

Long-stalled Geneva motor show revs again as Renault, MG, BYD electrics roll onto its smaller stage

February 27 2024, by JAMES BROOKS and JAMEY KEATEN

MG



The New MG cyberster electric is presented during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Cyril Zingaro/Keystone via AP

The century-old Geneva motor show is back in action for the first time in five years, and organizers are desperately trying to rev up its fortunes.

The show skidded off track in 2020—canceled at the last minute because of the coronavirus outbreak—and had been stalled until now.

A handful of automakers, including fabled British brand MG, France's stalwart Renault and Chinese upstart BYD—which has been taking the global market by storm—are hoping to inject some new va-va-voom into the Geneva showroom with an array of enticing [electric vehicles](#).

Organizers say they hope they can be an antidote for hard times for Geneva car lovers.

But for Mark Tisshaw, editor of Autocar magazine, the show is a shadow of its former self.

"There are still some really exciting cars here. But, you know, let's be honest, you can count them on one hand," he said. "It's just disappointing more than anything—because Geneva was the greatest car show. But it frankly isn't anymore."

Here's a look at some of brands and vehicles hoping to stir excitement.

The MG cyberster

MG has rolled out its electric Cyberster: Think classic roadster with a high-tech upgrade. The British automaker, known for two-seat convertibles with a high coolness quotient, serves this vehicle up with scissor doors and rear haunches that convey power.

Its dual-motor version and all-wheel drive configuration allows it to go from 0 to 100 kilometers per hour (0-62 mph) in 3.2 seconds—making it

the fastest-accelerating and most powerful production car yet at MG.



The New BYD Seal U electric car is presented during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Cyril Zingaro/Keystone via AP

Renault 5 e-tech

This flashy, sleekly designed electric, which is making its debut in Geneva, is an retro-inspired reimagining of the popular hatchback that—long since retired—had its premiere over a half-century ago, in 1972.

Any middle-aged French person knows the nostalgia of the once-ubiquitous R5, whose short-lived American cousin was called "Le Car" before Renault quit the U.S. market decades ago.

"The 5 was a car of the fuel generation, coming in tough times—at the time, it was a crisis of ... petrol prices, and the idea was 5 was the answer. It has been the car of a whole generation," said Christian Stein, a Renault vice president for customer experience. "Our ambition is very simple, to make a similar step with this brand-new car."

The 5 EV will sell with two battery options, including one with a capacity of 52 kWh, delivering a range of up to 400 kilometers (250 miles). Renault will roll it out first in the French and German markets this year, and in Britain next year.

On Monday, Renault's Scenic took home "Car of the Year" honors in a vote by a panel of automotive journalists. Other finalists were the BMW 5-series, Volvo EX30, Kia EV9, Peugeot E-3008/3088, Toyota C-HR, and the BYD Seal—the first time the Chinese automaker made the final cut.



Renault group's general director Luca De Meo presents the New Renault R5 E-Tech electric model car, during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Martial Trezzini/Keystone via AP



The logo IM for Intelligent Mobility, this is the name of the new premium brand from MG Motor, is pictured during the International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Martial Trezzini/Keystone via AP



