7 Hot Cars At The LA Auto Show

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The Los Angeles Auto Show opens to the public Friday. Here are some of the most talked-about vehicles that will be making their world debuts at the event:

— TOYOTA RAV4: The fourth-generation of Toyota's RAV4, which practically invented the crossover segment when it first went on sale nearly 20 years ago. The latest RAV4 has sharper, more aggressive styling, better fuel economy (up to 31 mpg on the highway), a new six-speed transmission and other features to help it compete against its archrival, the Honda CR-V. The V6 engine option, side-hinged liftgate and optional third-row seat will no longer be offered.

— HONDA CIVIC: Honda will unveil improvements to the Civic compact car, revamped just 19 months after the company introduced a new version. Honda did a lightning-quick revision of the popular car after realizing that compacts from other automakers had caught and passed the top-selling Civic. The 2012 Civic was panned by critics as a step backward from its predecessor. Honda is expected to address criticism that the 2012 model was noisy, cheap-looking and didn't handle or perform as well as older Civics. The unveiling will take place Thursday morning.

— FIAT 500e: The Fiat 500 mini-car is bulking up and going electric. The Italian automaker is showing two new versions of the 500 at the show: An all-electric model that Fiat says will go 80 miles when fully charged and a longer, four-door model that seats five and offers twice the room of the tiny 500. The 500e will go on sale in California in the second quarter of 2013, while the elongated 500 will hit dealerships all over the country in the middle of next year.

— BMW i3: The battery-powered concept car, which swaps the traditional steel body for lighter carbon fiber, gives some clues about where BMW is going with its first electric car. BMW says the concept car can go 80 to 100 miles on a battery charge. It has a 170 horsepower electric motor and is rear-wheel drive. Battery cells are under the floor, lowering the car's center of gravity for better handling. The cell around the passengers is made of carbon fiber reinforced plastic. No word on when the car will come to showrooms.

— ACURA RLX: It's a new version of the venerable Acura big car, the RL. The 2014 RLX will have an all-wheel steering system, a new communications setup and LED headlamps. The Honda luxury brand says it will deliver a new level of performance, sophistication and comfort.

— CHEVROLET SPARK EV: An all-electric mini-car that will go on sale in California, Oregon, Canada and South Korea next summer. Other markets are expected to follow. General Motors won't release many details, but says the Spark EV will cost less than $25,000 with a federal tax credit and will go at least as far on a charge as rivals like the Nissan Leaf and Ford Focus EV, which can go more than 70 miles.

— FORD TRANSIT CONNECT WAGON: After a six-year hiatus, Ford gets back into the minivan business with the Transit Connect Wagon. It seats up to seven, has dual sliding doors and will be instantly recognizable thanks to its short size and high roofline. It will get 30-plus miles to the gallon and start around $20,000. The Transit Connect Wagon goes on sale in the fall.

— OTHERS: Jaguar XKR-S (details released at 2:30 p.m. EST Wednesday); Porsche Cayman (details at 3:05 p.m. EST Wednesday).

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