

2013 North American International Auto Shows: Chicago and Detroit Trends Report



As we do every year, we turned to the Detroit and Chicago auto shows this year in search of design and technology trends that could feed our need for development inspiration.

This report details some of the most notable finds, from brilliant details to sweeping design language changes.

We have locations around the globe. If you'd like to speak to the PDT team nearest you, just [drop us a note and we'll get you in touch.](#)



COLOR

Orange

From the runway to the roadways, orange is hot right now. Orange combines the stimulating color red with cheerful yellow to infuse spontaneity, energy and adventure.



Cesar Galindo



Shiplely & Halmos



Carolina Herrera



Audi TT S 2.0 T Quattro



BMW Z4

Kia Cross GT Concept



Lexus IS-F Pikes Peak Racer



Toyota Furia Concept



COLOR

Green

Green's cool vibe conjures thoughts of freshness and nature. A color of elegance and beauty, its ability to enhance our sense of well-being, balance and harmony, Emerald Green was named Pantone's 2013 Color of the Year.

2013
PANTONE®
Emerald



Jeep Rubicon

Chevy Camero ZL1 Touring
Convertible Concept



2013 Fiat 500L



Ford Mustang



The Illinois Camero Club reminded us of
green's heritage with its 1970's Z28
Camero

2013 Volkswagen Super Beetle



COLOR MATTERs

Matte Paint

Matte paint was abundant this year. From Lexus to Fiat, Volkswagen to Chevy, Matte reigned supreme.

Lexus Project LS F Sport



2014 Ford Taurus



2014 Lexus IS 350 SPORT

Chrysler 300S Turbine Edition

Chevrolet Malibu Performance Concept



WHAT'S THE BUZZ...

Honeycomb

The honeycomb pattern is everywhere- from CES to Fashion Week and now the Auto Shows. The pattern has a vintage appeal (grandma's tile bathroom floor) and a fresh, modern feel at the same time. The angular, architectural shapes lend themselves to endless design possibilities.



Urchin by BOOM at CES

Alexander McQueen at Fashion Week

Nissan Z



Audi R5

Audi A7



Honda Civic



Jeep Grand Cherokee Diesel

HOT YOUNG THING



HOT YOUNG THING

The New Language

Seems like Lexus has its eye on a new target market. Their designs are wild and edgy and geared toward a younger crowd.



The designers aimed for the look of one piece of material with sharp, precise lines



The spindle grille remains but has been evolved

“Avant-garde beauty”



The interior follows a new design philosophy, with a natural form design language. The amazing center display is made of two bonded 12.3 inch screens

LIGHT 'ER UP

Accent Lighting

Manufacturers have taken lighting to the next level. They are seizing the opportunity to push their brand language with lights as a sculptural element.



Ford Atlas Concept
Pickup

2014 Jeep Grand
Cherokee

Mercedes-Benz SLS
AMG Black Series



Honda Urban SUV
Concept



Honda Urban SUV
Concept

EXHAUSTED

Exhaust Design

Designers saved energy for the final touches, like bumper and exhaust treatments. An extra that that used to be reserved for performance cars, 'normal' autos are flaunting more sculpted and integrated designs that are becoming important design elements of the brand.



