Thu, 29 May 2025
Weekly Newsletter

DVN Interior

NEWSLETTER #263

Editorial

Interior Imaginations At Bayern Innovativ

2019 AUDI AI:ME CONCEPT (AUDI IMAGE)

This past week, DVN Interior was at the Audi Sportpark Ingolstadt for the Bayern Innovativ yearly conference with InSuM, the Interior Hub for Sustainable Mobility. It was a nice gathering for the entire value chain of the industry: OEMs, SMEs, startups researchers, all talking, listening, and networking about tomorrow's vehicle interiors. This week's in-depth piece provides you with choice nuggets from that gathering from the likes of Audi, Volkswagen, BMW, Webasto, Mahindra, Chery, Feno, Harman and more, who spoke and exhibited about interior design, UX, digitalization and functionalization of surfaces, smart materials, the oncoming automated transport world, and sustainability. A lot of good stuff shows up, when innovation drives the interior!

Our collaborative conference with Enmore is happening early next week in the Shanghai - Hangzhou area, so grab a plane ticket and come attend the DVN-EAC cooperative event, on 4 - 6 June. Details are **here**.

DVN is back in Tokyo, Japan, on June 11-12 for its lighting workshop. We have an exciting agenda covering key topics, including **Interior lighting** which will be of high interest for interior guys, with lecture from Nissan, Marelli, Nichia, Inova, Brightek Optoelectronics, NISSHA and TactoTek. Detailed program in Interior News, and More here

I wish you a great week! Thanks as always for being with us.

Philippe Aumont
DVN-Interior General Editor

In Depth Interior Technology

Interior at Bayern Innovativ: Innovation & Sustainability

BAYERN INNOVATIV IMAGE

The 20th *Interieur im Automobil* × *InSuM* conference took place on 13 and 14 May 1at the Audi Sportpark Ingolstadt, in cooperation of Bayern Innovativ with InSuM, the Interior Hub for Sustainable Mobility.

It was a productive couple of days for the entire value chain of the automotive industry — automakers, subject matter experts, suppliers, startups, and researchers — to talk, listen, and network about future auto interiors, and DVN Interior's Carsten Befelein was there.

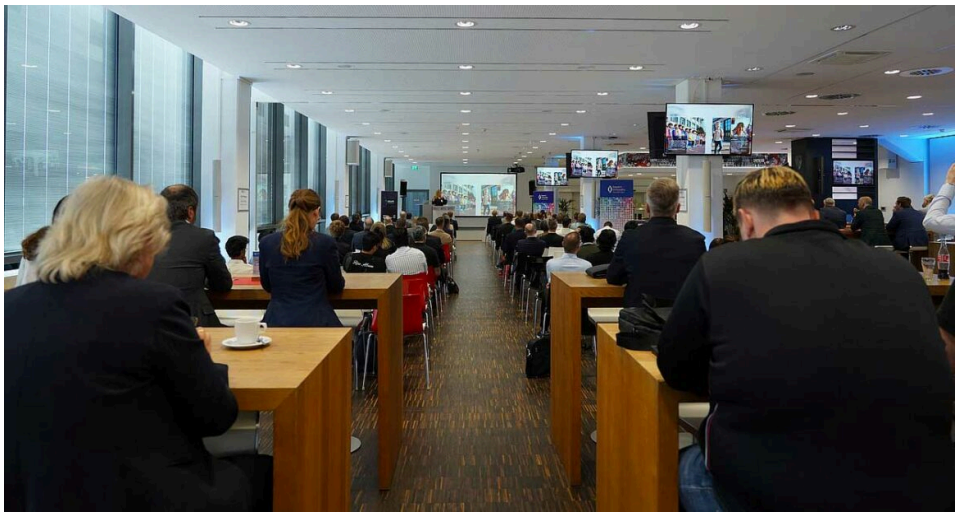
Especially in these challenging times, sharp focus on future-oriented developments is crucial. The vehicle interior is increasingly becoming a differentiating factor; it represents comfort, design and digitalization and shapes the driving experience of the future. Innovations in materials, technologies and sustainable concepts can provide new impetus and open market potential. But which trends, technologies and markets do we need to understand today to be successful tomorrow? What requirements of different markets need to be considered to ensure long-term competitiveness?

This year's key topics at the conference were:

- **Strategy and future trends** in automotive interiors
- **Global markets:** growth & potential
- **Sustainability** as a driver for innovation
- **User experience** as a differentiating factor
- **Digital experiences** in car interiors

Speakers from business and science shared their knowledge in presentations from the likes of Audi, Volkswagen, BMW, Webasto, Mahindra, Chery, Feno, UPM, Dolby, and Harman Automotive. Like last year, more than 200 industry experts participated.

