that VW debuted here last year, and the original I.D. concept vehicle, are poised to kick off an EV revolution here in the States, which could start as early as 2020. The I.D. Pilot Self-Driving System, which VW plans to deploy in 2025, relies on four laser scanners in the roof, as well as ultrasonic and radar sensors, side view cameras, and a front camera. As evidenced by all the other manufacturers with similar offerings on the show floor, it's safe to say the era of George Jetson's self-driving car has finally arrived!

Meanwhile, Volkswagen is realigning its North American strategy and going on the offensive, with new models tailored especially for the American market. They are committed to investing more than \$1.2 billion here in the United States over the next three years, with plans to introduce two new U.S. models each year going forward. With that in mind, they debuted the all-new 2019 Jetta, Volkswagen's best-

selling vehicle, with over 3.2 million sold in the U.S. since its introduction in 1979.

Now based off the award-winning MQB platform, the 2019 Jetta is an entirely new design. It has a longer wheelbase, with shorter overhangs, and is longer, wider and taller than the outgoing model. The larger exterior also adds up to more interior volume as well. There's a new digital cockpit, with a high-resolution



thin-film transistor (TFT) display, as well as our favorite feature: the 10-color customizable wrap-around ambient lighting. And for the first time in a VW product, Jetta will offer heated AND ventilated front seats. A new center storage console is 5-liters, large enough for a standard iPad. And best of all, the new Jetta will start at just \$18,545, less than the outgoing model! That announcement brought a rousing cheer from the crowd!

VW's driver assistance technology will also be available, specifically, Forward Collision Warning, Autonomous Emergency Braking Assistance, and Blind Spot Monitor Alert. We currently have these features on our 2018 Passat, and they're really incredible - braking for us when we don't react ourselves, and highlighting cars in our blind spots!

The new Jetta will be powered by VW's 1.4-liter turbocharged TSI engine, with 147hp and 184 pound-feet of torque, the highest in the compact sedan class. There's a standard 6-speed manual transmission and an optional 8-speed automatic. Jetta will be available in S, SE, SEL, and SEL Premium trim levels, along with an R-Line model as well.

VW also seized the opportunity to display the all new Jetta alongside its predecessor, a newly-restored 1982 Jetta, in that beautiful teal color from those early days, Lhasa Green. The '82 Jetta was restored in just five weeks by local VW customizer, John Bickel, of State of Mind Customs in Pontiac MI. More on that next month when we talk with John about the project.

Volkswagen also used NAIAS to introduce the new Passat GT as a limited edition model based off the R-Line trim. It was designed by the North American engineering team in Chattanooga, based on feedback from U.S. customers and dealers.

In keeping with their new strategy (dubbed Transform 2025+), VW has plans to introduce the Arteon as a replacement for the CC later this year, followed by a new Passat next year, and a replacement for the now-defunct Touareg sometime beyond that. They're also backing up their vehicles with the amazing new People First Warranty, America's best bumper-to-bumper new vehicle limited warranty on the market today - coverage for 6 years or 72,000 miles that's transferable to subsequent owners.

The icing on the NAIAS cake was delivered from Cars.com, which bestowed not one but two of their prestigious awards on our favorite car maker. The Chattanooga-produced Atlas took top honors as Best of 2018, in their words, "the most spot-on interpretation of an American family SUV that we've seen in ages". And the Golf GTI was named Most Fun-to-Drive Car of the Year, or as they put it, "Volkswagen's hot hatch rises to the top and continues to be a hoot." We couldn't agree more!