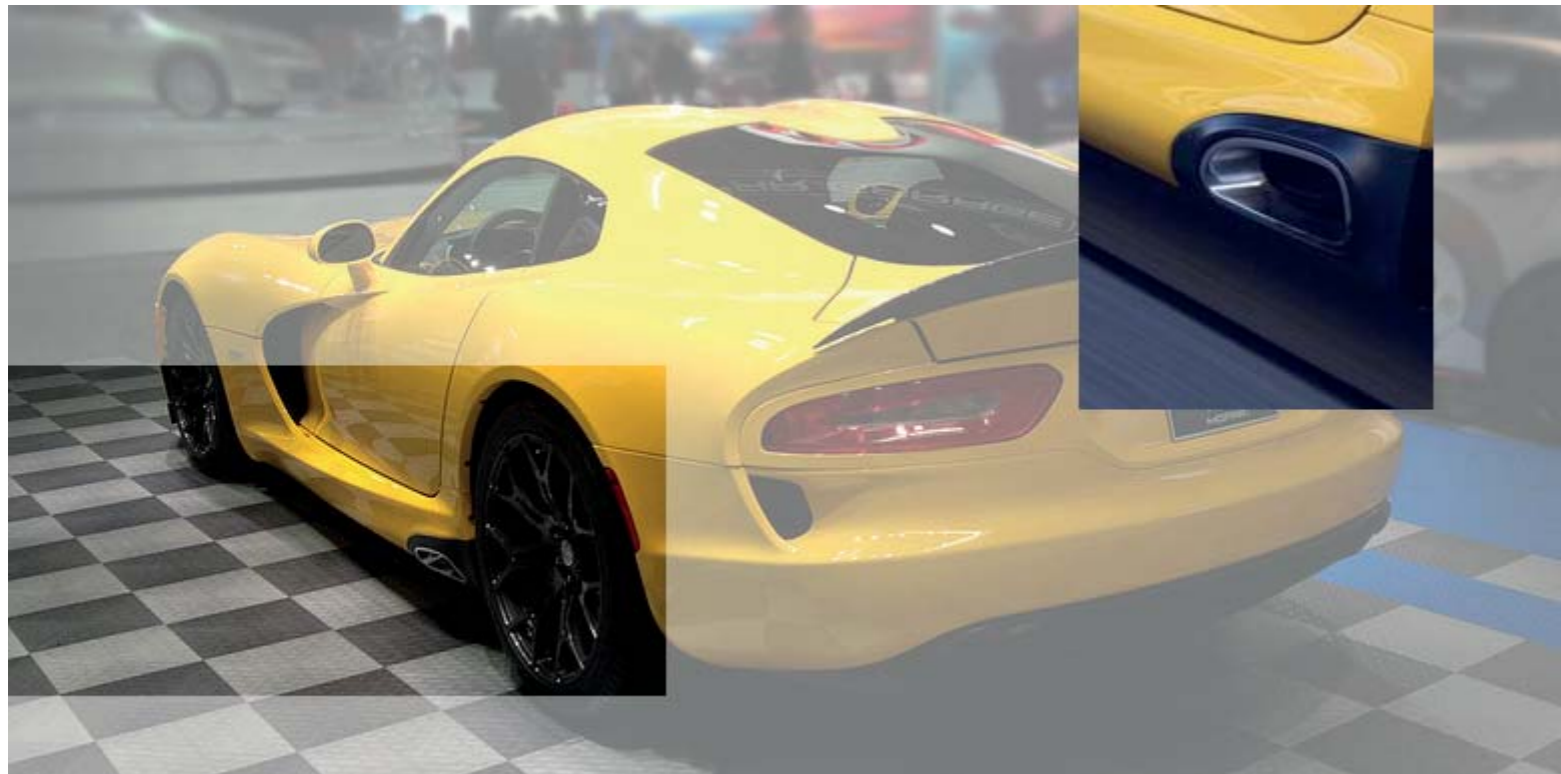
2013 Lexus LFA



Volkswagon Cross Coupe Plug in Hybrid Concept

BMW 4Series Coupe

2013 Ford Focus ST



2013 SRT Viper



2013 Lexus LF-LC Concept

IF YOU LIKED IT THEN YOU SHOULD PUT A RIM ON IT

Rims

We're seeing a change in rim styling which is taking on the look of turbines. In addition, we're seeing materials other than metal, such as carbon fiber, being implemented.



GRILLZZZ

Grilles

While grilles used to just serve to keep the engine cool, now they're working double time as recognizable brand elements while lending cool character to vehicles.



MAY I HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION PLEASE



MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE

'14 Corvette Stingray

There was no problem finding the gorgeous new 2014 Corvette Stingray at the Show- you just followed the crowd.



Muscle and aggression meet aerodynamics and cool.



The rear defies Corvette tradition, with a unique tail lamp design. Tradition rules, though, in the quad exhaust tips.



The first vehicle to use shape memory alloys to reduce mass and enable innovative features.



User centered features emerged during designers' 'field trips' to the GM Proving Grounds.

POWER UP!

Alternative Energy

Automotive companies have been clamoring to deliver to consumers who want fuel-efficient, eco-friendly solutions. Some are pushing technology while others are looking to improved versions of older technologies to answer their customers' requests.



Diesel... wait, what?

Diesel engines have been known for being dirty and loud, but today's diesels are powerful, clean and efficient, making them as attractive to consumers as hybrid and electric vehicles.



2013 Ford Focus Electric Fuel Cell Tank



Fisker Karma Ecosport is the first luxury plug-in exotic four door four passenger sedan.



