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Aston Martin keeps foot on the gas pedal with new concept model

October 23, 2015



Aston Martin electric Rapide concept

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Aston Martin is speeding into both the future and China with the announcement of an electric Rapide concept vehicle.

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The concept model is being developed in conjunction with investors ChinaEquity and collaborators Williams Advanced Engineering and marks the first step in Aston Martin's move toward zero-emission sports cars. The growth of electric vehicles is nearly irreversible at this point, and any automaker hoping to compete in the future will likely need to have at least one in its fleet.

"An electric vehicle is an intrinsic part of our strategy going forward, said Matthew Clarke, public relations and brand communications manager of [Aston Martin](#), Americas. "The industry is changing and that is the direction we will go in now. Not all Aston Martin's will be electric, but there is a place for it within our product range."

Rapid growth

Although some automotive enthusiasts will always love the roar of a powerful engine, electric vehicles are increasingly popular, particularly among younger consumers. The dichotomy between fast sports cars and electric cars is far less prevalent today than it was in the earlier part of the 21st century. Just like consumers, brands are now more aware than ever of the impact their choices have on the environment.



Aston Martin Rapide E concept car

The development of an emissions-free car also allows Aston Martin to keep its less eco-friendly V12 engine in circulation. There is increasing pressure for manufacturers to decrease emissions, but rather than making all of its engines progressively smaller, Aston Martin is looking to balance larger, more powerful engines with zero-emissions cars such as the Rapide E.

The investments of ChinaEquity also set up the automaker to increase its presence and visibility in China, where luxury automobiles are becoming increasingly popular. The Rapide E is among Aston Martin's most popular vehicles in China.



Aston Martin electric Rapide E concept

In a statement, Chaoyong Wang, chairman of ChinaEquity, affirmed the stance, saying, "We are delighted that Aston Martin not only provides a high performance driving experience to customers, but also shows their social responsibility by showcasing a new generation of electric car with zero emissions. We are excited to participate in the development of the Rapide E and to make a contribution to Sino-British clean energy and green environmental strategy. We feel confident that there are significant opportunities for electric cars in China and the world."

Aston Martin Rapide E concept

Although the actual production of the car has still not begun, the brand hopes to have the car on the market in about two years.

The vehicle was showcased last week outside Lancaster House in London, where British royalty also met with PRC president Xi Jinping. For those unable to see it in person, Aston Martin has released a short video.

Steady as she goes

Aston Martin has recently demonstrated an eye for timing with emerging markets.

Since August, the brand has made a point of increasing its dealership footprint with its latest outpost in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

Aston Martin operates a number of dealership within China where its brand awareness is strong, but in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, the automaker has yet to establish a physical presence. Opening a dealership showroom is likely causing an increase in interest from affluent Indonesians who come in for test drives and

purchases ([see story](#)).

Other luxury automakers are also turning their eyes toward developing emissions-free vehicles.

As a first step toward emissions-free and autonomous vehicles, German automaker Mercedes-Benz is putting itself on the frontline of technological innovation with its latest mobile application.

Designed in collaboration with Pivotal, the Mercedes Me connected car app is being billed as the first-ever app of its kind and the first step in a new era of digital transformation for both the automaker and its industry. With consumers now wanting safety, environmental friendliness and a number of conveniences for their cars, the Mercedes Me app could position the brand as a leading developer of next-generation automobiles ([see story](#)).

"We think we can make it very exciting," Mr. Clarke said. "The idea of a RapidE, a bespoke Aston Martin that everyone knows and loves today but powered by electric motors that produces, hypothetically speaking, 800-1000 horsepower but no sound could be really exciting. We don't see [that resistance] as a problem at all."

Final Take

Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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