

The Abarth brand tuning story continues: international debut of the esseesse kits for the Abarth Punto Evo and Abarth 500C at the international Paris Motor Show. The Abarth 500 saloon range is extended with new colours and new trim levels.

2010: year of commercial successes and consolidation of racing activities.

Carlo Abarth loved to call himself a “creator of cars that are tuned, not prepared”. It was not by chance that his first commercial success came with a tuning kit for the Fiat Topolino launched at the beginning of the 1950s. Since then, the Abarth brand philosophy has remained the same: to convert special items into extraordinary products.

Bolstered by the success of the recent conversion kits (one Abarth 500 in three is converted using the official kit), Abarth has expanded its range by launching the world premiere of the esseesse kits for the new Abarth 500C and Abarth Punto Evo models in Paris. These are designed to improve performance, handling and safety without having to sacrifice the car's low emissions and fuel consumption.

The stand will host two esseesse cars that perfectly illustrate the spirit of Abarth tuning, encapsulating substance and unassuming good looks: in accordance with brand tradition and market requirements, Abarth cars are a mix of sporty yet elegant looks and safe driving experience, yet always with sporty performance levels. The Punto Evo esseesse is in fact capable of 180 HP with truly thrilling performance levels: maximum torque of 270 Nm at 3000 rpm, top speed of 216 km/h and acceleration from 0-100 km/h in just 7.5 seconds. The esseesse kit for the 500C turns the scorpion-branded convertible into a genuine open-topped sports car: 160 HP, maximum torque of 230 Nm, top speed of 209 km/h and acceleration from 0-100 km/h in just 7.6 seconds.

The Abarth Punto Evo esseesse is exhibited with a Campovolo Grey body, named after the airfield, still operational today, that is located opposite the company's historic headquarters in Corso Marche, Turin. This was where the young Karl Abarth used to buy paint for his cars, the very same Campovolo grey shade used for aircraft. In detail, the Abarth Punto Evo on show combines this particular colour with an Abarth band in the body shade and 18” alloys in a special titanium-coloured esseesse design. Inside, the car features Abarth Corse by Sabelt seats in black leather with a distinctly sporty design and an Abarth Blue&Me™ MAP satellite navigation system complete with telemetrics developed with Magneti Marelli.

The Abarth 500C esseesse on the other hand, comes with an elegant Campovolo grey and Pista grey two-tone livery with a white chromatic liner, an element that divides and at the same time combines the two ‘souls’ of the car: the elegance of a cabriolet above and the out-and-out sporty performance of the esseesse kit below. The 500C esseesse is exhibited with an original Record Monza exhaust silencer (dual mode with variable counterpressure) that enhances the engine sound above 4000 rpm and, as on the Punto Evo, with an Abarth Blue&Me™ MAP satellite navigation system with telemetrics.

These two models may be very different but they share a single spirit, the sporting spirit of the Abarth scorpion logo, which has proved itself capable of igniting the passion of thousands of motorists with a taste for challenge, performance and Italian style. In the words of the advertising slogan “More power to your senses”, on an Abarth car all your senses are stimulated to the maximum. The perception is further amplified by the two kits that guarantee even more driving performance and adrenaline: all in all, the Abarth conversion kits represent empowerment taken to its highest levels.

The Parisian stage also offers an opportunity to admire some new products created for the Abarth 500 saloon: the stand will exhibit a model in the new Record Grey shade, with tobacco coloured leather

interiors and super-sporty 17” alloys with 5 diamond shaped spokes against an anthracite background. This mixture of sportiness and good looks is inspired by the heritage of a brand that will once again satisfy customers who seek a high-performance car that is also elegant.

The Paris Motor Show is also an opportunity to take a look at the two pillars of the Abarth business model: roadgoing cars and the world of racing. To date, approximately 1600 Abarth 500C and nearly 1300 Abarth Punto Evo cars have been sold: these numbers bear witness to the warm welcome extended to these two cars and will certainly contribute to the already excellent results recorded since the brand was relaunched. Suffice to say that since 2007 the brand has enjoyed continual growth, as evidenced by sales of nearly 28,000 for the Abarth Grande Punto and Abarth 500 models in addition to approximately 6000 performance kits designed for the two models.

The Abarth 695 Tributo Ferrari has also met with great success. This is the fastest and highest performing road-going 500 ever, arising out of a joint venture between Abarth and Ferrari, based on shared values that include a passion for performance, a racing soul, attention to detail and Italian style. This numbered and limited special series has been marketed from July and has already notched up more than 600 orders; more than half of which are from countries such as United Kingdom, France and Germany.

These sales successes have been partly made possible by the extraordinary network of dealers and official tuning shops, an organisation that is unique in its field and is extending to other international markets such as Israel, Rumania, Cyprus, Lebanon, Finland and Australia.

The growth in Abarth's sporting activities was also constant in 2010, consolidating the brand's presence both in rallies and on the track, in Italy and throughout Europe. As far as rallies are concerned, two official teams are competing with success in the Italian Championship with Abarth Grande Punto S2000 cars, while the RALLY version of the Abarth 500 has led to the advent of the Abarth 500 Rally Selenia Trophy. Track activities have also met with great success. The tried and tested single-make Abarth 500 Selenia Italia and Abarth 500 Selenia Europe trophies have been joined this year by a championship reserved for single-seater Formula Aci-Csai-Abarth cars with the intention of allowing young drivers to show their mettle at the wheel of an experience-building single-seater car at an accessible price. In 2011, great expectations surround the debut of the single-seater car in Europe, with the Formula Abarth European Championship.

Last but not least, Abarth returns to the Paris International Motor Show with a stunning stand where major world débuts mingle with tried and tested models to underscore - yet again - the brand's unique position on the international motoring stage. The design idea that inspired the space is simplification: the architecture does not use a language to interpret the brand but acts as a foundation to enhance its values. Abarth and its world take centre stage and the brand exhibits itself to the public in all its pureness and simplicity, in its maximum essence. This approach focuses the attention on the three new Abarth cars, positioned in an extensive space with three areas of light; a huge LED display representing the central element of the scenery forms an ideal backdrop for the cars. Technical drawings of Abarth engineering are ideally exhibited under a glass floor, visible to all, as used to happen with cars when their rear bonnet lids were partially raised.