Infiniti’s first all-electric car will be inspired by this flashy concept

Infiniti showed up to last year’s North American International Auto Show in Detroit with a wild, low-slung, futuristic sedan that looked straight out of a sci-fi movie villain’s garage. The strangest thing about that car, though, was that the far-out concept wasn’t electric. Instead of showcasing the future that parent company Nissan seems so set on, the luxury arm fitted its concept with a combustion engine, which wasn’t *exactly* expected.

That changed at this year’s show, because Infiniti debuted something called the QX Inspiration. The puffy SUV concept is all electric, and is meant to serve as a preview of what’s to come with Infiniti’s first true EV — whenever that arrives.

“Blistering” performance, but with a luxury interior
Infiniti skimped on specifics, so this concept really only informs the broad look and feel of that first EV. We know a “high-capacity battery pack” will sit below the floor of the car in a skateboard-style layout, though Infiniti didn’t say what it considers to qualify as “high-capacity.” That layout will be able to accommodate an all-wheel drive setup with an electric motor on each axle, which Infiniti says will offer “blistering off-the-line acceleration.” (Though that language hints that all-wheel drive won’t be standard.) Future electric cars from Infiniti will also be able to use that dual motor setup to distribute power on demand to each wheel as needed, meaning they should handle well in almost any setting.

As is the case with other EVs, placing the battery and motors beneath the floor gives automakers an opportunity to carve out more room in the cabin. Infiniti says it’s taking advantage of

this by shortening the car’s hood and the rear overhang, adding space to the in-car experience. Right now, in concept form, Infiniti is leaving that space mostly empty, citing — really! — the “Japanese spatial concept of ‘Ma’,” which has to do with the spaces between lines.

The result is a “lounge-like” experience, at least according to Infiniti. The interior is certainly decorated in high style, with marble covering the back of the center console, brown and white leathers adorning the steering wheel and walls, along with “luxurious grey cloth normally used to upholster furniture,” the company explains. Suede rhombuses with gold accents line the floor, naturally.

Of course, this is a concept car, and so it’s not just a husk; Infiniti teases some futuristic technology with the QX Inspiration, too. There’s a display that stretches from pillar to pillar across the dashboard. Another screen sits embedded in the steering wheel. A third screen extends up from the center console, almost like it’s reaching out to connect with the massive dashboard display. Pipe lights stretch around the car, too, and can glow in a number of different colors.



The QX Inspiration also nods to a future that Infiniti (and Nissan) believes will be increasingly autonomous. (Nissan does, after all, offer one of the more well-known advanced driver assistance systems at the moment – ProPilot.) The steering wheel collapses down, and the brake and throttle pedals retract, in case autonomous technology ever allows a driver to kick back and enjoy the view (or the screens). To top it all off, the front seats rotate up to 30 degrees to make it easier to get in and out of the SUV.

Adding this much future tech to a physical concept car can

occasionally be a fraught endeavor, and it sort of backfired on Infiniti on Monday: the prototype that the company brought to Detroit broke down and missed its onstage debut.

The QX Inspiration is the best look yet at how Nissan plans to tackle the luxury EV space

Still, the QX inspiration is a tantalizing look at how Nissan plans to push beyond the Leaf and into the world of luxury EVs. Infiniti hasn't said much about when it will roll out its first EV, how much it will cost, or what kinds of performance or features it will offer. Instead, those are the kinds of things we can expect to learn as the company takes this final rough sketch and shapes it into the eventual production version.

Whenever that does happen, Infiniti's first EV will have plenty of competition. SUVs are selling like hotcakes lately, even as overall car sales cool off. Porsche, Tesla, Mercedes-Benz, Ford, and Audi — to name a few — all have brand new fully electric crossovers or SUVs coming to the market in the next two years. In fact, even Nissan announced a crossover-style electric concept at the same show on Monday.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/14/18182686/infiniti-ev-qx-inspiration-detroit-naias-2019