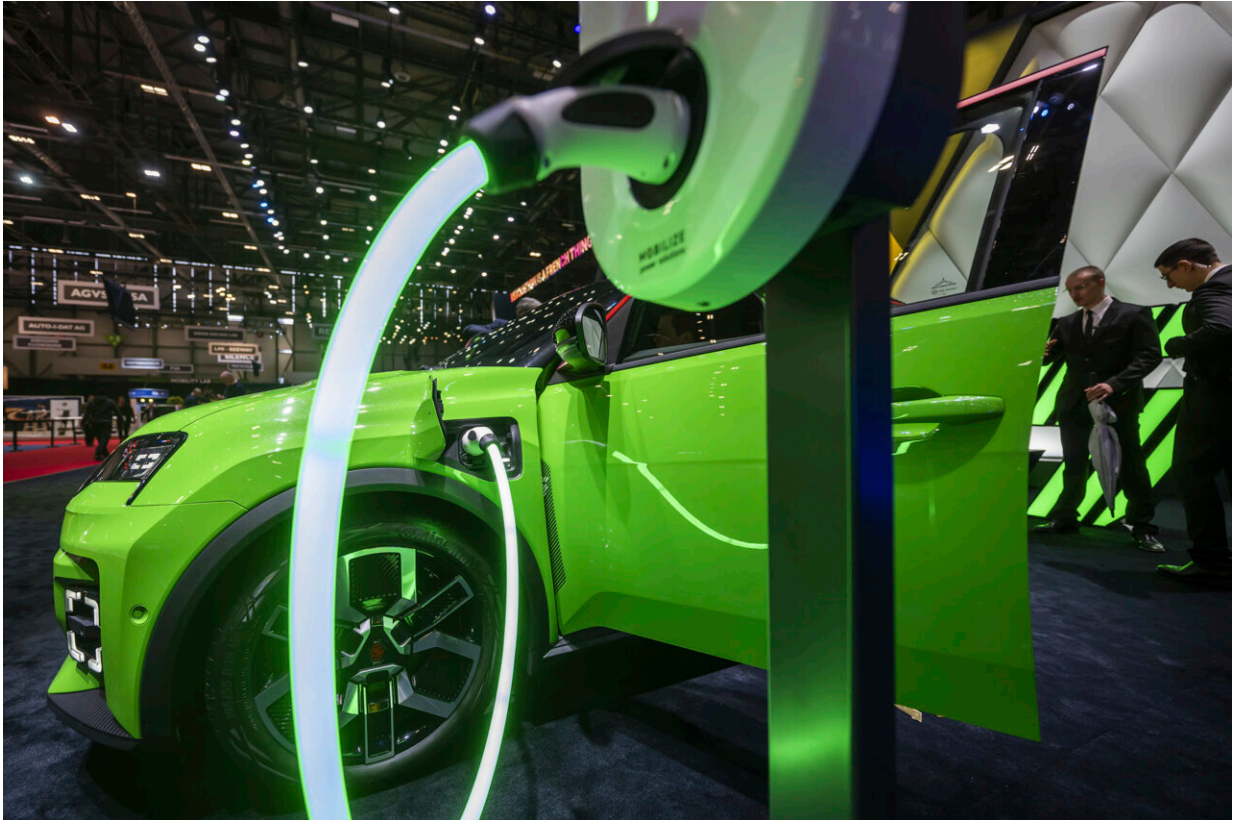
The New MG IM L6 electric car is presented, during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Martial Trezzini/Keystone via AP



The New BYD Seal U DM-i hybrid electric car is presented during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Cyril Zingaro/Keystone via AP



Michael Shu, Managing Director, BYD Europe, speaks during the presentation of the new BYD Seal U DM-i hybrid electric car during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Cyril Zingaro/Keystone via AP



The new Renault R5 E-Tech electric car is presented, during the press day at the 91th Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024. The Motor Show will open to the public from Feb. 27 to March 3. Credit: Martial Trezzini/Keystone via AP

BYD's big suvs

China's BYD, which dethroned Texas-based Tesla as the top seller of electric cars late last year, is showcasing a range of EVs headed to European markets—including its Seal U electric SUV.

The automaker is also showcasing the U8 hybrid SUV from its luxury brand Yangwang.

BYD is the brand on carmakers' lips these days, automotive analysts say, and it has been omnipresent at auto shows. They say European carmakers—many of which are sitting out the Geneva show—fear the competition from BYD vehicles that have improved looks and handling, and a lower price tag.

Geneva losing its luster

Only about five major automakers are attending the show this year, and organizers say a total of 15 world and European premieres are taking place—a fraction of the 140 five years ago. Top luxury brands Ferrari, Lamborghini, Aston Martin and Porsche aren't on hand.

Geneva show organizers hosted a show in Qatar in the fall, where big-name brands sought buyers and attention in oil-rich Persian Gulf states. The return home—the show runs Tuesday to Sunday—comes a century after the first Geneva International Motor Show, and after more than 600,000 visitors turned out in 2019.

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