Bikes Share Space With Cars At Auto Show

David Runk, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Transportation of the two-wheeled variety is sharing the floor at the Detroit auto show with the latest cars, trucks and concept vehicles, a nod to the potential marketing boost that bikes may offer for automakers.

Some, such as those at Subaru's display, are shown as accessories on vehicles including the Outback wagon that are aimed at outdoor enthusiasts. An electric-powered bicycle at Smart's display is sold by the mincar maker in Europe.

Bikes weren't the focus of presentations during this week's media previews, but they're often used in marketing cars.

"Consumers that may be not that active or may not even have bicycles themselves are going to associate that with an active lifestyle, an outdoor lifestyle, a healthy lifestyle," said Jeremy Anwyl, vice chairman of the Edmunds.com auto website.

Other prominent bike displays in Detroit this year include the Prius X Parlee concept bicycle among Toyota's vehicles. And at Hyundai's spot on the show floor, a bike is shown perched out the rear and rooftop of a Veloster coupe.

In 2000, an electric-powered bicycle from Ford Motor Co. under the Th!nk brand name got attention at the show during the company's launch of a line of electric vehicles. The company in 2002 halted production of the bikes.

At this year's show, the Smart-brand bike that's on display may be used as a traditional bike, but it also includes a rear-wheel drive motor that can assist the rider at speeds up to 15 mph. It's sold in Europe, where commuting by bike is more common.

The Prius-branded concept bike, which was developed in 2011, is a traditional bike designed in cooperation with Parlee Cycles. In addition to a lightweight carbon-fiber frame, it includes electronic shifters and a smartphone dock.

Kia had a bike at its display during media days. In addition to the Outback with two bikes on a rooftop rack, Subaru gave a nod to outdoor enthusiasts with rooftop racks holding skis and snowboards on some other vehicles.

People's associations with bicycles are generally positive, Anwyl said, even if a vehicle doesn't have room to easily stow a bike.

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