

Japanese take on European luxury models

"I want to see the one everybody's talking about — you know, the one from the TV show," said the woman I live with, tugging me away from the finale of the Chevrolet Hearsthebs.

I was just beginning to get the hang of opening night of the first North American International Auto Show, having figured out that if I did and pulled my chin down, my undershirt wouldn't show over the top of the black tie I tied myself.

"I said, my mind still on the Hearsthebs."

"You know — named after someone on Dynasty?"

"No — Alexis, Joan Collins, you know."

"That's a Lexus."

"That's what I said."

Whatever.

I'M STARTLED to see a people mover car rumble through the roof of the renovated Cobo Hall, and I get the first stirrings of civic pride. It's clear we have the makings of a new international forum here at the first North American Auto Show.

Moving the NAIAS up on the calendar to within hanger range of New Year's Eve makes it the first auto show of the season, and news coverage is heavy. More than a thousand reporters register for the first three days of show previews, another promotional first for Detroit, which usually settles for a hayseed role on the national show circuit.

But are attendance records enough?

Can Detroit take its rightful place among the great world forums of the



auto talk
Dan McCosh

auto industry?

In search of an answer, we pushed over to the booth where Toyota's latest luxury offering was on display.

AS IT TURNS OUT, Lexus is something of a visual letdown, given its rumored price tag approaching \$40,000. Leather seating, advanced electronics and a Mercedes-like grille give it some styling cues that move it comfortably upscale from the struggling masses. But overall it

wouldn't stand out on the street much after being camouflaged in road salt.

Mechanically, it's something else.

It shares the distinction with Nissan's Infiniti of having the first Japanese V-8, about the size of a mid-1980s Chevrolet, but producing twice the power.

Still, neither the Lexus nor the Infiniti, shown to the public for the first time at the NAIAS, seemed all

that intimidating.

ON THE other hand, the first time I sat for a shrimp at the Lexus lunch party, I nearly stuck the toothpick in the hand of a guy from Jaguar's U.S. sales operation. Then there was BMW, Volvo, Saab and Mercedes, also heavily represented.

The Europeans were trying to maintain a doorman's aloofness while nipping the new kids on the luxury-car block. I got a better outline of Toyota's marketing plans from a guy from BMW than I could get from Toyota.

The Europeans were clearly nervous. Sales of high-priced European luxury cars have dropped 15 percent or more this past year despite an overall strong auto market in the United States. Whether this is a short-lived stumble or the end of a

decade-long trend of where yuppies spend their money remains to be seen.

BUT HERE come the Japanese, to Detroit, of all places, and launch new car lines in the \$20,000-\$40,000 range. Then Toyota, at least, starts claiming it will outsell BMW in the first year Lexus goes on sale. A guy from Saab says they are idiots, and so on. The stuff of international car debates, right here in Detroit. It makes a strong showing on the national news.

Then comes reality. Outside, it's freezing, and our bus breaks down on the way back to the party. Anyone in his right mind would be in Los Angeles. But the show makes a strong showing on national news. Maybe we've got something going here.

Next year I'll figure out the tie.

To get capital, avoid these mistakes in business plan

In their book, "Business Plans that Win \$\$\$," Stanley Rich and David Gumpert claim that the business plan "is the ticket of admission to the investment process."

Without providing a plan, furnished in advance, many investor groups won't even grant an interview. And for those that do, only a small percentage receive the requested funds.

Richard Chapple, managing general partner of Palne Webber Ventures, said his company invests in no more than six plans per year. "We read 500 to 750 . . . and those that we read are only a fraction of those that are submitted."

If obtaining investment funds seems difficult, it is. After all, professional investors and lending institutions are inundated with proposals. They also realize that there are many more losers than winners among firms that can return 50 percent or more annually on their origi-

nal investment. Now, in the beginning of time, the goal is to maximize opportunity while minimizing the risk.

Rich and Gumpert stress that every company needs a written business plan to not only "win" backing, but to guide the operation and ensure its viability and growth.

"The business that runs by the seat of its pants often winds up with torn pants."

Before the development of any plan, it is crucial that business owners are aware of the danger signs that most stand out to potential lenders.

"Business plans which devote more space to describing the product than to detailing who will buy the product and how it will be sold make investors nervous that the company is really a playpen for the founders to fiddle with their latest gadgets."

