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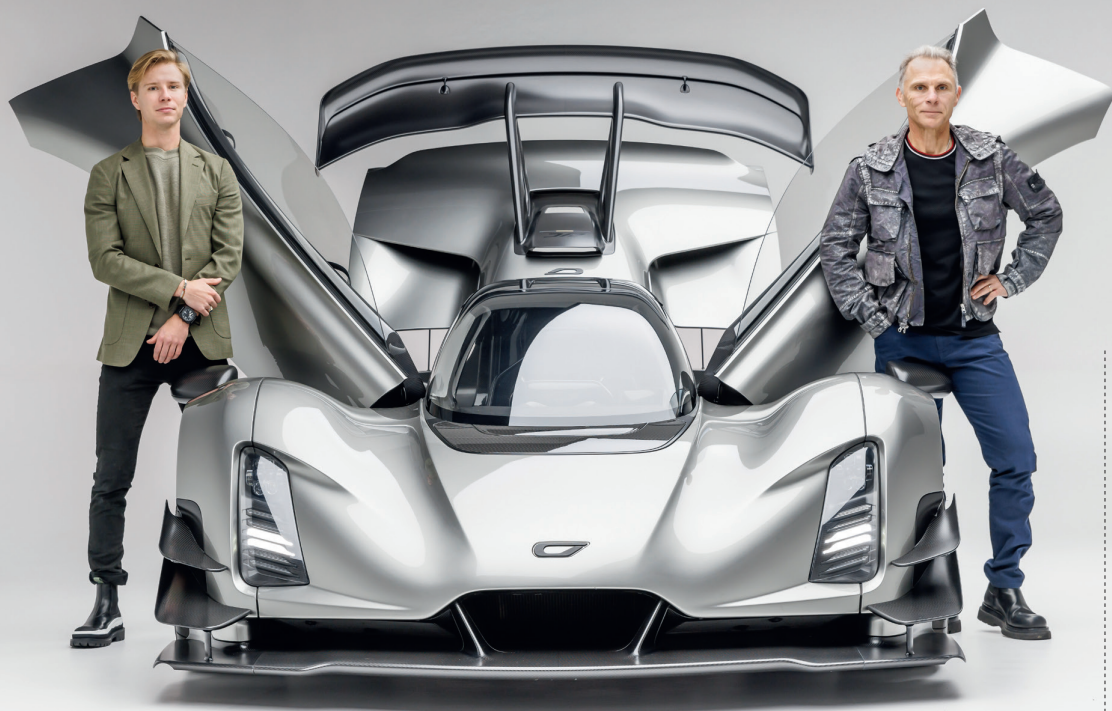
Dare to be DIFFERENT

ADMIRAL'S NEW FLAGSHIP BREAKS THE MOULD



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Kevin and Lukas Czinger aim to revolutionise car production using cutting-edge digital technology



The duo hold around 145 patents protecting the digital design and 3D printing of the 21C's components

When I first heard about Kevin Czinger's eponymous, California-based automotive marque, I couldn't help wondering whether he had dreamed up his surname simply to fit the image of the brand's first product - a blindingly quick supercar with jet fighter, in-line-style seating. After all, the definition of "zing" does refer to something that moves rapidly.

In reality, it's an old Hungarian name brought to America by Czinger's immigrant forebears. Born in 1959, he was raised in Cleveland, Ohio. The youngest of five children by a decade, his two older brothers, he says, "put me to work cleaning up tools and sweeping the workshop floor".

Both were accomplished mechanics and local street-racing legends. By the time Czinger was 15 he had absorbed so much engineering knowledge that he had become sufficiently skilled to be entrusted with "blue printing" race engines.

Only a special kind of person possesses such an ability to learn, however - and one look at Czinger's CV is enough to demonstrate that he is, indeed, a remarkable individual. "I went to a Jesuit school where I proved to be a very good

Speed in 3D

Simon de Burton talks to the father-and-son duo reinventing the hypercar

[American] football player," he says. "Through terrific fortuity I was spotted by a coach from Yale who recruited me to play for the college, meaning I could become a full-time student without my parents needing to pay."

He left Yale in 1987 with the coveted title of "All American Footballer" and a degree in law which, after a brief period as a banker at Goldman Sachs, led to him working as a criminal prosecutor for the Southern District of New York.

"I spent three years trying complex organised crime and fraud cases, at the end of which I realised I didn't want to be a corporate lawyer,

so I ended up back at Goldman Sachs working on major deals with everyone from Rupert Murdoch to the Chinese government."

What the experience taught him, however, was that he didn't want to advise other people on how to grow their companies - he wanted to build his own. As a result, he became involved in the online delivery business Webvan, and later co-founded Coda, a manufacturer of electric vehicle battery systems and a short-lived electric saloon car. Coda was acquired by energy storage company Exergonix in 2016, at which point Czinger began developing the Divergent Blade hypercar which, in 2019, evolved into the Czinger 21C.

Czinger is building a limited edition run of 80 21Cs, priced at £1.6 million each





Inspired by the legendary Lockheed SR71 Blackbird spy plane of the 1960s, the Czinger 21C features a hybrid powertrain comprising a 2.9 litre, V8 rear-mounted engine with a pair of electric motors mounted on the front axle.

The result is a power output of 1,233 horsepower, a zero to 100km/h of 1.9 seconds and a potential top speed of 452km/h.

In August last year, one of the first production-specification 21Cs proved the car's capabilities by lapping the WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca in 1:25:44, smashing the record set in a McLaren Senna by more than two seconds.

But while both the 21C's looks and its performance are decidedly impressive, what is really remarkable about the car is the way it is built, using what Czinger describes as "the world's most advanced production technologies".

Czinger and his son, Lukas, 28, hold around 145 patents between them, mostly in respect of the fact that the car is digitally designed and extensively 3D printed before being assembled by robots using the latest in artificial intelligence.

Their aim is to revolutionise car production by making it faster, more accurate and therefore hugely more efficient and energy-saving, reducing emissions even before a vehicle takes to the road. "The way we are building the 21C shows how 3D printing gives complete flexibility in how a car can be designed and built," says Lukas, whose speciality is in the field of so-called "fixtureless assembly".

"The system uses 22 robots in a 10 metre square cell that can be reset from building an Italian sports car one moment to an American SUV the next. In the case of the 21C, it enables us to assemble a full chassis from scratch in 20 to 30 minutes. There is no welding; everything is bolted and bonded using our own adhesive, and assembly tolerances are accurate to 0.1mm," he says.

The system allows for unprecedented levels of flexibility in terms of design and build and, according to Czinger senior, has already attracted orders from major manufacturers to build certain assemblies.



"In the case of the 21C, it enables us to assemble a full chassis from scratch in 20 to 30 minutes"

The ultimate aim is to license the building methods that Czinger's parent company, Divergent Technologies, is creating. For now, however, Czinger is content to complete the limited edition run of 80 21Cs, which, despite being priced at £1.6 million each, have attracted orders from around the world.

The marque currently has seven dealers in the US and six internationally, too. This set-up, says Czinger, has allowed the firm to begin building a genuine brand that can provide future owners with the confidence that there will be a specialist nearby able to look after their cars.

The first deliveries are set to take place towards the end of next year, but we'll be bringing you our own driving impressions before that. We can't wait to get behind the wheel and experience that "Czinger zing" for real. ■



The Czinger 21C can reach 100km/h in just 1.9 seconds and has a top speed of 452km/h