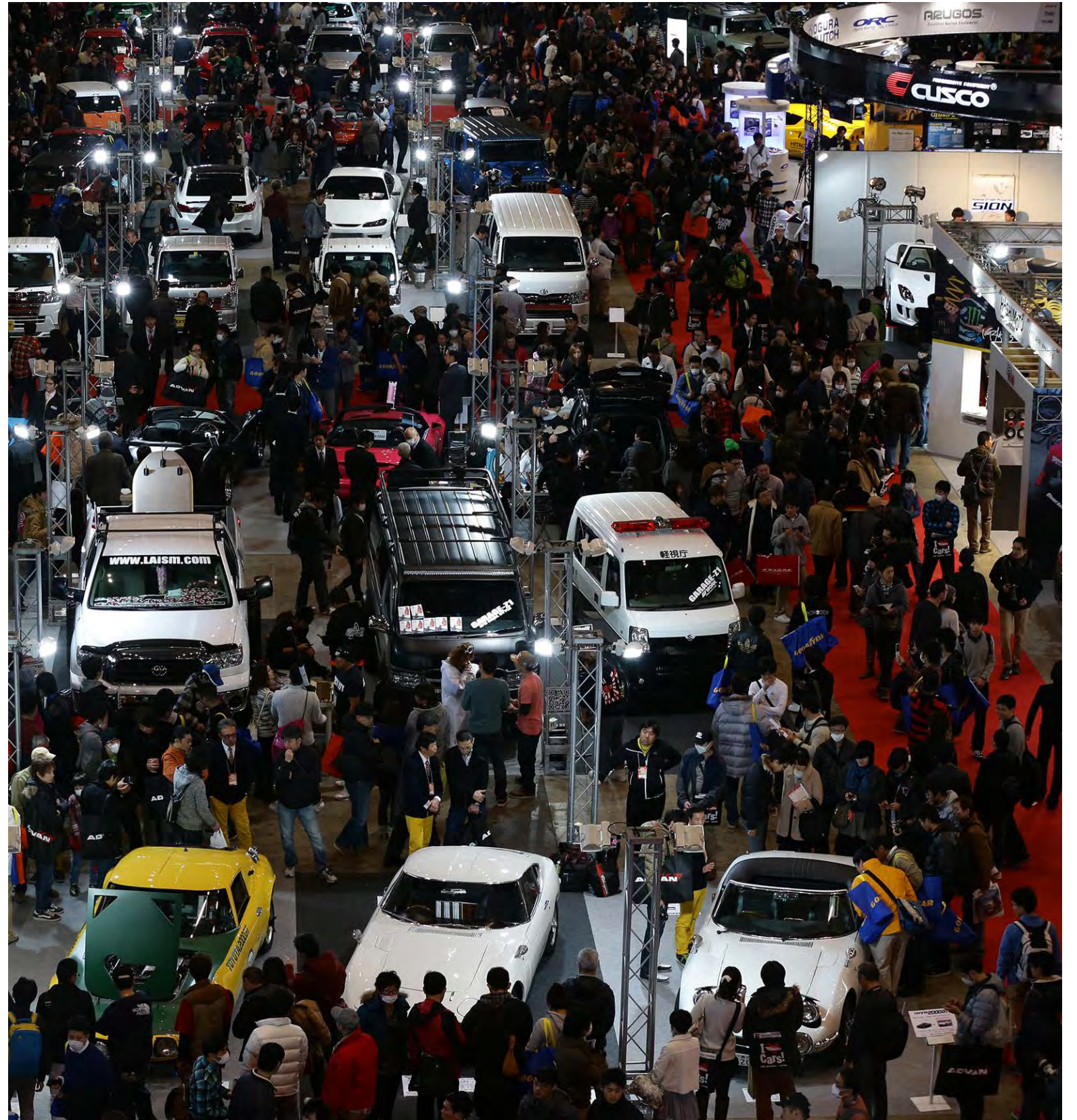


Tokyo Auto Salon 2015 with Napac opens

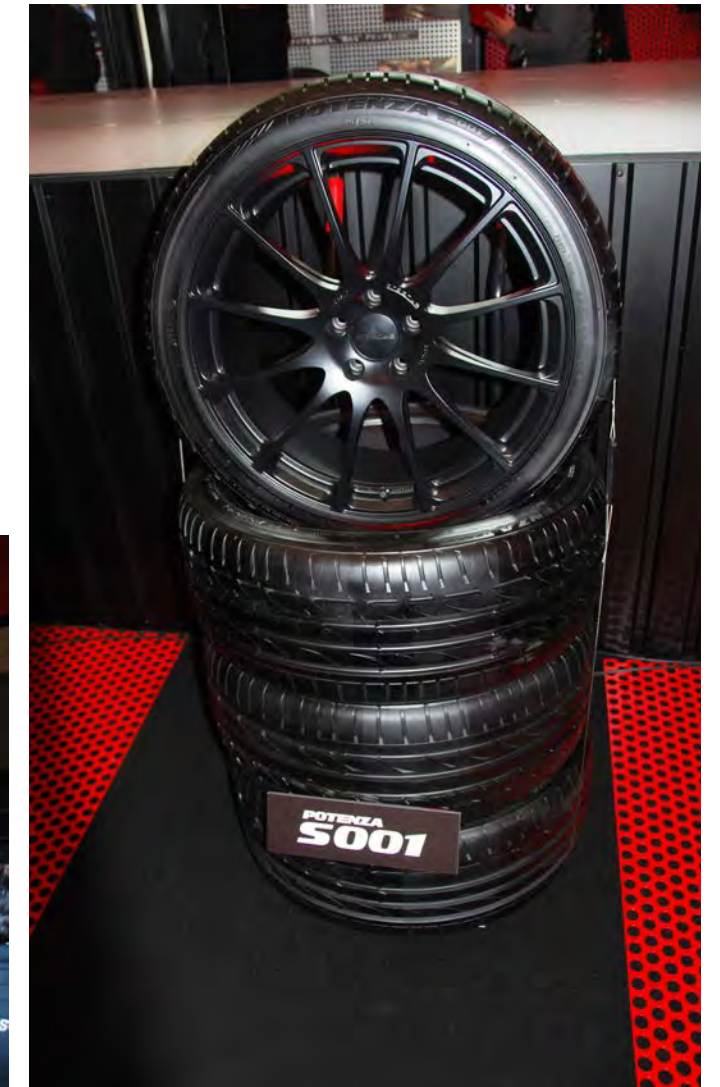
A record 309,646 visitors come

Presentations include 4,163 booths, 104% in comparison with last year



Bridgestone

Bridgestone presented a booth whose theme centered on the global premier brand, "Potenza," which supports "the joy of driving" from the ground up. The company has realized the fastest street radial in the history of "Potenza." It will also, in February 2015, put on the market "Potenza RE-71R," a new product so called to show its link with, and the maker's passion for the able "RE71," which is still sought after by many users. The firm's booth had "Potenza History Section," centering on this "RE-71R," to show Potenza's predecessors and its ample documentation as "Potenza" has been developed with driving on circuits as the yardstick. It even exhibited the vehicles of "Autobacs Racing Team Aguri," in the Super GT 500 class, equipped with "Racing Potenza." This way, the firm was creating the visual presentation of "Potenza" worldview, which is to support "the sublime joy of driving." On the specially set up stage, on the other hand, there were held talk shows with many guests like racing drivers that had participated in "Super GT," "Gazoo Racing 86/BRZ Race," and "24 Hours Nurburgring," and legendary [racing] drivers that had a part in the development of Potenza predecessors. The shows on the special stage were also broadcast live via "Ustream," a video hosting service.



Dunlop Tyres

Dunlop's booth, unlike a motor show, exhibited tires that are really "driven," developed by utilizing the world's top class technology belonging to Dunlop.

