

Porsche 918 Spyder starts at \$845,000



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And, as an incentive to those who order the supercar, Porsche also is offering the opportunity to buy a limited-edition 911 Turbo S, called the 918 Spyder Edition. It will cost \$161,650 for the coupe and \$173,050 for the convertible.

The destination charge and any potential gas-guzzler fee will be determined later for the 918 Spyder.

First previewed in concept-car guise at the 2010 Geneva motor show, the 918 Spyder recently completed the first phase of a three-year development program that is set to culminate with production at Porsche's traditional Zuffenhausen manufacturing plant in Germany, with the first example earmarked to run down the line on September 18, 2013. The first car arrives in November 2013.

The production version of the 918 Spyder eschews the full open-top treatment of the earlier concept for a targa-style roof featuring removable panels that can be stowed in the front luggage compartment. Other changes evident in official sketches released by Porsche appear to be minor, although with the first production car still two and half years away, further modifications are possible.

Despite the high price tag--topping even that of the Carrera GT--potential customers will need to be quick. With just 918 examples of the new Porsche to be produced over a two-year period, the order book for the plug-in gasoline-electric hybrid is said to be filling faster than originally anticipated.

At the heart of the Porsche is the same driveline previewed by the earlier 918 Spyder concept. It featured a detuned version of the V8 used in the company's RS Spyder race car with a displacement more than 4.0 liters and developing more than 500 hp in combination with two electric motors, one acting on the front axle and the other on the rear axle. They're good for 218 hp to provide an overall output of more than 700 hp.

Drive is via all four wheels, with what Porsche describes as independent control of the propulsion force on both axles, meaning the driver can switch from pure gasoline, a combination of gasoline and electric and pure electric--the latter of which is claimed to provide range in excess of 16 miles. Energy for the electric motors is provided by a liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery that can be charged from a conventional domestic power socket.

Porsche claims its future-range topping model will accelerate from 0 to 62 mph in 3.2 seconds and run to a top speed of 199 mph, or 94 mph in pure electric mode. On the European consumption cycle, it's also said to return a remarkable 78.4 mpg.

Computer simulations also suggest the carbon-fiber-monocoque-based supercar is capable of lapping the revered Nürburgring circuit faster than the Carrera GT in less than 7 minutes, 30 seconds.

Those who place a deposit for the 918 Spyder will be among the first in line for a new limited-production version of the 530-hp, turbocharged 3.8-liter horizontally opposed six-cylinder-powered 911 Turbo S.

Called the 918 Spyder Edition, it is planned to be produced in the same numbers as the supercar, 918 units. Identifying features include acid-green interior and exterior accents similar to those seen on the 918 Spyder concept, as well as a number badge on the glovebox. The 911 Turbo S 918 Spyder Edition can also be ordered in the same color as that chosen for the 918 Spyder.