Day 1

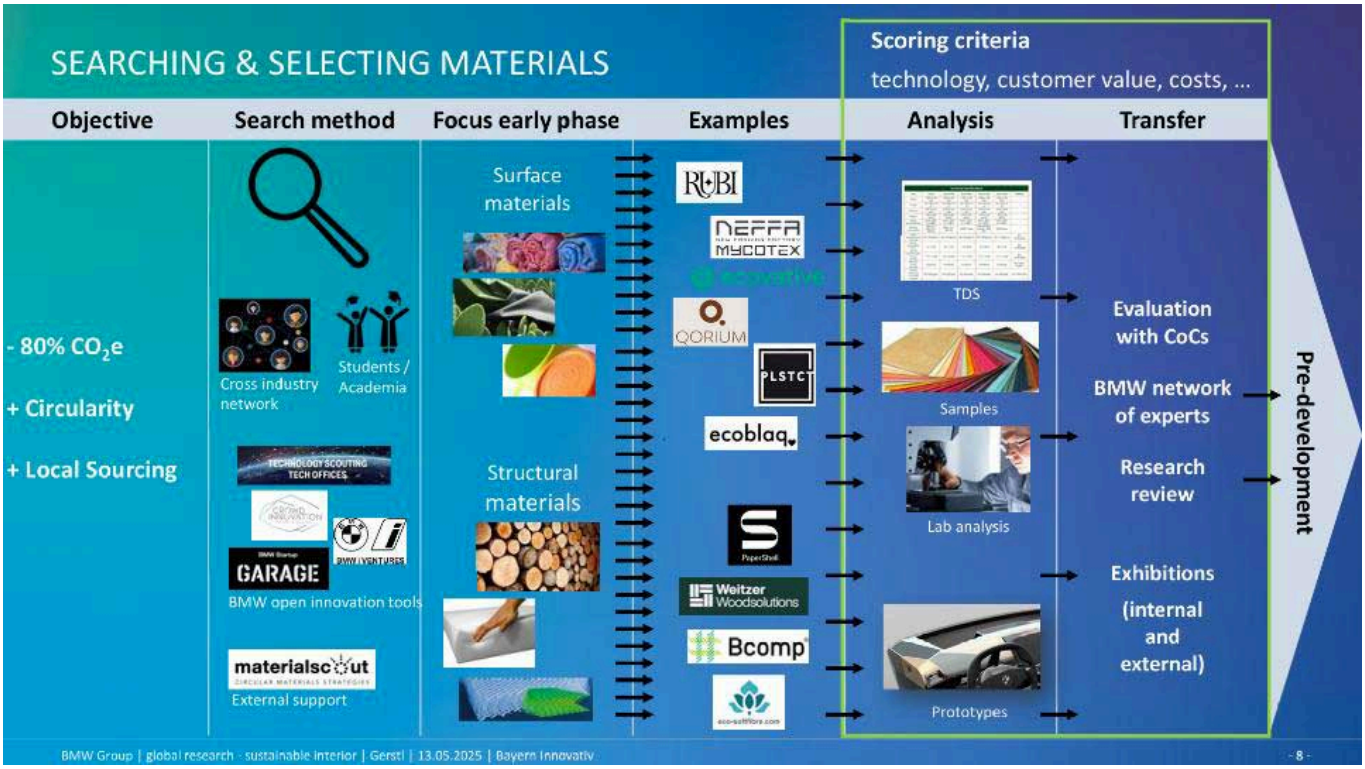


BAYERN INNOVATIV IMAGE

Lars Ellermann (Interior Pre-Development, Audi): <u>Development of An Interior for *L*^{4} Vehicles</u>

Diving into the future of interior design for automated driving. Discovering the development process from analyzing customer requirements to redesigning human-vehicle interaction. Focus areas included customer studies, derived design principles, and a preview of new and innovative interior concepts. The talk included the latest trends and technologies that enhance comfort and safety.

Thomas Gerstl (Sustainable Interior Concept Development, BMW): <u>Renewable Materials for the Car Interior</u>



BMW IMAGE

Sustainability is particularly important for future generations of vehicles. Renewable materials such as wood and cork can make a significant contribution to reducing the CO_2 footprint. These are new to the automotive industry, and are being investigated as part of research projects about possible applications in the interior.

The presentation began with an overview of the BMW Group's sustainability goals and measures as well as the basic principles of design for circularity. A cockpit and seat were used to show how new materials (wood, cork) can be used, and what findings are already available from research projects.

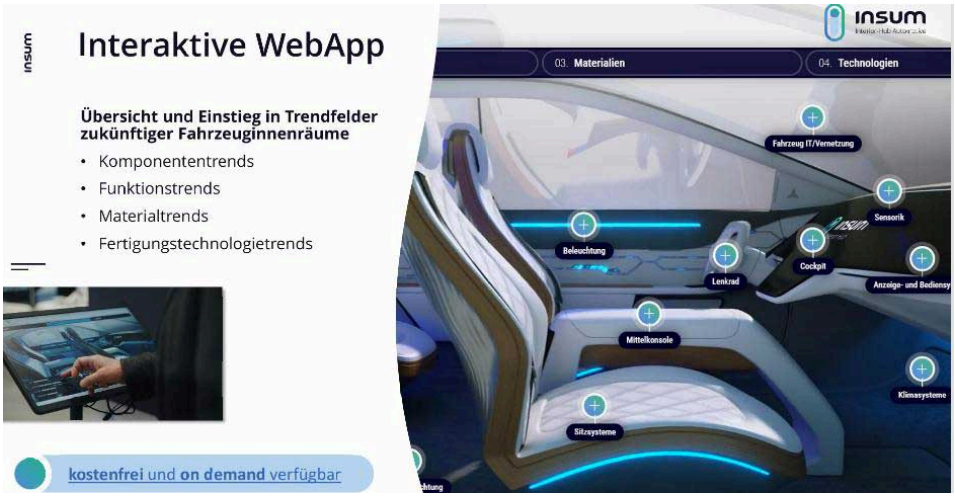
Dr. Eiko Gütlich (Innovation Working Group Lead, Mobis Technical Centre Europe):

Driving Innovation: How Effective Innovation Management Fuels Creative Solutions and Competitive Advantage

INSUM IMAGE

This was a lecture to discover real-world examples of successful innovation management activities — for example, Mobis' holographic windshield display (see DVN-I coverage) — to learn the critical decision point for stopping projects, and to understand the importance of 'moonshot compost' in fostering groundbreaking ideas.

Philipp Grunden (InSuM): Special Insight: Federal project InSuM (Interior Hub for Sustainable Mobility)



Targets of the InSuM project include analysis of trends and markets, knowledge transfer, skills networking, and industrial commercialization of ideas and products.

Parallel Interactive Workshop Sessions on important future topics of interior design

For the first time, the conference offered parallel workshop sessions on interior trends and the most important future topics in interiors, such as:

- Functionalization of surfaces
- Bio-based plastics & recycled materials
- Interior in the highly automated vehicle
- User experience as a differentiating factor
- Recycling textile components

The discussions in the individual workshops were very intensive, and all participants were able to contribute their knowledge and arguments on these topics very well within two hours. Here's a summary of the five workshops:

Future Interior Trends - Functionalization of Surfaces (CATI Institut, TH Chemnitz)

Smart Interior opens new perspectives in the vehicle interior. Voice and gesture control, lighting and sound, personalization and user experience…how can suppliers recognize and use these trends? In this workshop, experts and participants used the 'fishbowl method' to discuss how suppliers can use the innovation and growth area of vehicle interiors to position themselves for the future. What trends are there, what is important, and who are the key players and partners?

Bio-Based Plastics & Use of Recyclates (AMZ Sachsen)

How can the sustainable use of bio-based plastics and recyclates in vehicle interiors be achieved? Current challenges and potentials range from material procurement to regulatory hurdles. Using real components, attendees discussed concrete application possibilities, technical requirements, and next steps for pilot projects and collaborations.

