







Infiniti

Infiniti



INFINITI®

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| Type | Division |
| Founded | 1989 |
| Headquarters | Tokyo, Japan |
| Key people | Mark Igo, president of Infiniti North America |
| Industry | Automotive |
| Products | Automobile |
| Parent | Nissan Motors |
| | Infiniti USA |
| | Infiniti Canada |
| Website | Infiniti Europe |
| | Infiniti of Britain |
| | Infiniti Middle East |

Infiniti is the luxury car division of Japanese automaker Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. Infiniti sales officially started in November 8, 1989 in North America and its global operations have since grown to include Mexico, the Middle East, South Korea, Taiwan, Russia, Switzerland, China and Ukraine. Today, the Infiniti global network includes more than 230 dealers in 15 countries.

Carlos Ghosn, President and CEO of Nissan Motor Co. Ltd., unveiled Infiniti's arrival in Europe at the Geneva Motor Show 2008. The official launch is scheduled in the autumn of 2008 and will be phased over a two year period as Infiniti rolls out its operations across 21 European countries. Infiniti Europe's headquarters are based in Rolle, Switzerland.

All current Infiniti coupes, sedans and crossovers are based on the Nissan FM platform. The center of the engine is placed behind the front wheels. This placement makes weight distribution more even, which is intended to improve braking, acceleration, and handling. It also reduces the polar moment of inertia. The only exception is the QX56 full-size SUV, which rides on the Nissan F-Alpha platform.

Infiniti's model name designation includes one letter for coupés and sedans (two letters for SUVs) and a number reflecting engine displacement. For example, the QX56 is an SUV featuring a 5.6 L engine. An exception to this was the QX4 SUV, which featured a 3.3 L engine (1997-2000) and later a 3.5 L engine (2001-2003). An 'x' following the engine displacement of Infiniti sedans denotes an all wheel drive model (e.g. Infiniti G35x) while 's' denotes a sport package model on all models, and a 't' for a Touring model (older models only). The logo was designed as an artistic representation of Mt. Fuji.

History

1989: The beginning

The Infiniti brand was introduced in the United States in 1989. Its purpose back then, as it is now, was to create and sell premium vehicles in the United States that wouldn't have otherwise fit in with Nissan's more mainstream image. Not by coincidence, Infiniti was created around the same time as Japanese rivals Toyota and Honda's luxury brands, Lexus and Acura respectively, in the U.S. The brand's sales were disappointing, a fact may attribute to some of Infiniti's poorly received advertising at the time. The company's initial campaign aimed to bring about brand awareness with Zen-influenced spots that focused on nature. However, the ads didn't show the actual cars, and many believe this omission did no favors for a company that was hoping to have buyers recognize and clamor for its vehicles.

Better advertising and the introduction of award-winning models eventually made Infiniti a contender in the luxury vehicle segment of the American market. Since 1989, sales have consistently grown. According to Infiniti, the company's logo is a combination of a stylized highway infinitely heading towards a distant horizon and a modified infinity symbol.

Infiniti began to take part of the luxury market mostly thanks to its popular Q45,



which was based on the JDM Nissan President on a shortened wheelbase.. The vehicle included a class-leading (at the time) 278 hp (207 kW) V8 engine, four wheel steering, the first active suspension system offered on a motor vehicle, and numerous interior luxury appointments. These made it competitive against the German imports like Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, which by the time of Infiniti's release had overtaken Cadillac and Lincoln in dominating the luxury segment of the American market.

Launched alongside the Q45 sedan in 1990, the 2-door M30 coupe was able to hold steady but relatively weak sales during its three production years. The M30 was basically an "Americanized" version of the Japanese Nissan Leopard F31, built mainly to compete with the Acura Legend coupe. Unlike the Nissan Leopard, the M30 was available with only one engine choice; the 162 horsepower (121 kW) Nissan VG30E "V6 3000", and one transmission, the Nissan RE4R01A 4-speed automatic with electronic overdrive. This small amount of power was not enough to propel the rear-wheel drive, 3,333 lb (1,512 kg) M30 fast enough. In 1991, a convertible M30 joined the lineup, but its life was rather short-lived. Only two years after being introduced to the American market, the M30 was discontinued.

The third vehicle in Infiniti's lineup was the entry-level G20, based on the Nissan Primera, which debuted in 1991.

Mid 1990s

In 1997, Infiniti released the QX4, a modified and more luxurious version of the Nissan Pathfinder, making Infiniti the first maker (apart from SUV specialists, Jeep and Land Rover) to offer a mid-sized luxury SUV - predating the release of the Lexus RX 300, Acura MDX and the Mercedes-Benz ML320. Like a traditional SUV, it was based on a truck platform, which gave it a competitive edge against the aforementioned competitors for its off-roading abilities.

