2012 North American International Auto Show - Scion Press Conference

January 09, 2012

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Jack Hollis, Vice President of Scion

Thank you so much for joining us today. It is great to be back here with you in Detroit…truly one of my favorite auto shows. I love this show because so many great cars are revealed here.

You've got to give it up to the Lexus LF-LC Concept car…that sure looks like it has the potential to bring some excitement back to the industry…and after all, isn't that we all want? Call me biased, but I think that you're going to find the most excitement right here at the Scion booth.

I'm not sure if you're aware, but we've been incredibly busy at Scion recently…the good kind of busy. Just last month, the 2012 Scion iQ went on sale on the west coast, marking the beginning of its wave launch…expanding the Scion brand from three models to four.

The iQ ushers in a "New Urbanism" for a progressive buyer whose transportation desires are different. It's a new…premium…micro-subcompact …for new urbanites who want inventive transportation without sacrifice. And while it is small…it has a HUGE, fun-to-drive spirit. It also manages to get the BEST combined MPG of any non-hybrid…it even does it using 87-octane fuel.

One of Scion's main goals as a laboratory for Toyota, is to attract new buyers to the Toyota family. I'm pleased to report that 72% of the iQ buyers are brand new to the Toyota family, have never owned a Toyota, Lexus or a Scion before…which is slightly higher than the rest of the Scion lineup.

The iQ will continue its wave launch later this month, showing up in dealerships throughout the South and the Southeast. The iQ will complete its launch when it reaches the East Coast and Midwest dealerships in March.

As excited as we are to launch the iQ, it can't compare to how excited the sports car enthusiasts are about our next car…our fifth car…the 2013 Scion FR-S.

On November 30th, Scion invited a group of over 500 Scion owners, automotive media, Scion dealers and driving enthusiasts, to be a part of the global reveal of the FR-S.

At this event, we had an amazing display of Toyota performance cars…the Toyota 2000GT, the Sports 800, Supra Turbo, MR2, Corolla GT-S and of course the Lexus LFA. You might be asking why did Scion do that?

We did it because we felt that before we could talk about what the FR-S is all about…it's essential to know where the FR-S comes FROM.

These cars play a significant role in Toyota's lengthy history of performance and racing heritage…each containing Toyota's high octane DNA that can only be obtained through years of engineering…innovation…experience…and of course…racing.

You may also be wondering… Why is this car a Scion? That's also an easy one. The FR-S… with its style, performance, authenticity, originality… fits perfectly with what Scion is all about! Passion for your car!

The definition of the word Scion…as you may already know…means to be a descendant of…or an heir to. Well…the FR-S is an excellent example of that definition. The heritage and DNA of these performance cars trickles down into every ounce of the FR-S…just one of the benefits of being from such a great family.

The FR-S gets its core inspiration from three Toyota models…the 2000GT for its exterior styling, making it extremely low to the ground with a long, sleek hood…the Sports 800 because it was the first car to have a front-mounted boxer engine in a rear-wheel drive configuration…and most importantly, the Corolla GT-S, known by its true fans as the AE86 or "hachi-roku," which means 8-6 in Japanese. The AE86 was a moderately priced car that didn't rely on brute horsepower, but instead a remarkable combination of a lightweight design, responsive power and a perfect balance.

It inspired the FR-S so much in fact, that each car wears unique badging on its front fenders, depicting its "86" heritage along with the evolution of its new boxer engine.

From its looks to its performance, it's easy to see that the FR-S is a descendent from Toyota's motorsports and performance heritage.

The FR-S features the world's only flat boxer engine in a front-engine… rear-wheel drive configuration…like the Sports 800. Its 2.0-liter, naturally aspirated four-cylinder engine is the result of a joint development between Toyota and Subaru… combining Subaru's newly developed horizontally opposed engine, and Toyota's D-4S direct and port injection system, results in an impressive 200 horsepower and 151 pound-feet of torque.

We're talking about a 100 horsepower per liter! The great performance will not sacrifice efficiency as we expect the FR-S to achieve the best MPG of any rear-wheel drive sports car?

The flat architecture of the engine allows it to be mounted low and pushed back far enough to classify it as a front mid-ship with a center of gravity lower than many sports cars today, even lower than the Porsche Cayman.

The flat-four mates with either a six-speed manual or a six-speed automatic transmission. The manual offers quick and precise shifts with a short-throw… while the automatic transmission features aggressive up shifts…and sporty rev-matched down shifts…both initiated by steering-wheel-mounted paddle shifters. The power is put to the pavement via a standard Torsen limited-slip differential.

One of the FR-S's best weapons is that it only weighs just over 2,700 pounds. Talk about light! We decided to go with a solid roof instead of a sunroof…we chose a rigid trunk instead of a hatchback…made appropriately sized lightweight 17-inch wheels standard…we even made the hood out of aluminum! As you can see, our engineers are all about keeping the "weight down" and the "structural rigidity up."

And every single angle of this car screams performance…The front bumper is low and aggressive… with fierce…edgy headlights…while the rear features a trapezoidal shape with unique tail lamps and center-positioned back-up lights.

The roof has a gull-wing shape… channeling air-flow smoothly over the car. The FR-S will come in seven colors that complement its amazing style lines, like this striking silver that we call, Argento.