Interior in the Highly Automated Vehicle (Automotive Thüringen)

Fully automated driving (L^4 and up) opens new possibilities for vehicle interiors. What components, functions and materials will really be needed in the future? In this interactive workshop, people gained exciting insights into future vehicle concepts and, together with other participants, developed specific requirements and innovation potential for the automotive and supplier industry. Targeted networking generated new project ideas and cooperation approaches for participants to take back to their companies.

User Experience as a Differentiating Factor (Bayern Innovativ, Nio)

We learnt about the most important methods and tools of user-centricity, and how to apply them directly. Nio provided exclusive insights into its user-defined vehicle strategy and showed how UX plays a key role in the mobility of the future. Topics included how Nio's vehicle operating system, smart cabin, and AI-driven features enhance the driving experience, and how Nio gathers and integrates user feedback within its user centric development approach. It was a dive into the tech behind Nio's smart EV ecosystem to explore the innovations that make it go.

What innovative approaches are already being used today to develop recyclable seat covers, and how can these solutions change the automotive industry in the long term? In the interactive World Café that followed, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges of material recycling with experts, and develop creative ideas for an environmentally friendly automotive future.

Day 2

DVN IMAGE

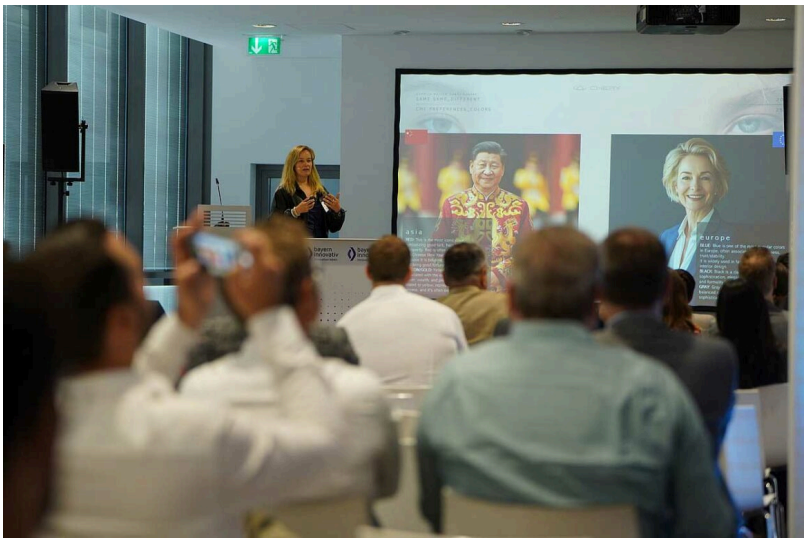
Sascha Klapper (Research & Analysis Manager, S&P Global Mobility): Interior Strategy: Geopolitical Developments, Market Analysis & Forecast

This presentation provided a concise yet insightful global economic outlook, highlighting major trends and potential challenges ahead. Shifting the focus to the automotive industry in 2030, presenting b overview in numbers: what growth, shifts, and market dynamics can we expect? Finally, diving deeper into the automotive interior industry, exploring the key trends driving innovation, the biggest challenges facing manufacturers, and the opportunities that lie ahead. From sustainability and smart materials to the role of digitalization.

Ajay Saran Sharma (Senior Vice President of Design, Mahindra & Mahindra): Designing Automobiles for a New Paradigm of Customer Lifestyles & Global Priorities

How is the power of design influencing decisions, including in India? How have automotive design studios and processes like Mahindra's evolved to keep pace with these fast-changing realities and deliver quickly? How does design impact business and profit?

Carolin Nuyten (Industrial Designer, Head of CMF, Senior Manager, Chery Europe): Focus on China: innovation Drivers and New Requirements

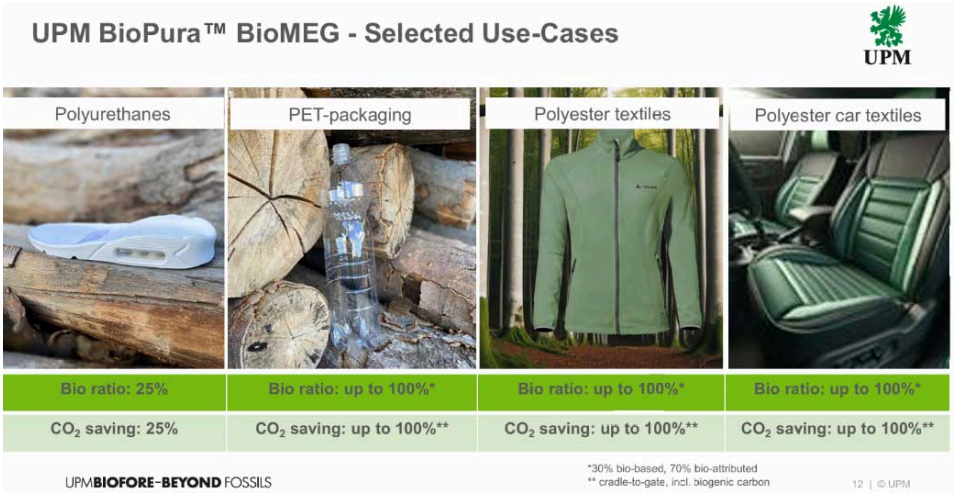


Different cultural backgrounds, habits and preferences of Chinese versus Western culture lead to different treatments and different wants and needs for the interior design, color, and material of a vehicle. This presentation looked at how to understand where the differences and similarities lie and what both sides can learn from each other.

Stephanie Waser (Head of CMF Design, Nio): Circular Economy Strategy: The Future of Sustainable Interiors

How does sustainability become a driver of creative excellence? Stephanie Waser provided exciting insights into the CMF design philosophy of Nio and firefly, and showed how future-oriented design goes far beyond the choice of materials. Experience how responsible design does not restrict, but creates new creative freedom.

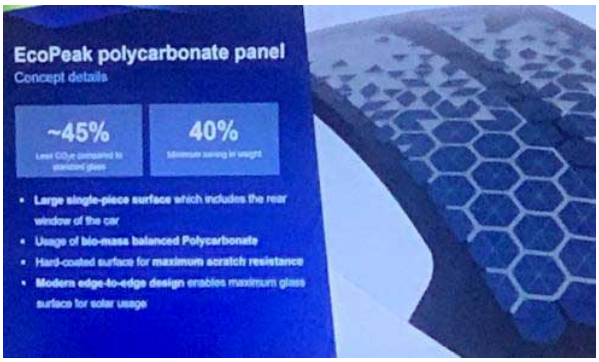
Holger John (Sales Manager, UPM): Unlocking the Future: Renewable Chemicals Becoming Reality at Industrial Scale



UPM IMAGE

UPM BioPolyester and BioPolyurethane offer a solution for eco-conscious interior material. The biochemicals reduce the environmental footprint and reduce reliance on fossil resources. Integrated into BioPolyester and BioPolyurethanes, UPM BioGlycols are true drop-in solutions which enable high-performance and fully recyclability while treading lighter on the planet.

