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## Low-Volume Automaker Brings High-Powered Sports Cars to New York

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**2002 Panoz Esperante Magnussen Edition**

NEW YORK — One of the best-kept secrets at the New York Auto Show is the presence of the Panoz Auto Development Company. The independent, low-volume automaker, which is based in Hoschton, Ga., is at the Jacob K. Javits Center to introduce a limited edition — make that a micro-edition — of its luxury sport convertible. The Panoz Esperante exhibits the type of swoopy, low curves that made classic Jaguars the favored cars among the English nobility.

At Thursday's press conference, which closed out this year's NYIAS Press Preview, company founder Daniel Panoz introduced a Jan Magnussen Edition of the 2002 Esperante. Produced in direct collaboration with Magnussen, the vehicle's suspension settings, brakes, wheels, tires, seats, trim, colors and other details have been hand-selected by the Panoz Racing Team driver.

The Magnussen Edition Esperante is the first of two driver's edition vehicles to enter production this year. A David Brabham Edition vehicle will be introduced in a few months, according to Panoz. A total of 20 Driver's Edition Esperantes will be built each year to commemorate the team's leading drivers Jan Magnussen and David Brabham. The 10 Magnussen Edition and 10 Brabham Edition Esperantes celebrate the 10 American Le Mans (ALMS) races held annually.



**Panoz Esperante GTS racer**

The Driver's Edition Esperantes are a lighter variant of the 320-horsepower, hand-built convertible. They feature carbon-fiber super structures and are fitted with lighter adjustable sport seats, a carbon-fiber front spoiler and a rear ducktail. Both the special-edition models and the regular 2002 Esperante feature a 4.6-liter, dual overhead cam, Ford SV hand-built engine. Prices for the 2002 Panoz Esperante begin near \$89,000 while the Driver's Edition models hover closer to the \$117,000

starting mark.

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British Show Spotlights Performance, James Bond

Also highlighted during the company press conference was the Panoz Esperante GTS racer. The 385-hp, tube-frame spec racing car is based on the Esperante sport convertible's styling and features thermoformed plastic body panels that are lighter and more durable than glass fiber, according to the company. The car is built specifically for amateur racing and sells for about \$60,000 at SCCA Enterprises dealers and select Panoz streetcar dealers.

—Reported by *Mary S. Butler*, *cars.com*;  
photographed by *Tobias Lopez* for *cars.com*

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