The interior shares the same DNA… designed with both form and function in mind. The seats are mounted extremely low and are comfortable yet assertive. The large center-mounted tachometer is all business, keeping the driver informed of the engine's vitals.

For many, the FR-S is the definition of the perfect daily driver AND weekend warrior. Its 2+2 seating configuration with a fold-flat cargo area is large enough to transport a full set of race tires for a fun day at the track.

The FR-S is a legit sports car…and the drivers in the sports car world have responded.

The days following the global reveal, the buzz on the Internet was huge, with more than 100 million social media impressions in just 48 hours.

It just proves that the true driving enthusiasts are READY for a car that is awesome to drive, a car that is light and nimble, a car that is sleek and sporty, a car that is exciting AND affordable, a car just like this FR-S!

So drivers online are liking what they are seeing…the car makes sense on paper, but how does it all come together when the tires hit the pavement? Is the hype legit? We knew it was, but critics were still skeptical.

Recently, we invited a small group of automotive journalists to get an early taste of the FR-S on the racetrack.

So after an entire day of track time, did the FR-S live up to its hype?

Well, according to Autoguide.com…"ABSOLUTELY…The Scion FR-S is a return to the roots of what makes a sports car a sports car."

Motor Trend said, "Scion doesn't just have a special car on its hands — it's got a potential smash hit that can be enjoyed by many. It is a car that will likely redefine the Scion brand and the entry-level enthusiast car segment as a whole."

It's my pleasure to introduce the gentleman who has given this fantastic sports car to us…Please welcome the chief engineer for the FR-S… Mr. Tetsuya Tada.

Thank you Tada-san for creating the newest addition to the Scion family. It's truly a great sports car that is exciting the Scion enthusiasts as much as it is us.

The FR-S is EXACTLY what the industry has been missing, and EXACTLY what the driving enthusiasts have been asking for. So now that we know the FR-S is the real deal…what is next?

I know the suspense has to be killing you…what the heck is under this cloth? Well as you might know, Scion has been involved in racing from its beginning …from drag racing to road racing and even rally. But I honestly have to say that we probably have the most fun drifting sideways with smoke pouring off of our tires.

We've already started having a blast with the FR-S…take a look at this clip!

Some of you might have seen spy shots of that test car last week when Scion Racing's own Ken Gushi was practicing at Laguna Seca. It's come a long way since then.

Today we are extremely proud to introduce you to the latest member of the Scion family…the Scion Racing/GReddy Performance FR-S built to compete in the 2012 Formula Drift season!

This car looks absolutely phenomenal! It looks fast even when it's parked?

This car has a few more horsepower than stock…a total of 600 to be exact…and over 500 pound-feet of torque.

Now we don't expect that too many owners will take their FR-S to this level of extreme, but we do know that like all Scion vehicles, it will be pretty hard to find one that is left stock.

We're not done yet. As you may know…Scion buyers are the youngest in the entire automotive industry…and these young buyers demand the latest in in-car technology.

Last year we made Bluetooth and HD Radio STANDARD in all of the Scion models…but with the insane speed of technology, techies are already hungry for more features…a desire to be CONNECTED.

I am happy to announce that the 2013 FR-S will not only be raising the bar in driving performance, but it will also take in-car technology to new heights…as it will be the first car to offer Scion's next generation connected infotainment audio system called BeSpoke, powered by Pioneer's Zypr technology.

The new BeSpoke system has some cool features that Scion owners are going to love:

How about being able to locate a friend on the map on your audio screen…send them a tweet to meet up for coffee via voice command, and then have a routing feature guide you to the café. Sounds pretty cool right?

How about checking out your friend's Facebook wall posts or recent tweets? How about having access to hundreds of internet radio stations? There are so many advanced functions in this new system…we can't wait for you to try it out soon!

There's more…To get FR-S's into garages of eager enthusiasts as early as possible, we have come up with an idea that should get the already 30,000 hand-raisers even more pumped up. Scion will launch a special program called, "First 86".

In the spirit of the AE86, Scion will give 86 lucky people the chance to be among the first to own the Scion FR-S. The selected 86 owners will take delivery of their car earlier than the rest, making sure that the die-hard driving enthusiasts get it FIRST! In just a few days on January 12, starting at noon eastern time, anyone who wants the opportunity to own the FR-S before it goes on-sale to the general public has 8 hours and 6 minutes to submit their request at www.ScionFirst86.com. Make sure to submit your request on January 12!

In addition to an early delivery, the First 86 will also get some really cool FR-S related gifts.

Like I said earlier, there are some great cars out here today, but I have yet to find a car that is generating as much buzz as this one. Add in our news about Scion's next generation BeSpoke audio system, our First 86 early buyer promotion…and this ridiculous 600hp drift car and you can see that Scion's Future is Really Strong.

We're going to have some more Scion news to share with you about the FR-S at the New York Auto Show so I look forward to seeing all of you in April. Until then, you can keep up to speed on all things Scion at the brand-new Scion.com website that just launched three days ago…a site that might just be the most advanced in the industry.

I want to invite you all up here to take some photos of the FR-S. I'll be around to answer any questions that you may have.

Thanks again for hanging out with us today.