What's coming

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Arriving in showrooms by spring, the new RX crossover vehicle is mildly restyled on the outside but is 6.1 inches longer and a bit taller and wider than its predecessor, so the interior is roomier than before.

Among the new features are headlights that swivel to help drivers see around curves at nighttime.

A 3.3-liter V-6 mated to a new five-speed automatic transmission provides 230 horsepower for the RX 330, up from 220 horses in the predecessor RX 300 with 3liter V-6. Torque in the RX is 242 foot-pounds at 3,600 rpm, up 20 foot-pounds from the previous model.

Lexus also has two special edition models coming out in March. The 2003 IS 300 SportDesign and GS 300 SportDesign incorporate new wheels and other features.

Mazda

Production of Mazda's 2004 RX-8 has begun, and the novel four-door sports car is

due in U.S. showrooms by June.

This is a car for rotary engine fans, as the rearwheel-drive RX-8 has a Renesis rotary engine. Rear suicide doors (doors hinged at the rear instead of the front) and four-person seating are other features of the RX-8.

Two special edition Miatas have been introduced. The 2003 Miata Shinson Version is painted a titanium gray outside and has interior touches such as aluminum trim. The Special Edition Miata has blue paint that matches a blue fabric soft top, with a chrome fuel door outside as an accent. New interior items include aluminum pedals.

In late April, the 2003.5 Mazdaspeed Protege goes on sale. This turbocharged version of the Protege sedan has a unusual appearance, thanks to front and rear skirts, rear wing and special

Among the noteworthy features on the new Maxima is a Skyview roof, with glass panels running lengthwise over the front and rear seats. There's also an Elite Package that has a fixed, full rearcenter console that creates true four-passenger seating. Maximas without this package have five seats.

In summer, the sporty 350Z coupe is joined by a roadster version. The 2004 350Z has a power fabric top with glass rear window.

Also this summer, Nissan returns to the minivan segment with its redesigned and re-engineered Quest. The model has new styling, a futuristic interior, a larger body and is powered by a 235-horsepower, 3.5-liter V-6.

The 2004 Quest has an available Skyview roof that's a series of four panoramic glass roof panels over the second and third rows; with the front sunroof, these rear glass panels help bring light

too. These vehicles will be the last 500 Auroras that roll off the line, in midyear.

WHEELS

Pontiac

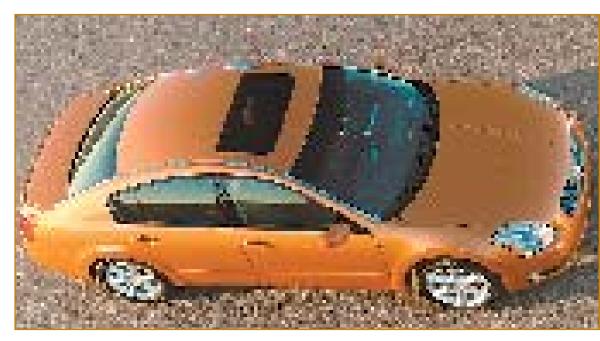
The 2004 Pontiac Grand Prix debuts in March, marking the ninth generation of the sporty sedan.

The car is more sculpted in appearance than the old model, rear doors swing open to a nearly 90-degree angle, and the interior is updated.

A Head-up Display features a unique "stealth" mode, which allows the driver to navigate solely from the HUD with the instrument-cluster lights extinguished. Power is increased.

The base engine in the Grand Prix is a 200-horsepower, 3.8-liter V-6, while the uplevel engine is a 260-horsepower, 3.8-liter, supercharged V-6.

Pontiac's Vibe hatchback adds a Sport Package that adds a customized look with front and rear fascia exten-



The Skyview roof lets the sunlight shine on passengers in the restyled Nissan Maxima.

wheels. Power comes from a 170-horsepower, 2-liter, turbocharged four-cylinder.

Nissan

The busiest automaker these days has to be Nissan. The 2004 Maxima was scheduled to come to dealerships right about now. This sixth-generation Maxima is restyled, and horsepower from the 3.5-liter V-6 tops out at 265. Torque is up, too, to 255 foot-pounds at 4,400 rpm.

throughout the vehicle.

Oldsmobile

This GM car division continues to wind down its operations, and this is the last year for the Aurora.

As a result, Oldsmobile will produce a 2003 Aurora V-8 Collector Edition model that comes with distinct embroidery inside as well as special wheels, color and badging. Owners will receive a

Collector Edition certificate,

sions, side rocker extensions, and two spoilers.

A Vibe Supercharger Kit, due out in the spring, adds up to 7.5 pounds of boost and up to a 35 percent increase in horsepower and torque.

The Aztek gets an appearance package called Rally Edition. It features lowered front suspension, metallic orange paint and chromeplated exhaust tip.

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