Thomas Weiderer (Roof R&D Tech Incubator Manager, Webasto): Sustainable Roof: Innovative Roof Systems for Sustainability



DVN IMAGES

The Webasto Group has ambitious climate and environmental targets, including halving CO_2 reduction in their own production, cutting it by 25 per cent in their supply chain, and using only green electricity by 2030. EcoPeak highlights are Roller Blind, Polycarbonate panels, and solar cells.

Dr. Astrid Wollenberg (Head of Interior Living Space, VW): User Experience As A Differentiating Factor - Inclusive Mobility and Interior Ideas for All

The customer groups for mobility and mobility services are as different as the worlds in which they live. With the work in the field of vehicle interiors, VW would like to respond to these different customer groups in a better way; VW wants to understand their needs and customize its products according to those needs. In doing so, there is also a focus on people with disabilities.

The presentation included interior ideas for people with visual impairments, very old people and people with obesity (BMI>30).

Lena Nguyen (Senior M&V Marketing Product Designer, Feno): Light Art Mindset Creates Well-Being in Automotive Interiors

This lecture delved into how light-based art turns the car into an emotional space, and conveys a new understanding of light. Nguyen looked at the way famous lighting artists think and work to transfer their lighting effects to the automotive interior, and presented color-psychological and technological methods.

How can we think about the design of a vehicle from the point of view of the driver's well-being? Light is the new answer — light that doesn't just fulfill its usual function, but creates an immersive experience and plays a key role in ensuring the emotional well-being of the driver and passengers. If you are prepared to learn from lighting artists, you can completely redefine and use light.

Philipp Siebourg (Global Design Director, Harman Automotive): Consumer Experiences, Automotive Grade

HARMAN IMAGE

In this presentation, it was shown how Harman's targeted strategies and collaboration were used to create unique experiences that strengthen a position as a leading innovator.

Andreas Ehret (Head of Automotive Business & Product, Dolby): Designing the Future of Entertainment in Cars: New Use Cases and Opportunities

As part of their digital lifestyle, drivers and passengers are supposed expect an in-car entertainment experience that matches the one they enjoy at home or on the road. And because cars offer a purpose-built environment, it is possible to create a personalized interior experience that goes beyond what is possible elsewhere. This presentation provided an overview of existing and emerging use cases and content formats that go beyond music and movies. In addition, critical success factors for broad consumer adoption were highlighted and some thoughts on potential business opportunities were shared.

Expo Space

The event was accompanied by a trade exhibition where companies presented their technologies, products, and services. Exhibitors included:

- Acad Group
- Dolby Germany
- Fachverband Galvanisierte Kunststoffe
- Feno
- Grafe & Co
- Hamamatsu Photonics Deutschland
- IFG Ingolstadt AöR
- Iprotex & Co
- Rökona Textilwerk
- Sandler
- Sonomag
- SRW Metalfloat
- TactoTek
- Textilforschungsinstitut Thüringen - Vogtland
- TITK - Thüringisches Institut für Textil- und Kunststoff-Forschung
- TÜV Rheinland LGA Products

BAYERN INNOVATIV IMAGES

Interior News

Interior Lighting @ DVN Lighting Tokyo Workshop, June 11-12

INTERIOR NEWS

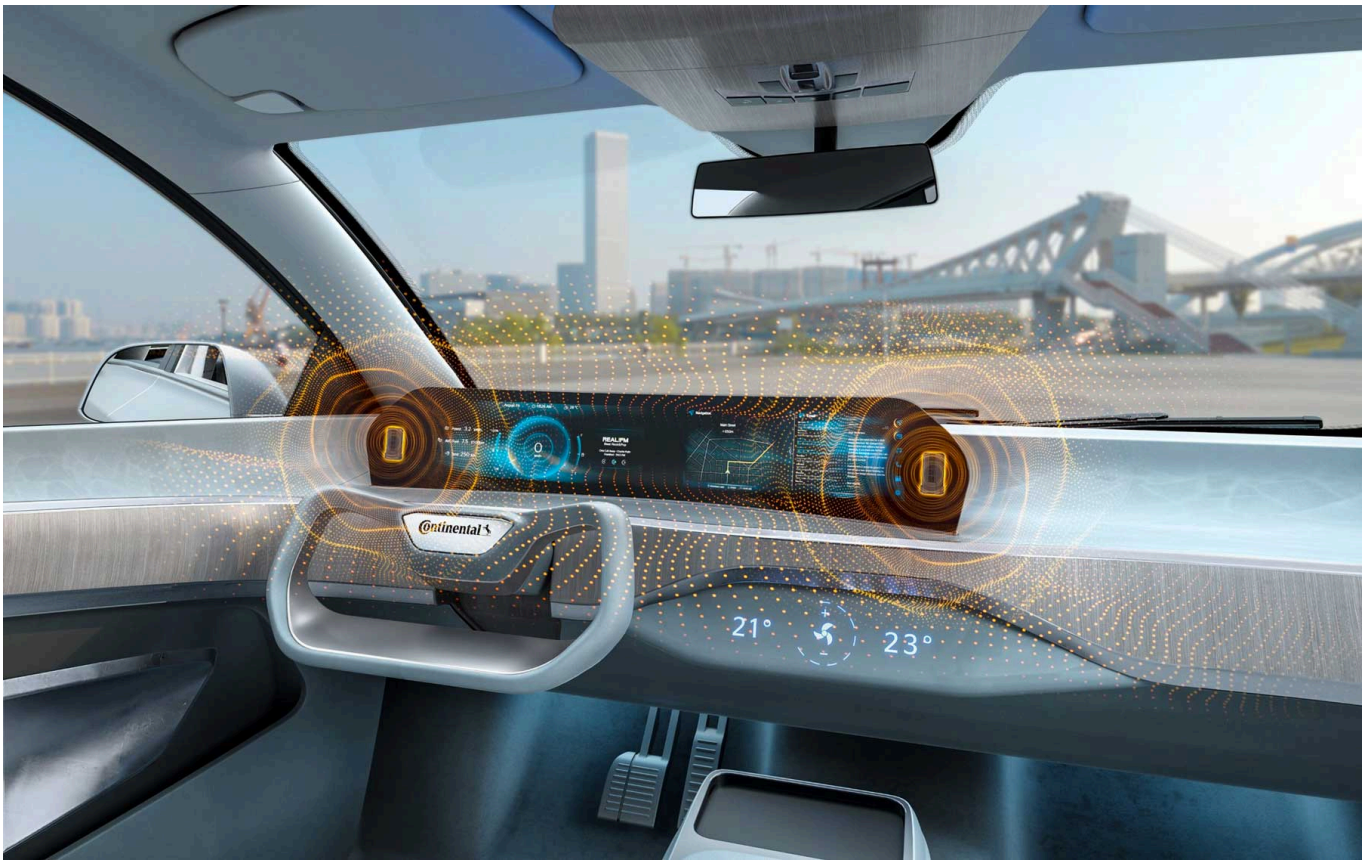
Don’t miss the Interior Lighting session on June 11 afternoon, with the following exciting program

