



Information

World Premiere: Saab 9-X Air Summary

Canopy Top Brings Breath of Fresh Air to Convertible Design

The 9-X Air concept demonstrates what a future convertible from Saab could look like. It features a unique 'Canopy Top' – patent pending - and the close-coupled proportions of a sports car, as well as four-seat accommodation.

In breaking the mould of conventional convertible design, the bodywork of the 9-X Air incorporates prominent rear pillars which curve upwards to mount the flat folding Canopy Top. They also anchor a distinctive, wraparound glasshouse, including a separate, recessed rear screen.

Designer Anthony Lo and his team have achieved this execution while still offering the four season, four seater practicality pioneered by Saab when its first convertible concept was premiered at the Frankfurt Show exactly 25 years ago.

Top down or up, the 9-X Air cuts a distinctive silhouette. With the canopy stowed away and the rear screen up, occupants can enjoy open-top motoring free from buffeting. Top up, the 9-X Air assumes the appearance of a true coupé, with a cohesive design that eschews the looks of a conventional, four-seater convertible.

Designed in parallel with the Saab 9-X BioHybrid concept, the 9-X Air shares its distinctive frontal styling, together with its highly efficient powertrain. The small, 1.4-liter Saab BioPower engine combines a series of steps for more responsible performance: engine rightsizing, turbocharging, the use of biofuels and hybrid technology.



Running on E85 fuel (85% bioethanol/ 15% gasoline), the engine delivers a sporty 200 hp (147 kW), giving zero to 100 kph acceleration in 7.9 seconds and projected CO2 tailpipe emissions of just 107 g/km over the combined cycle. Compared to gasoline, the overall environmental impact on a source-to-wheel basis of using E85 is even more beneficial.

Progressive Design

The clean, sculpted body contours of the 9-X Air give fresh expression to Saab's Scandinavian-inspired design ethos and its aircraft heritage. The purposeful stance, with minimal overhangs front and rear, is complemented by a single, wraparound window graphic, smooth uncluttered body surfaces and 'ice block' lighting themes.

The exterior look is defined by the prominent C-pillars, or buttresses, that provide the rear mounting for the unique Canopy Top - a powered, flat-folding roof developed from a Targa top principle. This innovation in convertible design, which distinguishes between a folding roof and a complete folding soft-top or hood assembly, is subject to a Saab patent application.

The Canopy Top is in fabric, rather than metal, to save weight and provide more efficient packaging. It is fully automatic in operation and folds neatly in three small sections under a rear tonneau cover in the trunk deck. The rear screen between the buttresses retracts automatically into the underside of the raised tonneau cover to allow stowage of the Canopy Top. The screen then moves back into position to provide a complete glass surround for the cabin in open-top mode.

This 'surround glass' feature, together with an active wind deflector on top of the windshield header rail, provides enhanced occupant comfort. It minimizes buffeting, reduces back drafts and eliminates the need for a wind deflector net. Separating the rear screen from the folding top also enables a glass area larger than feasible with a soft top and integral screen.

In a further break with design convention, the 9-X Air dispenses with a trunk lid. Instead, a large storage compartment, big enough to accommodate two golf bags, slides out from underneath the rear light bar. To save weight, it is spring-loaded, without any power assistance, and slides

effortlessly on rollers. Revealed underneath the sliding drawer is a separate compartment for stowing smaller items.

Driver Focus

Inside, the 9-X Air features innovative developments in its driver-focused cockpit design and the provision of seamless connectivity for personal nomadic devices, both first seen in the 9-X BioHybrid.

The driver information zone encompasses the top of the door moulding. It is a fresh execution of Saab's traditional, driver-focused cockpit layout and dispenses with a central, floor-mounted console. The zone is a flat, arc-shaped surface, within which a row of five display screens is embedded and illuminated in green 3-D graphics, including an 'infotainment' screen and control panel in the driver's door.

In co-operation with Sony Ericsson, the 9-X Air and its hatchback sibling also showcase the potential for seamless, wireless connectivity (Bluetooth) with one or multiple nomadic devices (mobile phones, PDAs etc). The in-car interface enables streaming of data, entertainment and satellite navigation functions, which are transferred automatically to the car while the device remains in the user's pocket.

The smarter the device, the more functions in the car. The same unit could also be programmed to remotely lock /unlock the car, raise or lower the Canopy Top, and even remotely change in-car pre-sets. The 9-X Air makes a separate car key fob or remote controller redundant

Efficiency in Design and Performance

The 9-X Air has been created by a team under Anthony Lo, Director of Advanced Design at General Motors Europe, working in co-operation with the Saab Brand Center in Sweden. "Like the 9-X BioHybrid, this car is all about efficiency in design and performance, and that includes the Canopy Top." says Lo. "It offers important benefits in weight-saving and packaging, as well as giving us the freedom to take convertible design forward in a very Saabish way.

“This is the direction we’re exploring for a future open-top car from Saab. We’re keeping the all-year-round practicality and the four-seat format, but giving it a fresh, sportier expression.”

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