



2010 SRX CROSSOVER

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Cadillac's crossover switches from the rear-drive Sigma platform to the front-drive Theta-Epsilon (GMT166) platform next year, although all-wheel drive is likely to be standard. Styling of the production version, which is expected to make its debut at the 2009 Detroit show, will differ little from the concept already seen.

Moving SRX off Sigma onto Theta-Epsilon buys GM a better interior package relative to the vehicle footprint. It shares the new platform with the upcoming Saab 9-4x, and it's bigger than the Chevy Equinox, Pontiac Torrent (GMC Terrain), and Saturn Vue Thetas, so it's directed squarely at Lexus' hugely popular RX midsize crossovers.

The SRX will be loaded with far more features and high technology than any of its platform brethren, though not the hybrid powertrain the Provoq fuel-cell hybrid hinted at. Engine options are 2.8- and 3.6-liter gas V6s. Exports to Europe could get the 1.9-liter turbodiesel used in the BLS.

RIVALS: Lexus RX, Mercedes-Benz ML, BMW X5, Audi Q5, Acura MDX, Infiniti EX

2011 ALPHA FAMILY

Even Mercedes, Audi, and Lexus envy what BMW has done with the 3 Series: Making it an "affordable," iconic sport-luxury model that brings in bags-full of euros in profit. Alpha is GM's small rear-drive vehicle architecture and launches in late 2010 as a smaller-than-CTS Cadillac sedan aimed straight at the 3 Series.

This is where the volume is in the premium segment, both here in the U.S. and in Europe and Asia. This is where the money is made.



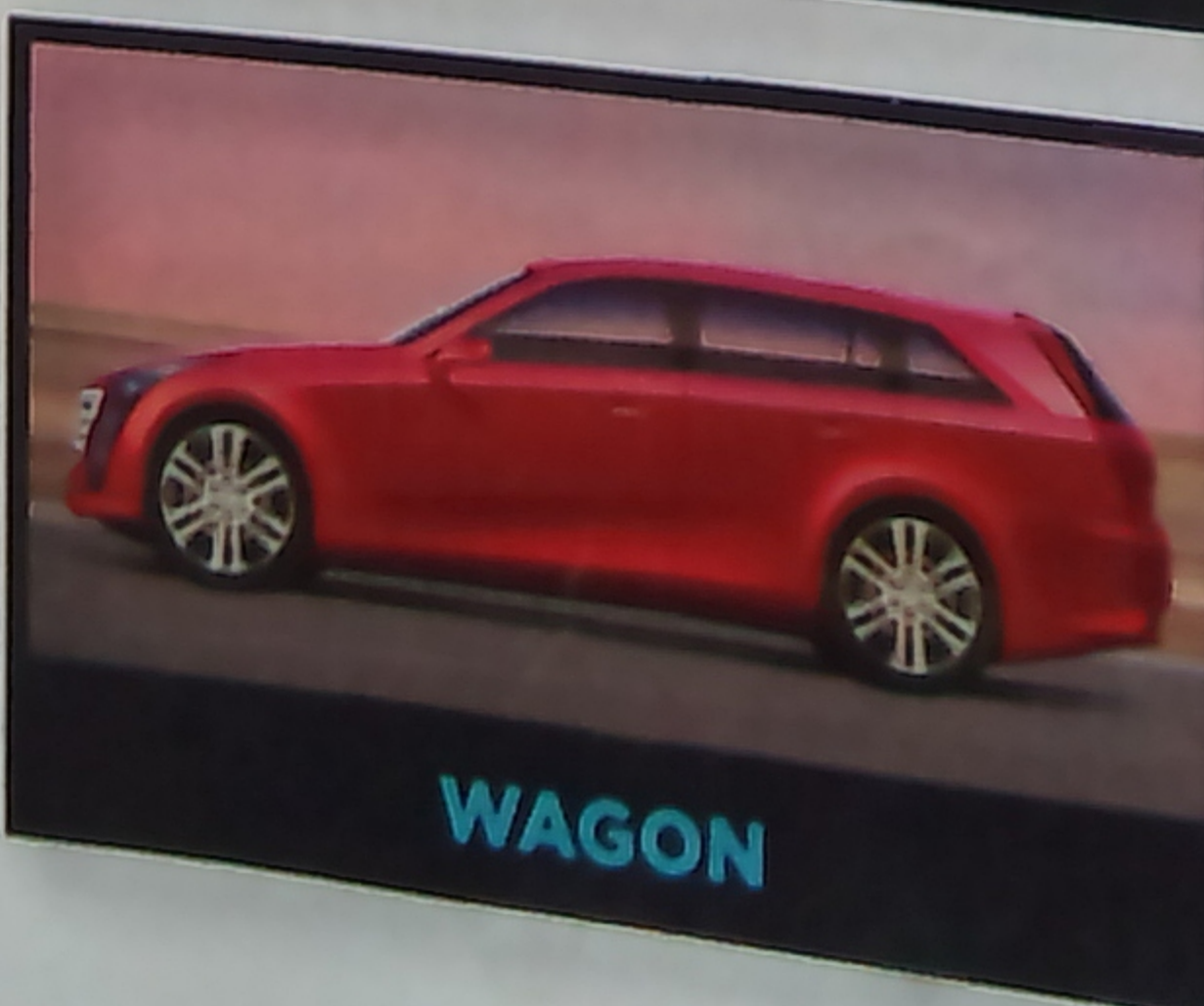
SEDAN



CONVERTIBLE



HATCHBACK COUPE



WAGON

Cadillac simply cannot afford not to do the car. And it cannot afford not to do coupe, convertible, and wagon variants of the car just like Benz and BMW.

A 2012 Alpha convertible is likely to follow within a year. An Alpha coupe is a logical addition, although here's where the picture gets fuzzy. One of our spy photos shows a radical two-door hatchback-style car (similar in concept to the Z3-based BMW M Coupe that bowed in 1998). Cadillac may be anticipating an emerging trend toward luxury C-segment hatchbacks, which seems a gamble, even for the European market, although Mercedes is a player in the segment with the C-Class-based CLC.

We hear Bob Lutz is pushing hard for an Alpha coupe that's more or less a scaled-down version of the CTS. But the CTS Coupe's extreme rake makes it difficult to do a convertible at low cost compared with a more conventional three-box design—and a convertible to rival BMW's 3 Series and Benz's CLK is essential if Alpha is to be a truly global, high-margin vehicle.

Besides, it's clear GM design chief Ed Wellburn doesn't want Alpha to be a CTS mini-me: "You know, if you're doing a smaller-type Cadillac, you'd have to tighten up the forms more," he says, without actually confirming the car's existence. "Because if you're doing a smaller one, you'd want it to be an agile, nimble car, and you certainly wouldn't want to do what some other brands have done, brands that are known for doing handling well and having a heavy body shape. That relationship of the body shape to the wheels is important, and you'd want to keep it lean."