- **Nissan** – Yasukazu Kanda, General Manager, Interior and Exterior Engineering Department: *Transition of interior lighting function and future outlook*
- **Marelli** – Mitsuyoshi Naritomi, Vice President, R&D Interior Experience Division: *Marelli’s Vision for the Future of Vehicle Interiors*
- **Nichia** – Hiroaki Kuroda, Manager Automotive business unit: *Revolutionizing automotive interior, the future of Laser illumination*
- **Inova** – Aleksandar Živanović, Senior Sales Manager & Project Responsible for ILaS® & ILaS® RBG: *ISELED – The automotive ambient lighting standard*
- **Brightek Optoelectronics** – Dr. Darren Kao, Assistant Vice President: *A Smart Lighting Solution for MCU-Free Automotive Systems*
- **NISSHA** – Jun Sasaki, Director of Engineering, Technology and Business Development: *Smart surfaces, seamlessly integrated: mutech by NISSHA*
- **TactoTek** – Sami Hyyryläinen, SVP Sales and Business Development: *TactoTek IMSE® – Superior Performance for Functional Illuminated Surfaces*
- **Q&A**

See you there !

Continental Tech Turns Vehicle Display Into Speaker

INTERIOR NEWS



CONTINENTAL IMAGE

Using sound actuators to vibrate a surface and produce sound is a straightforward application of basic physics. Turning those vibrations into clear, audible sound and intelligible speech is a more impressive feat of magic. There have been attempts in the past to a 'flat' or 'invisible' car speaker, but not one has successfully made it into mass production.

Continental’s Ac2ated Sound technologytakes a new approach, by turning a display surface into a speaker which can deliver a lifelike, immersive audio experience.

The technology takes advantage of acoustic localization — the natural human ability to determine the direction of a sound. When audio cues such as speech or feedback come from a specific location, people instinctively turn their attention in that direction. This improves focus and interaction with vehicle displays.

Developed by Continental Engineering Services’ specialized team in vehicle acoustics and psychoacoustics, Ac2ated Sound replaces conventional speakers with compact actuators that vibrate the display itself. The display's unique structure offers excellent acoustic properties, including optimal damping and stiffness; the system creates a unified, direction-aware audio environment that elevates both functionality and design. The technology can also be integrated into flat components inside the vehicle, for example in door trims, headrests, A-pillars or the roof lining. The actuators are small, measuring just a few cm so they're easy to integrate. The benefits are significant: reduced installation complexity, lower assembly cost, major space savings — up to 90 per cent less than traditional systems — and a weight reduction of up to 40 kg.

Ennostar Sees Limitless Potential in MicroLEDs

INTERIOR NEWS

ENNOSTAR IMAGE

Ennostar is the world's № 5 LED producer by revenue, and they're a leader in comprehensive optoelectronic integration solutions. Recently, they've been heavily investing in microLED technology, and have made significant progress toward providing one-stop shopping for everything microLED — from chips to modules.

The first automotive microLED applications came in 2023 in adaptive headlamps, followed shortly by transparent display prototypes. Now, Ennostar says they have improved blue and green microLED efficacy by 10 to 15 per cent, and red-light efficacy by a whopping 90 per cent.

Ennostar says they have made substantial improvements in their mass-transfer yield, enabling them to meet rigorous auto industry quality standards, and that they have reduced microLED chip size by 40 per cent, and cut production costs, improved resolution, and accelerated market adoption. Quite a list of accomplishments!

The outstanding features of microLED technology will increasingly be integrated into future vehicles, with application areas including high-transparency side window displays with touchscreen functionality for entertainment, video conferencing, and other interactive uses. Thanks to their inherent flexibility, microLED displays can also be used as rollable screens, offering greater design freedom and enabling more versatile use of interior cabin space.

Ennostar was established in 2021 as a joint venture between Epistar and Lextar . The company recently announced intent to merge Epistar and Lextar into a single company, to be called **Ennostar**, in October 2025.

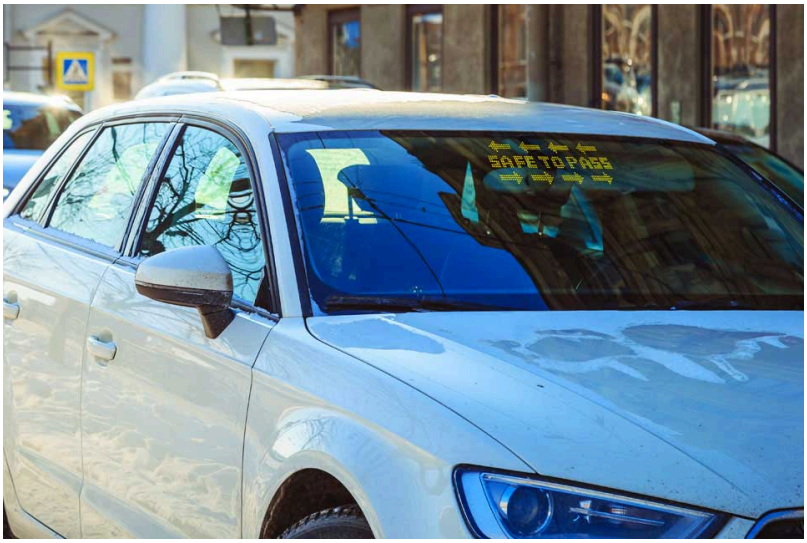
Lumineq: In-Glass Displays for Safety, Comfort

INTERIOR NEWS

LUMINEQ IMAGES

Lumineq makes in-glass displays, and their technology can turn any glass — windshields, side windows, sunrooves — into interactive see-through displays.

