

MULTICHANNEL

## Mercedes-Benz reveals revolutionary hangout on wheels

October 30, 2015



*Mercedes-Benz Vision Tokyo interior*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is looking beyond the millennial market with its "mobile club lounge."

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The "Vision Tokyo" concept model is an electric-powered, autonomous driving vehicle aimed at the urban trendsetters of Generation Z. A variety of technological advances are presenting automakers with enormous opportunities to redefine the luxury automotive market.

"It's evolution," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#). "Return on Cool' requires press coverage, buzz begins with Generation Z and trickles up.

"Creating desire is a pillar of luxury. Desire and vision are intangible; they stick longer," he said.

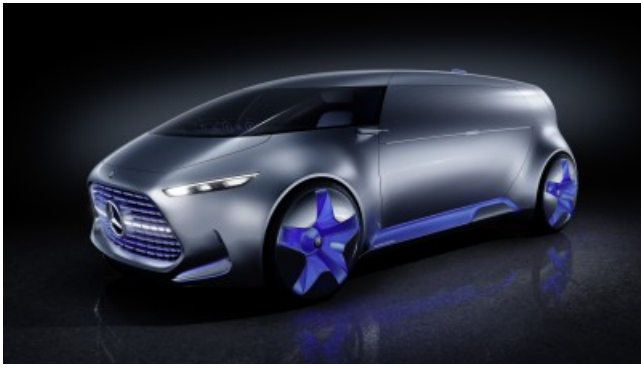
Tokyo on my mind

The concept model will be on display from Oct. 30 to Nov. 7 at the Tokyo Motor Show. For those who cannot make it, Mercedes has also posted a video to its Facebook page.

The video intercuts images of Tokyo's buildings and crowded streets with shots of the interior and exterior of the vehicle. Both the interior and exterior are lined in an electric light blue, giving the vehicle a futuristic look, and the entertainment system is made up of 3D holograms rather than a two-dimensional surface with buttons or a touch screen.

*Mercedes-Benz Vision Tokyo*

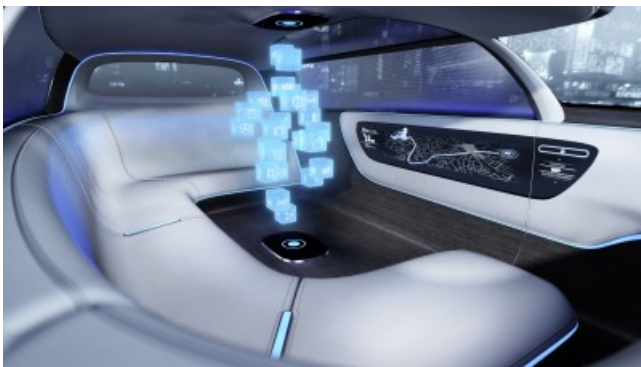
The interior of the concept model contains an ovular couch, enabling a space for conversation and interaction rather than pure transportation that traditional forward-facing seats provide. The steering wheel is out of the way of the passengers and the driver's seat is immersed within the center of the couch unless a need for manual driving emerges.



*Vision Tokyo exterior*

In addition to a battery that can be charged via induction, good for about 120 miles, the vehicle also contains a fuel cell-powered system that generates hydrogen fuel for the car, good for another 500 miles or so. The fuel cells are crash-protected because of the flammability of hydrogen.

The vehicle also becomes familiar with its occupants as they continue to use the automobile, meaning it will automatically adjust settings to match their preferences.



*Vision Tokyo interior*

The concept model is designed for a young urban audience looking to expel the stress related to driving in densely populated metropolitan areas and turn transportation into a space for fun and quality time rather than a reluctant necessity.

Accordingly, Tokyo serves as the inspiration since it is among the most densely populated cities in the world, containing almost twice as many people as New York in about three-quarters of the area and outpacing Paris by similar measures.

Although the ambition of the vehicle means it could be some years away, it capitalizes on a number of trends in various ways.



*Vision Tokyo in manual driving mode*

All consumers, but the young particularly, are demanding electric and low-emissions cars, which would make the Vision Tokyo more appealing. Additionally, millennials are continuing to stray away from purchasing vehicles in favor of alternatives such as Uber and Zipcar, a trend that could continue with Generation Z.

Targeting Generation Z in the midst of efforts throughout luxury to court the millennial also positions Mercedes favorably for the long-term, giving the automaker a head-start on a future market that many competitors have not yet

considered.



*The Vision Tokyo's door swings up to open*

Mercedes-Benz is recognized as a leader for providing stylish but also convenient and innovative cars. Launching a highly desirable product without many peers in the marketplace would continue that tradition.

Leading the way

Recent innovations by Mercedes have been understood as precursors to a larger product.

For example, Mercedes 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](#)).

Market researchers have also identified Mercedes as a leader in automotive frontier technologies.

German automakers Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi are among the leaders in strategy and execution in autonomous cars, with Tesla and Jaguar a bit further behind, according to a new report by Navigant Research.

Although fully self-driving cars are still at least a decade away, pieces of the technology are already being implemented into vehicles today, meaning that the battle to be first is already waging. Because of the safety and ease of such a vehicle, the first brand to release an effective, fully autonomous car could capture a sizable segment of the market ([see story](#)).

"Sustainability and climate change are critical issues drilled into every Gen Z's mind," Mr. Ramey said. "Mercedes is demonstrating they're the solution. Innovative ideas and vision manifest desire; particularly to those who are young and idealistic."

Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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