



NISSAN

NISSAN DESIGN NEWSLETTER

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We are pleased to deliver the first issue of the "Nissan Design Newsletter."

This newsletter features various inside stories about Nissan design.

We hope this newsletter will be of interest to you and give a clear perspective into our design activities worldwide.

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Corporate Vice President
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Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.

The story behind the interior of the all-new Nissan Teana

"Modern Living" in a car

Introducing the concept of "Modern Living" in a car, the first generation Nissan Teana was released in 2003. In contrast to previous models, the approach of mainly focusing on the inside of the car earned positive feedback from customers in and outside of Japan.



First Generation Teana, 2003 (positioning image)

When creating the first Teana, Nissan's designers conducted a thorough investigation into the lifestyle of Teana's target users. They gave disposable cameras to around 30 prospective customers and asked them to take pictures of their favorite items in their homes - an learning process which has never been carried out before. After developing and analyzing the pictures, it turned out that many customers were very design-conscious when it came to the interior of their homes and that the term "modern" was a significant concept to each one of them. The design keyword "Japanese Modern DNA" was derived from these findings and was eventually replaced by the theme "Modern Living".



Toshiya Matsuo
Product Design Dept.

"We tried to express an "unattainable lightness," a feeling we could not achieve under the technical capabilities at that time," said Toshiya Matsuo, designer of the new and the first generation Teana on the question of how to integrate the concept of modernity into the design of the Teana. In the non-automotive design field, examples such as Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye with its characteristic combination of steel and glass, the "Butterfly Stool", a chair which makes use of a special, but simple technique of shaping plywood, or the works of Zaha Hadid which originated from progress in structural calculation processes are similar expressions of modernity made possible through the technological innovations of their time.

The changing concept of "modernity" over the last 5 years

Five years since the launch of the first generation, the new Nissan Teana integrates the changes that have occurred during the last five years in terms of design, while inheriting the previous model's interpretation of "Modern Living".



New Teana, 2008 (positioning image)

Although the new generation Nissan Teana embodies this same "Modern Living" theme as its predecessor, its design language is characteristically different. In contrast to the interior of the 2003 Nissan Teana which was characterized by the combination of straight and plane lines, the new Teana makes extensive use of wave-like curves adding a calming or soothing feeling to its interior space.



First Generation Teana]



New Teana

How to express "lightness"

Many features in Teana's interior create an airy feeling of the interior such as its panel design. For example, its designers decided to let pads "float" above the wood-grain of the instrument panel and doors which makes the whole interior feel very light and spacious. "We were inspired by the cushions on those wood-panel chairs which are often found at the beach in front of a resort hotel," explains Matsuo.





To achieve this feeling of "lightness," Nissan put emphasis on giving the interior a certain depth. In order to create this impression the designers focused on eliminating unnecessary elements in the cabin. For instance, despite the Teana's sofa-like seating, which was made possible by a three-layer shock-absorbing seat structure, the feeling of weight and size is limited thanks to the design and color selection of the seat which strikes a balance between comfort and modernity.

Moreover, the armrest, which normally ends at the point where the driver puts his/her elbow, has been extended and is now closely adjoined to the seating surface. This gives the seating cushion and armrests the look and feel of a real sofa.



The challenge of "Perceived Quality"

Aside from the design of its seats and armrests, the interior coddles its passengers through other innovative features aimed at maximizing driver comfort. At Nissan, the quality achieved through these details, a quality passengers can actually feel, is called "Perceived Quality".

For example, the door trim and the armrests not only have a soft, tactile feel, they also provide exactly the same degree of softness regardless of their material. Providing the same softness to the entire surface area is a quality standard of many upscale sofa, but this application is typically not found in automobiles. Designer Mitsuru Yamazaki who was in charge of ensuring the "Perceived Quality" of the Teana added, "Everything that should be hard feels hard and everything which should feel soft is soft. It is very important to consistently keep the same hard surface feel. This is a determining factor for achieving "Perceived Quality".



Mitsuru Yamazaki
Perceived Quality Dept.

Reducing dividing lines in the interior is another important factor of "Perceived Quality." The L-design of the wood-grain paneling, one of the new Teana's characteristic marks, was made out of one seamless piece of wood. "Due to some production challenges we discussed the alternative of dividing the grain into different parts halfway through the development stage, but that would have caused a seam in the panel."



The integrated "L"- design of the wood-grain paneling

"Because this wood grain is one important feature which makes the Teana's interior so special, we persisted on an integrated design the whole way through the development stage," said Yamazaki.

A "light" interior thanks to color design

"At the beginning, our idea was to make the pad color lighter, but later we decided on a darker tone which gives the interior a more free-floating feel and makes it appear lighter," adds Naoto Yamahara, color designer of the Teana.



Naohiro Yamakoshi
Color Design Dept.



Wood-grain paneling (Left : 1st Gen. Teana, Right: New Teana)

While embodying the first generation's theme, the new Teana's design captures the changing concept of "modernity" as well as the needs and sensitivity of its users – evolving the "modern living" concept further.



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