One of the most obvious applications is HUDs, which usually require a bulky setup with a projector, combiner, and video computer. That takes up space and has angle limitations. A more advanced solution involves laminating a transparent thin-film display directly into the windshield, eliminating the need for extra components. Lumineq'si n-glass displays offer over 70-per-cent transparency, meeting industry standards (as well as many localities' legal requirements for minimum car window transmissivity) and remaining nearly invisible when not in use.



In-glass displays could help with autonomous driving: without a human driver to make eye contact, it can be unclear if a vehicle intends to yield to a pedestrian. Displaying a message like 'safe to cross' on the windshield or side window could broadcast intent, possibly replacing a human driver's nod or arm-wave.

Integration in 'smart' windows could be useful in a shared/gig economy; when you are looking for rideshare car among hundreds of cars in the parking slot, your name could appear on the windshield. With 'smart' windows, you could unlock the car by typing the code directly on the window.

Other applications could include displaying charging status on the side window of an EV, controlling the sunroof, dimming the side window, or getting a warning notification on the side window when leaving things behind on the back seat.

IEE VitaSense Child Sensing Technology

INTERIOR NEWS

IEE IMAGES

IEE is a sensor supplier specializing in automotive safety and comfort technology. Their VitaSense radar-based interior sensing solution for unattended child detection (UCD) is "likely to become a landmark product" for the company, says CTO Alain Schumacher. "In the U.S. alone, 39 children die of vehicular heatstroke on average each year. With our experience in intelligent sensor solutions, we were eager to develop a product capable to spot these children, who are frequently sleeping infants, to enable the triggering of saving measures".

Founded in 1989 and headquartered at the Automobility Campus in Bissen, Luxembourg, the company runs operations in Europe, the U.S., and Asia. IEE employs over 4,100 people, more than 10 per cent of whom are focused on R&D.

IEE says that with a connected hardware platform and distributed, collaborative sensor systems, automakers can reduce build cost by reduced reliance on multiple sensors. With other important elements such as seatbelt reminders, hands-off detection, and occupant classification.

VitaSense is a highly accurate and reliable radar system made to detect even the vital signs of sleeping newborns. When an unattended child is detected, the vehicle's alarm and communications systems can alert caretakers or passers-by that a child is still present in the car.

The small sensing unit is easy to integrate behind the vehicle headliner without altering the interior design. It emits low-power radio signals and analyzes reflections — this is radar. The slightest motions of an occupant influence the signals, allowing VitaSense to discriminate between a living being and an inanimate object.

Webasto EV Roof Concepts for Natural, Dynamic Light

INTERIOR NEWS

WEBASTO IMAGE

The top criterion for EVs is still range. It not only influences customers' purchasing decisions, but also the investments made by car manufacturers. Every innovation is tested during vehicle development, to get the most out of a battery charge. This consideration also affects the choice of roof system.

New approaches are needed to meet the desire for an openable roof in electric vehicles. Driving with the top down (or open) gives a feeling of freedom that EV buyers don't want to go without. Manufacturers are seeking solutions that make openable roof systems compatible with EV architecture, and meet the high requirements for opening and closing times, tightness and insulation, acoustics and design.

Openable panoramic roofs provide plenty of light and a natural atmosphere in the interior. Webasto uses this large area to create additional features. For example, dynamic lighting scenes or patterns can be played on it. During the day, the roof can provide shade and a pleasant environment thanks to switchable glazing.

Innovative concepts, especially for electric vehicles, combine the advantages of fixed, transparent roofs and large openings. This results in roofs that offer the full convertible feeling, and are space-saving and lightweight at the same time. These systems even manage without the conventional cross struts, which provides a panoramic view while freeing up space for the battery system.

Integration of solar cells in the car roof not only extends the range but also reduces the vehicle's CO_2 emissions. One US manufacturer claims to have achieved an increase in range of up to 3,000 km per year with an openable Webasto solar roof. The solar power generated can also be used to sustainably power other vehicle systems, such as the air conditioning. Electric drive and openable roof systems are not mutually exclusive, and can be implemented without any range or battery restrictions. This means EV buyers can fully enjoy the convertible feeling, without range anxiety, while emitting less CO_2.

Aston Martin is First with Apple CarPlay Ultra

INTERIOR NEWS

ASTON MARTIN IMAGES

Apple's new CarPlay Ultra is making its worldwide debut in the Aston Martin Lagonda, DBX707, and 'across all new core models'.

CarPlay Ultra offers a seamless experience across the central display, and for the first time, the driver instrument cluster. It displays key vehicle information and allows users to control vehicle functions through bespoke Aston Martin and CarPlay Ultra features.

Apple pivoted away from designing their own car, but they're taking control of the digital cockpit. CarPlay Ultra replaces the gauges, the GPS, the climate control, and more; here Apple is becoming the car's operating system.

Luxury tie-ins have been a successful strategy for the iPhone maker; as with the Apple Watch Hermès, Apple is partnering with a prestigious brand to establish their technology as a status symbol.

The logic is that Aston Martin is leading the way today; tomorrow, others will follow. The cockpit becomes like an Apple Watch. That's what tech-first Chinese car buyers are said to want — will it be the same elsewhere in the world, with more stringent safety regulations and pressure from consumer and safety groups not to have everything in the car touchscreen-operated? That remains to be seen.

CarPlay Ultra features the ability to display maps and media in full screen. Drivers can curate their own multi-screen setup, with the freedom to modify the layout. There's a choice of different instrument cluster themes, colors, and wallpapers. Drivers can manage vehicle functions, such as radio and climate, using the touchscreen controls, physical buttons if they're provided, or Siri. iPhone-powered widgets can be added, as well.

Xiaomi YU7 Has HyperVision HUD

INTERIOR NEWS

XIAOMI IMAGE

Xiaomi has shared details of their YU7 electric SUV's interior.

This large, high-performance car has a panoramic display above the center console, called HyperVision. It isn’t a screen, but a 'PHUD' a panoramic HUD. It projects the image on the bottom part of the windshield. This display is highly configurable. It can show information about power and speed, a navigation system, and ADAS readouts for the driver.