Its concept was "Dunlop Ultimate Station," and exhibited the company's high performance tires using the cutting edge technology, such as "SP SPORT Maxx" series, its flagship tire, and "DIREZZA ZII Star Spec," a high grip sport tire, and alongside, the company hosted some events in which visitors could experience the joy of driving themselves.

Inside the booth there were exhibited Subaru WRX STI Type-S fitted with "DIREZZA ZII Star Spec," and BMW 5 Series fitted with "SP Sport Maxx 050 Neo," a run flat tire manufactured by the firm's new manufacturing method of the next generation, "NEO-T01." They surely caught the visitors' attention.



FALKEN

This was the first time Sumitomo Rubber Industries presented a booth of the FALKEN brand since 2008, and the first time, too, the FALKEN brand had its own booth since 2005, which aroused a lot of interest. The structure of the booth was unlike that in the SEMA Show, when the FALKEN color, blue, came to the fore, but was rather simple with white as the motif, but its long absence had made the visitors fonder and more curious.

Inside the booth there was exhibited "Porsche 911 GT3R," belonging to the FALKEN Motorsports Team, which has been gloriously active in Europe, for example, coming fourth in the overall results in "24 Hours Nurburgring" 2014, a racing event sometimes said to be the toughest car race in the world. This was its debut in Japan.

The concept of the booth being "From RACETRACK to ROAD," the firm exhibited "AZENIS FK453," its flagship tire, "AZENIS RT615K," a high grip sport tire, "ZIEX ZE914," a tire marked for its sportiness and comfortableness placed on the market this year, and so on: these were the latest tire product lineup, which has been developed using the technology built up through motorsports activities FALKEN Tire actively participates in globally.

We have long been keeping an eye on the signs of FALKEN Premium Brand's frontal assault on the Japanese market, and could this be it? We just had to wonder. They certainly keep us on our toes.



Yokohama

Yokohama Rubber's booth had the theme of the high performance abilities of "ADVAN," its global flagship brand, and was aimed to make the "ADVAN" brand permeate even more into the community of users that like to dress up their vehicles, and to make the brand appeal to the younger generation. At the same time it also exhibited Yokohama's alloy wheels, which are popular among users that like to dress up their cars. It was befitting the custom-made car-parts shop of long standing, and greatly engaged the interest of the visitors.

The tire booth showed "ADVAN Sport V105," a tire for high power, premium cars, which the world's top high performance vehicles are equipped with when they come out of the factory, "ADVAN NEOVA AD08R," a street sport tire, "ADVAN dB," the firm's best comfortable tire, and other key products of the "ADVAN" brand. Also, it exhibited a large number of demonstrator vehicles, including domestic and imported cars, to suggest the ways of dressing up cars, in which "ADVAN" can add more attraction to cars.

On top of this, there was a talk show, in which Ukyo Katayama, and Masahiko Kondo, directors of racing teams that use the ADVAN racing tires to participate in Super GT, and Manabu Orido, and Nobuteru Taniguchi, popular racing car drivers, appeared to discuss the high performance abilities of "ADVAN," the mainstay of the winners in top car races in Japan. The wheel booth showed "Racing Titanium Blue" of "ADVAN Racing GT Premium Version," which is the "ADVAN Racing" brand's flagship model, as its new color. As for the "AVS" brand, "AVS Model F50," which made its debut in 2014, is now available also in another size: 19 inches. The new model of the "ADVAN Racing" series was also presented there.

To add to this, the company gave a press conference, on the 9th of January, with Mr. Masaki Noro, executive officer, manager of the tire and consumer products development division of the firm, and president and representative director of Yokohama Motorsports International, who came on stage, to talk about the development of "ADVAN," the company's global flagship brand, and the presentation of "ADVAN A08B" in a wider variety of sizes.