By the late 1990s, however, Infiniti was consistently behind Lexus and Acura in sales, due to Nissan's struggling financial situation. The Q45 had retreated considerably from its focused, taut rendition of an executive sedan, having become a barely recognizable, ponderously-handling sedan that earned the nickname "The Japanese Lincoln." In 1999, Infiniti reintroduced the G20, a compact sporty sedan whose production was halted for 1997 and 1998. The G20 was marketed as a competitor to European luxury sport coupes such as the BMW 3-series but, with an underpowered four cylinder engine and compact size, it fell short. Also at dealers the G20 was marketed primarily to the wrong demographic middle-aged professional women, and as such was not as popular new as its actual main competition, the similarly-priced Acura Integra. Infiniti's other offerings, the Maxima-based I30 and the jellybean-shaped J30, never garnered large followings, and the company, bereft of an image or a following, floundered.

2000s

By 2000, Infiniti was facing extinction. The company rededicated itself to developing a dynamic and powerful line-up of sporty luxury cars. Car and Driver reported that Infiniti executives invited members of the motoring press to a meeting where they "swore never again to take their eyes off BMW." Although this effort began with a completely redesigned Q45 flagship for the 2002 model year, it was the G35 that turned sales around for Infiniti in 2003. A sports sedan far exceeding the capabilities of its Nissan Primera-based predecessor (the G20), the Nissan Skyline-based G35 became an instant hit, named Motor Trend Car of the Year in 2003. The release of the sport-tuned FX35/45 crossover that same year piggybacked on the G35's success. The FX used the same components under the skin as the G35 sport coupe and was designed for American tastes. It combined sports-car handling and performance with station wagon-like versatility and all-weather capability. After a few years, a number of manufacturers began making similarly-styled vehicles, so Infiniti reclassified the FX as a Crossover utility vehicle (CUV). In 2004, Infiniti added an all-wheel drive version of the G35 sports sedan in an effort to sway buyers from similar all-wheel drive sports sedans from competitors Audi and BMW.

Infiniti's sales and reputation continue to rise as Carlos Ghosn follows through on his vision to break Infiniti away from its Nissan roots. The G35 series helped re-define Infiniti as the "Japanese BMW," an image it continues to cultivate. This reputation has been enhanced by the FX35/FX45 SUV, and the redesigned M35/M45 for the 2006 model year. The M35/M45 garnered impressive acclaim from the automotive press, winning an eight-car comparison test in Car and Driver and also named the best luxury sedan in Consumer Reports. The M45 model featured the same engine as the flagship Q45, and its success prompted Infiniti to remove the Q45 from its lineup for the first time ever in 2007, at which time the M45 became the flagship model. The Infiniti M (2003 - 2005) and the Infiniti G (starting in 2003) were known in Japan as the Nissan Gloria and the Nissan Skyline; the Gloria and Skyline were originally conceived by the Prince Motor Company in 1955 - 1957, which Nissan acquired in 1966.

For the 2007 model year a redesigned version of the G35 sedan was introduced, followed in 2008 by a new version of the company's G coupe, the G37. The coupe was first unveiled at the New York International Auto Show. Also released in 2008 is the new Infiniti EX35 compact crossover, which is Infiniti's entry into the compact luxury crossover market. The EX shares the G35's 3.5 liter, 306 hp (228 kW), V6 engine. Competitors are the BMW X3, Land Rover LR2, and Acura RDX.

Infiniti Europe was officially unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show in March 2008 and began sales in many European markets in late 2008. Four models are offered in Europe: the next generation of the Infiniti FX37 and Infiniti FX50 performance SUV, the Infiniti G37, the Infiniti G37 coupe, and the Infiniti EX37 crossover.

Models

Current models

- Infiniti G (convertible, coupe, sedan, AWD coupe, AWD sedan)
- Infiniti M (M35/M35x and M45/M45x variations)
- Infiniti EX35 (EX37 in Europe)
- Infiniti FX (FX35 and FX50 variations)
- Infiniti QX56

Past models

- Infiniti M30 (Coupe and Convertible)
- Infiniti G20
- Infiniti G35 (Coupe and Sedan)
- Infiniti J30
- Infiniti I (I30, 1996-2001; I35, 2002-2004)
- Infiniti QX4
- Infiniti Q45

Electric vehicles

Infiniti has presented its Infiniti Essence concept car, which previews the Japanese carmaker's future line of gasoline hybrid electric vehicles for Europe and the United States. ^[5]

Future vehicles

- Infiniti M - An all new M sedan is slated for release for the 2010 model year. The 2010 Infiniti M is expected to come in M37 (330 hp, 270 ft·lbf, 3.7-liter V6 as seen on the 2008 Infiniti G37 coupe) and M50 (390 hp, 369 ft·lbf, 5.0-liter V8 debuting on the new 2009 Infiniti FX crossover) variations. Release date: TBD.
- Infiniti Q - Infiniti may be resurrecting its departed flagship sedan, expected to be based on the Nissan GTR utilize Infiniti's new 5.0-liter V8 (390 hp, 369 ft·lbf). The new Q may be released in 2011.
- Small Car - Teased at a press event, but little is known.
- Hybrid versions of the G sedan and FX

























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