The main benefit of the PHUD is its position. The image from the head-up display sits far from the driver, minimizing the need to shift gaze and focus between the real world outside and a conventional HUD. And it means Xiaomi could delete the conventional instrument panel.

The YU7 has a three-spoke steering wheel with a flat bottom and top, similar to the company's SU7 sedan. The gear selector is on the steering column, and the center console has a clean design with smooth surfaces and two wireless phone charging pads.

It confirms the trend, seen at CES 2025 in BMWs, for example, to move displays forward, to the base of the windshield, to improve safety and readability.

The Design Lounge

Huawei Maextro S800: Luxury Maybach Challenger?

THE DESIGN LOUNGE

HUAWEI IMAGES

Maextro, the premium automotive marque under Harmony Intelligent Driving, will officially launch their top-of-the-line luxury sedan, the S800, tomorrow on 30 May. Positioned as China's most advanced large luxury sedan, the S800 combines cutting-edge technology with opulent design to directly challenge high-end international offerings like the Mercedes-Maybach S-Class.

Co-developed by Huawei and former Nio contract manufacturer JAC, the S800 is Maextro's first production model and will be available with all-electric and extended range (EREV) powertrains. It measures 5,480L × 2,000W × 1,536H mm, with a 3,370-mm wheelbase. Four-wheel steering gives the long sedan an impressive

minimum turning radius of just 3.8 meters in specialized modes. A crab-walk function allows lateral movement of up to 16 degrees.

Dimension of the S800 promises a spacious interior and a refined driving experience.

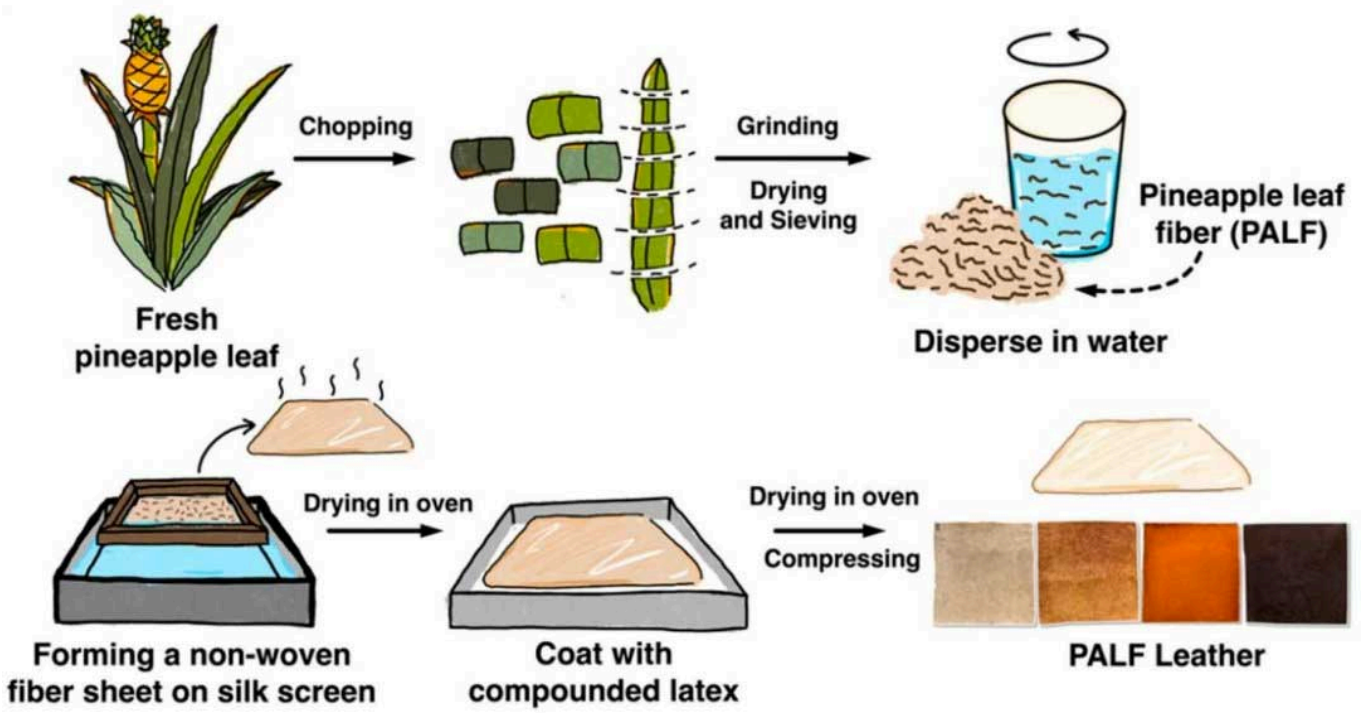
Three interior color themes will be offered: purple and white, brown and white, and a full brown heritage trim. A triple-screen panoramic dashboard, HUD, and digital side mirrors integrated into the doors add futuristic flair. Interior materials include nappa leather, handcrafted wood, and crystal accents.

Rear-seat comfort is a highlight, with an executive four-seat layout, massage and ventilation, and a starlight panoramic roof. A hidden 'Connoisseur Suite' includes dual wireless charging pads, fold-out worktables, a temperature-controlled wine chiller, and a compressor fridge. There's a dual-layer air purification system.

The launch also marks the introduction of six intelligent systems, including three world-firsts: the Maextro Turing Chassis Pro, an AI-powered adaptive suspension platform; the Guardian Angel Safety System, a full-surround active safety suite; and Starlink 5G+ Satellite Communication, developed with Huawei to maintain seamless connectivity.

Pineapple Leather for Renault-Ampere Emblème

THE DESIGN LOUNGE



'SUSTAINABILITY' JOURNAL IMAGE FROM 2023 (DOI: 10.3390/SU152115400)

Renault's Ampere division has unveiled the Emblème demo car, highlighting the innovative use of sustainable materials to tackle climate change and support resource conservation.

AMPERE EMBLÈME (RENAULT IMAGE)

The car features door panels and a center console upholstered in Piñatex, a plant-based leather, while the dashboard is upholstered with linen sourced locally from Normandy, France. These materials support Renault's mission to significantly cut the vehicle's carbon footprint while preserving comfort, style, and functionality.