Toyo Tires

The concept of its booth is “Japan’s advanced Technology” and the booth with a futuristic image showed the company’s key products, and a car dressed up with its concept tires. Also on the stage specially set up inside the booth, there were skillful dance performance, and shows using the latest imaging technique with a lot of “Japanese taste,” with nuances created by music and lighting, to direct the visitors’ attention to the state of the art product and technology power of Toyo Tires. Tires and vehicles presented there and image themes were as follows:

Tires	Cars	Theme
TRANPATH Lu II	TOYOTA ALPHARD	up graded highest elegance
TRANPATH LuK	DAIHATSU TANTO	customized refind pomp
PROXES T1 Sport SUV	Mercedes-Benz GLA	Luxurious and Gorgeous
PROXES CONCEPT	TOYOTA 86	Well sharpened runnability
TOYO H2O CONCEPT	NISSAN CARAVAN NNV350	Powerful and Wilde



Goodyear Japan

Goodyear Japan's booth this year had the theme of "Hybrid Showtime," and was designed to express "the multifaceted-ness (hybridity)" of the company's brand and products.

Its presentation included the two poles of automobiles, an "eco-friendly" car, and a "motorsports (Nascar)" vehicle, and besides, on the stage were dancers that were able to perform in two kinds of dance, and voice actors who were able to use two different voices. The direction of the stage performance was geared toward presenting the "hybrid" worldview, which was to simultaneously realize coolness and familiarity.

Koji Ota, president and representative director of the company, appeared on stage to coincide with the opening of the Auto Salon, and presented the company's new summer tire products, which now employ the hybrid technology of the fourth generation (G4).



Kenda

This is the second consecutive year in which Kenda had its own booth in Tokyo Auto Salon. Unlike the last time, its place for exhibition was in the hall, which also served as the main venue of the event. Moreover, the company set up its booth near the entrance, catching many visitors' eye.

Last year, the company showed many kinds of tire (those for passenger cars, for bicycles, for motorcycles, and so on) that it had released, but this year, it concentrated its presentation on exhibiting passenger car tires, showing demo cars that were actively used in drifting competitions, and customized light vehicles, in an effort to make its products appeal to the Japanese market.

Moreover, on the 9th of January, the opening day for the Auto Salon, the company held a meeting to present its new products for the Japanese market, and hosted a reception in a nearby hotel, inviting the members of the press, tire dealers in Japan, and those whom it thought it might concern. The reception was attended by Chairman Ying-Ming Yang of the firm, who passionately talked about how positively it was committed to doing business in the Japanese market.



Nankang

Nankang was presented in the booth of “Autoway,” a company that deals in imported tires, alongside other imported tire makers, sharing the booth with them.

Nankang, a company familiar to the Japanese market, had drawn many visitors to the booth. The exhibited vehicle was one of those light vehicles, which have the largest share in the Japanese market these years, and it was customized and equipped with “NS-2R,” its flagship product. It also exhibited “NS-20,” another of its flagship products, “Eco-2+,” certified, in April last year, by Tuv Sud, a trusted third party organization for tests and certification based in Germany, and, moreover, “Winter Activa ESSN-1,” a stud-less tire developed for the Japanese market.

Fn. Tuv Sud is an organization that certifies not only tires, but also medical products and industrial products, in various fields. It has 800 bases throughout the world, with 19,000 staffers working for it. As for “Eco-2+,” which Nankang has been certified for, it is a fuel-efficient tire, and this certification allows the firm to put a Tuv Sud label on it, showing to the world how reliable this tire is. Nankang was the first among Taiwanese tire makers to have been certified by it.



Conclusion

Tokyo Auto Salon this year was neither glaring nor flamboyant, but proved to us how popular customized cars were. The number of visitors also hit a record high, and so did that of presentation booths. After the Mortgage Crisis following the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers in 2009, the 2010 Tokyo Auto Salon suddenly had a drop in the number of companies presenting themselves there.

We also noticed that the Auto Salon is coming back on the right track of showing customized cars, turning away from presenting more and more popular hybrid demo cars. Although it is going in the diagonally opposite direction from eco awareness, I, for one, root for this festival: "Go for it! Customize cars!"

