

Phasing out fossil fuels

Both the Swedish and the Norwegian governments want to put final dates for selling new fossil fuel vehicles. The Norwegian majority party has proposed 2015, and Sweden's enterprise minister Maud Olofsson speaks of 2020. If this is realistic in relation to alternative is another matter



Lightweight pressing

Metal press producer AP&T has developed a complete hot forming press line with integrated hardening during the process. The line comprises both heating up to 900° C and cooling for hardening.

This is well suited for manufacturing light weight automotive components from ultra high strength steels. Typical applications are crash protection beams and supporting structures.

The system is co-developed with Baosteel, China's largest steel supplier. Customer Fiat has built a new plant for these new press lines.



Record year for Ferrari

Super sports car maker Ferrari turned over 1.92 billion € in 2008, up 15.2 per cent on 2007. Sales increased by 2 per cent to 6,587 cars delivered. This year's sales are lower, although luxury cars don't seem to be affected as much as volume cars by the present crisis.

Suppliers have solutions

At the recent Paris, Detroit, Tokyo and Geneva auto shows, car makers have been showing more new green, lean, clean and safe technology than ever before to meet a new and growing customer as well as legal demand.

Most of these solutions have been developed by suppliers, who have had them ready for



Lars Holmqvist, head of the European supplier organisation Clepa.

Safer small cars

New small cars offer better crash protection than older big ones, according to findings by the Swedish insurance company Folksam. This company keeps a big and growing data bank over

years without any significant demand from vehicle makers, says Lars Holmqvist, head of the European supplier organisation Clepa.

He says major suppliers have developed fuel injection systems which can reduce consumption by 10-13 per cent, electronic valve monitoring for a further 5-7 per cent, and stop-and-go systems which cut consumption by 3-4 per cent - totalling 18-24 per cent reduction for costs of 5-10,000 SEK per vehicle.

Obviously, both customer demand and legislation is needed to bring these systems on the market. This happens now, says Holmqvist.

Low friction surface

A new nano-composite coating from innovation company Applied Nano Surfaces in university town Uppsala is claimed to reduce friction between moving surfaces by half. Scania and

real life accidents with various cars, which gives facts about what protection cars give on the road rather than in tests and simulations.

Volvo Powertrain will now test the new coating on piston pins and cylinder linings.

The vital component of the new coating is wolfram disulphide.

Sea mussels improve paint

Proteins from sea mussels can be used for surface treatment of polymer materials, according to research by specialist company Biopolymer Products in the Gothenburg area. What is used is a glue substance, created in the mussel's foot.

R&D manager Camilla Fant says one third of cultivated

mussels can't be used for food for humans, and is destroyed or used in agriculture. The special glue substance would allow plastic materials and components to be painted in one single process, rather than one each.

This, in turn, would facilitate using more of light composite materials.



Car maker news



Mercedes-Benz

● Rivals **BMW** and **Mercedes-Benz** will co-operate in developing hybrid systems to save costs, but products for the market will differ. But they are also talking about sharing engine technology. Mercedes may for example get access to BMW's V12 knowhow - if the market is still interested.

● **Daimler** now has two Arabian oil emirates as its biggest owners. Abu Dhabi recently acquired 9.1 per cent of Daimler shares for a reported 2 billion Euro, which indicates a total market value of 22 billion. Kuwait already has 6.9 per cent, which means that oil emirates now have 16 per cent of Daimler.

Celebrating its legendary 300 SL gullwing coupe from 1954, Mercedes with its Formula 1 partner McLaren has developed a new super sports car, called SLR Stirling Moss in memory of this great driver's many victories. The new car also features gullwing doors, and is powered by a 650 hp compressor-fed V8 for a top speed of 350 km/h.



● **Fiat** rides the present European small car wave with the peppy new 500 as its spearhead. For its design, Fiat made potential customers surveys - and listened to them. A lesson to be learnt by many competitors. Fiat also has a successful diesel programme for both Fiat and revived premium sister brands Alfa Romeo and Lancia. The compact Alfa Mito is another success.



● One of few car makers to expect higher sales this year is prospering **Mini** with close to 240,000 cars sold in 2008 and hopes for more this year, stimulated by more model versions.



● The **VW group** delivered 6.23 million new vehicles in 2008, up 0.6 per cent on 6.19 million in 2007. By brands, VW delivered 3.67, Audi 1.00, Skoda 0.67, VW Commercial Vehicles 0.50, and Seat 0.49 million. The luxury brands Bentley, Lamborghini and Bugatti delivered 10,108 vehicles, down 19 per cent. But December group sales dropped, and continue to do so this year.