Piñatex is made from waste generated by pineapple production, providing a cruelty-free alternative to animal leather. The pineapple industry produces around 40,000 tons of leaves annually. Normally discarded or burned, these leaves are repurposed by Piñatex into a sustainable material without harming animals.

Ananas Anam, the manufacturer, uses about 480 leaves, about 16 pineapple plants' worth, to produce each square meter of Piñatex. Since it's derived from agricultural waste, Piñatex doesn’t require extra land, water, pesticides, or fertilizers. Its production avoids toxic chemicals, making it safer for both humans and the environment. It also supports job creation and boosts local economies in pineapple-producing regions.

The process generates virtually no material waste, and the leftover chemical-free biomass is reused as fertilizer on local farms.

Piñatex is available in two forms: Original, with a natural texture, and Performance, which includes a synthetic coating for a more leatherlike look.

News Mobility

Waymo Wants Twice the Robotaxis by 2026

NEWS MOBILITY

WAYMO IMAGE

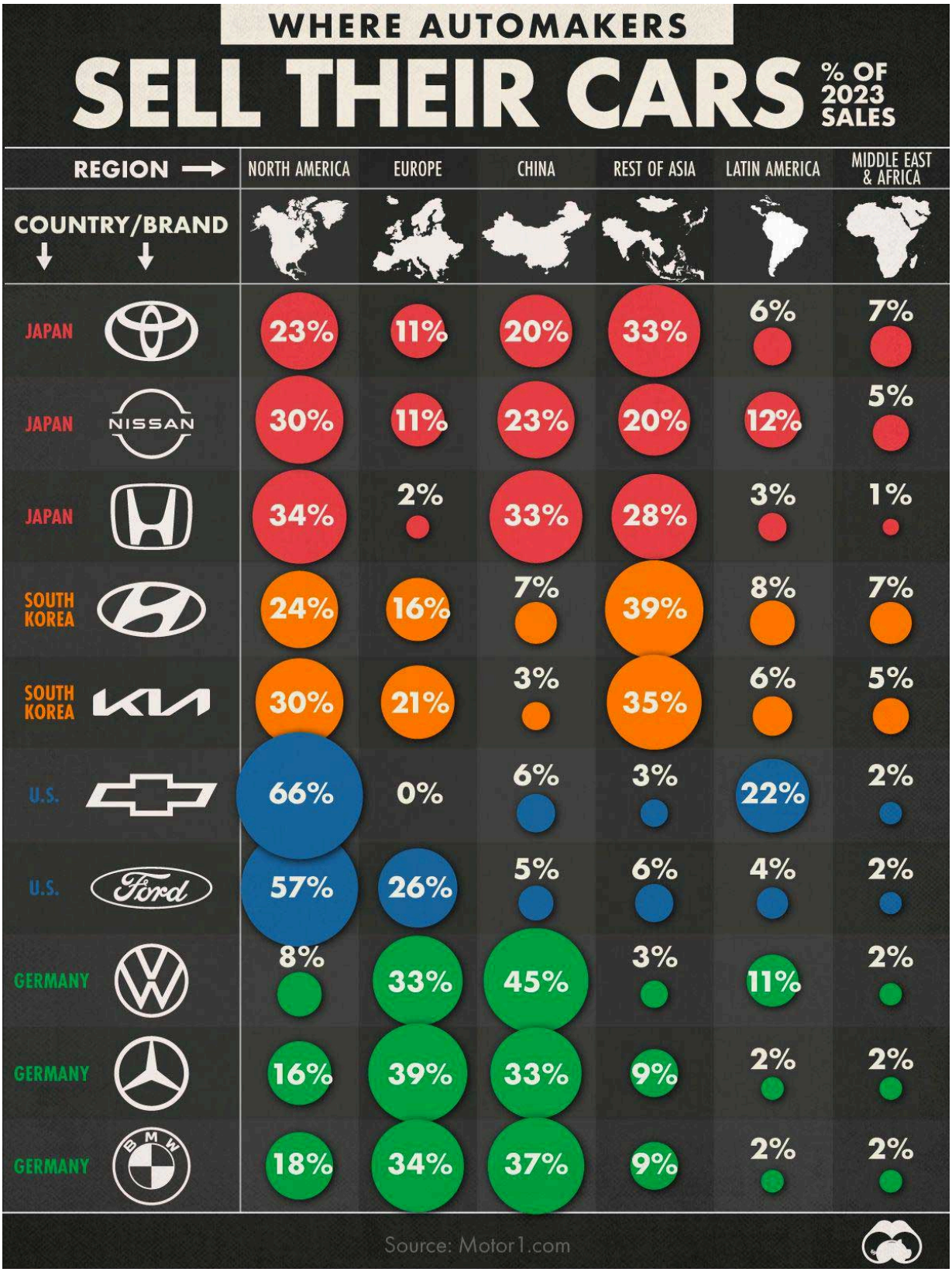
Waymo is currently making more than 250,000 trips with passengers per week in four US cities with over 1,500 robotaxis. By the end of next year, more than 2,000 additional Jaguar electric vehicles are to be converted into self-driving cars.

Vehicles based on a Chinese Zeekr model are also set to join the fleet in the near future. Over time, Waymo says (how much time is not clear), their plant in Arizona should be able to produce "tens of thousands" of autonomous cars per year.

General News

Where the World's Biggest Car Brands Sell Cars

GENERAL NEWS



VISUALCAPITALIST INFOGRAPHIC

It's a global automotive market, but which-all automakers are really global? It is interesting to understand where car brands are sold, and how the market is distributed by country. Looking at the 2023 numbers, before U.S. President Donald Trump started a trade war with destabilizing tariffs:

- Toyota is really the pan-Asian car company; 33 per cent of their sales came from the rest of Asia alone.
- Hyundai and Kia are really global, balancing between Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Kia sells more in Latin America (35 per cent) than in North America (20 per cent).
- Volkswagen sells more cars in China (45 per cent) than in all of Europe (33 per cent).
- Mercedes-Benz thrives in Europe (39 per cent) and China (34 per cent), with North America trailing behind.
- GM and Ford still rely heavily on the US; 66 per cent of GM's sales are in North America. For Ford it's 57 per cent in North America, and 26 per cent in Europe.

All in all: Japanese and Korean automakers have a diversified global footprint, German brands lean into China and Europe. and American makers are still playing mostly on home turf. These numbers do not reflect the growing presence of Chinese automakers, which are still very Chinese for China. That is changing, driven by electrification, and progressive global development of their manufacturing footprint.