

## Auto Industry Taking a Huge Hit

Automakers could hardly have it worse. Slumping economies and credit-strapped buyers have ushered in the stormiest era for the industry since the 1970s. U.S. auto sales in October were the worst per capita since World War II, throwing the future of General Motors (GM) and Chrysler in doubt. Carmakers are trying to move away from gasoline power and anticipate shifts in demand. Here are some of the offerings that will join Toyota's (TM) Prius in American dealerships over the next two years.

### CHEVROLET VOLT

General Motors is going all in with its new Volt, an advanced plug-in hybrid that can operate without using any gas on short trips.

Year: 2010

Cost: \$30,000-\$40,000 est.

Fuel Economy: 50-100 mpg est.

The bet: The Volt will leapfrog Japanese technology.

The risk: The vehicle's price has crept into luxury territory. GM's iffy prospects don't help.

The innovation: A 40-mile electric-only range means some commuters will never burn any gas.

### HONDA INSIGHT

Honda is rebooting the Insight brand name. Honda's smaller 1999 Insight hybrid was quickly overshadowed and far outsold by the Toyota Prius.

Year: 2009

Cost: Less than \$20,000

Fuel Economy: 40-45 mpg est.

The bet: A roomier, more powerful Insight will have more appeal.

The risk: Without advanced features, the Insight could get lost in the flurry of new green cars.

The innovation: Honda drove down manufacturing costs to make this hybrid the least expensive on the market.

### JEEP EV

Chrysler unexpectedly revealed a trio of electric vehicles early this fall, vowing to bring at least one to market by 2010. This Jeep EV uses technology similar to the Volt.

Year: 2010

Cost: N/A

Fuel Economy: 50 mpg est.

The bet: Drivers will flock to vehicles similar to gas versions but with advanced hybrid technology.

The risk: Chrysler might not have the cash to weather the current downturn and fund development.

The innovation: Electric motors built into each wheel could allow the vehicle to venture off-road like other Jeeps.

### VOLKSWAGEN JETTA TDI

Europe has been hesitant to embrace hybrid technology, favoring diesel-sipping engines instead. VW now plans to promote its TDI clean-diesel technology in the U.S.

Year: 2008

Cost: Base price, \$21,990

Fuel Economy: 30-41 mpg

The bet: Consumers will be swayed by the reliable, German-made diesel engines.

The risk: Diesel fuel costs more than gasoline and isn't as widely available.

The innovation: Highly efficient, turbo-charged engines turn out peppier performance than most hybrids.