Genesis’ Essentia is an electric GT with an awesomely retro-futuristic ‘bubble’ roof

Anyone who grew up on dog-eared copies of *Popular Science* probably assumed we’d be riding around in self-driving cars while viewing the passing scenery through glass or plastic bubble roofs. The self-driving car part is playing out right now, but the glass or plastic bubble part seems to have been left in the recycling bin. Now, here’s the Genesis Essentia, an all-electric performance concept with a transparent hood and a fully retro-futuristic bubble roof.

The Essentia, which made its global debut at the New York International Auto Show Wednesday, is stunning and sexy. And it has all the fanciful hallmarks of a concept befitting the luxury branding: super-lightweight, low-slung, carbon-fiber monocoque body; butterfly doors that are opened with a fingerprint sensor or biometric facial recognition; and a battery-powered motor that Genesis says can sprint to 60 mph in three seconds.

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This is Genesis’ first electric vehicle, but there’s no word on if and when the Essentia will enter production. The concept clearly is Genesis’ effort to match pace with supercars like BMW’s i8 and Mercedes-Benz’s Project One. Last year, the Hyundai-owned automaker unveiled a hydrogen-powered luxury SUV, the GV80.

Genesis vehicles are more rare in the US: only 100 dealers

feature the automaker’s cars. But the luxury brand is well-respected among those in the auto industry. Last year, Genesis sold 20,612 vehicles in the US, up 12 percent from 2016.

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