The Smart ForTwo is tiny and fully electric



The Cadillac ELR is the first full-line auto brand to leverage an extended range electric vehicle technology, delivering a range of 35 miles of electric driving.

IT'S ELECTRIC

Pulling from CE

Designers are implementing material splits, perforations and glowing details that are often seen on consumer electronics, making their autos instantly recognizable as electric.



2014 Cadillac ELR



Fiat 500e



Honda EV-STER



Honda Fit

Nissan Leaf

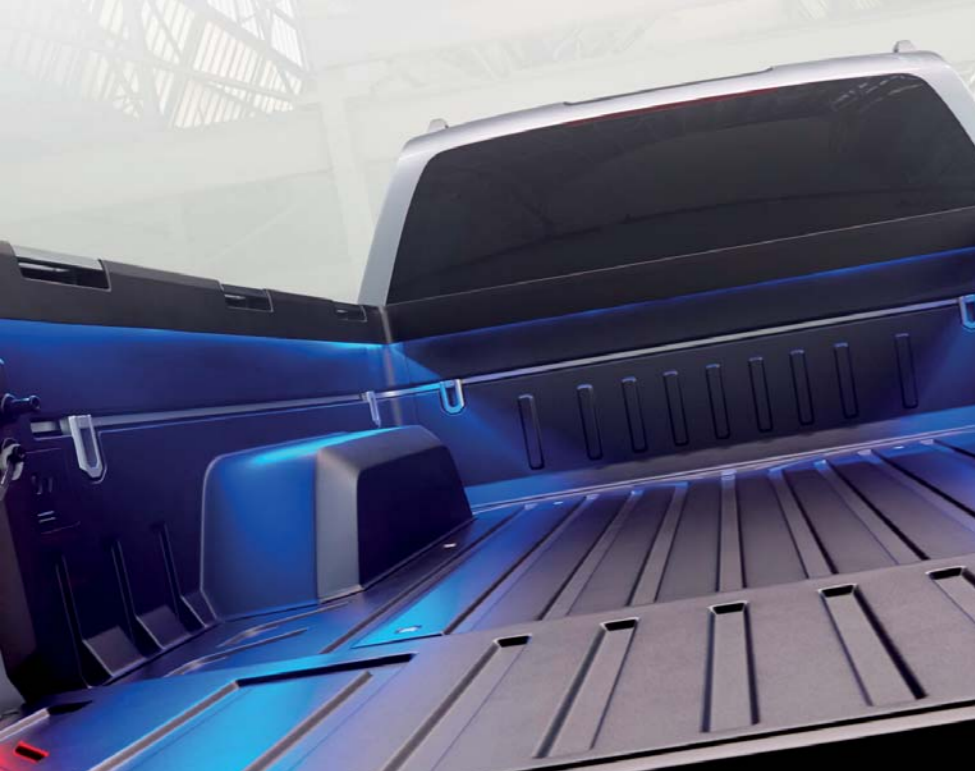
HEAVY DUTY HEADLINER



THE TRUCK THAT WORKS

Ford Atlas Concept

The Ford Atlas Concept is the result of a design and engineering feat fueled by decades of listening to users where they work and play. The Atlas showcases the design, capability, fuel efficiency and smart technologies that will define future pickup trucks.



Truck-specific features were integrated to boost capability, durability and productivity



The Grille features active aerodynamic elements that reduce wind resistance



Dual-Purpose Tailgate Step and Cargo Cradle

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CONTRIBUTORS



Gilberto Cavada

Gilberto Cavada has been designing for nearly 15 years and has been involved in all types of industries; both commercial and consumer.

He leads the Industrial Design team for PDT.

'My passion is my family; my strengths are delivering what I promised and what was desired; my ambition is to constantly reinvent myself without losing the lessons learned; and my weakness is fast cars.'



Tom O'Connor

Tom O'Connor is a design consultant with experience in categories ranging from beauty and hair care to industrial power tools.

'Consulting for so many new and diverse clients, markets and industries is the best part of being a member of the design team at PDT. I thrive in all areas of the design process from the fuzzy front end to finding creative, cost effective manufacturing solutions. I always stay up to speed with the latest and greatest technology and trends and I dig for inspiration anywhere I can find it.'

Outside of design, Tom's passions range from hockey, cars, electronic music, the outdoors and anything on two wheels.