Another turnoff is the business

new address is 30833 Northwestern Highway Suite 118, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48018.

Wade-Trip/Dierman of Rochester has established an office in Gaylord.

Book & Bozin CPA's of Troy and Marvin J. Kolon of Southfield announced the merger of their practices under the name of Book & Bozin CPA's. The firm will operate at the office in Troy.

Bloom Healthcare Consulting has opened an office in West Bloomfield.

marketplace

Oberlin & Co. Advertising and Public Relations Inc. was appointed the public relations agency for Hungry Howie's Pizza and Subs Inc. in Livonia.

Ross Roy Productions was awarded a Gold Medal at the 1988 New York International Film and Television Festival for producing the 1989 Chrysler Motors new product announcement show. It is the fifth year in a row they have won this award.

Credentia Check and Personnel Services Inc. moved its offices to the Northwestern Financial Center. The



focus: small business
Mary DiPaolo

plan that presents sales projections that deviate excessively from industry norms. Investors worry because it suggests "either that entrepreneurs haven't done their homework or they're being unduly optimistic."

Unrealistically high growth projections represent another red flag. "When a person presents a plan and tells me with a straight face that he expects to generate \$200 million in

sales over the next two years, I laugh him right out of my office,"

says one local investment banker.

And last, when a company's basic product or service needs to be altered or specially designed for each customer, investors see high costs and low profits. Although many companies focused on custom or applications engineering achieve great success, they should expect and usually experience resistance among lenders.

Next week, we will discuss the elements that comprise winning business plans for the new or existing enterprise.

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of MarketTrends, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Chamber Perspectives."

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Accidental Discovery May End Obesity

Blocks calorie absorption

SWEDEN—Medical researchers at the University of Kuopio, in Finland, have discovered (accidentally) a new weight-loss formula. The new discovery enables an overweight individual to lose pounds and fatty tissue without dieting or exercise.

Scientists made the discovery while searching for a formula to lower cholesterol. In a controlled study of a test group of people, cholesterol levels remained unchanged but the doctors were astounded to find that every patient who used the formula lost weight. The published report of this study stated, "A highly significant decrease in body weight was seen" in patients who received the formula.

The formula was then tested in Sweden at Sahlgren Hospital, University of Göteborg. Again, all patients lost weight. The amount of weight even though they did not change their eating habits. The report detailing this study, published in the British journal *Nutrition*, stated, "The body weight was significantly reduced even though the patients were specifically asked not to alter their dietary habits." One patient in this study lost more than 50 pounds.

According to one informed source, the active ingredient comes from a 100% natural botanical source and contains no drugs or stimulants. When taken before bedtime, it bonds with the food you eat and "ties up" calories, preventing their absorption.

A substantial portion of the calories ingested therefore pass through the digestive system unabsorbed. The body has to get energy to replace the lost calories, so it starts to burn stored fat. The result is rapid body weight loss. Extensive clinical tests have verified the safety of this formula for long-term use.

The formula is marketed in tablet form in the United States under the trade name Cal-Ban 3000. A firm located in Tampa, Florida, has exclusive North American distribution rights. A review of the customer files of this company revealed the names of hundreds of people who have lost up to 10 pounds the first week and as much as 20, 40 or 60 or more pounds overall with Cal-Ban 3000. This is a golden opportunity for people who are plagued by fat and cellulite that they can't seem to lose by conventional methods.

Cal-Ban 3000 is reasonably priced at \$19.95 for a 2-week supply and \$38.95 for a 4-week supply. Postage and handling is \$3. To assure fastest service, orders are accepted by toll-free phone only. VISA, MasterCard, Amex and C.O.D. orders are accepted. C.O.D. are \$2.00 extra. Orders may be placed by calling Anderson Pharmaceuticals TOLL-FREE 1-800-422-0842. During this special phone order promotion purchasers of a 2-week supply of Cal-Ban 3000 will receive, absolutely free, a beautiful 24" double strand necklace of sparkling Chinese Blue pearls. Anderson Pharmaceuticals is located at 19225 U.S. 41 North, Ft. FL. Call today to begin the pleasant transformation from fat and flab to the slender form you want. If you fail to achieve a major weight loss you may return the empty bottle within 30 days for a 100% refund.

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