

COMMERCE

Porsche begins new chapter with electric Mission E

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Porsche Mission E

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker Porsche is turning the page in its history with the first electric vehicle in its fleet.

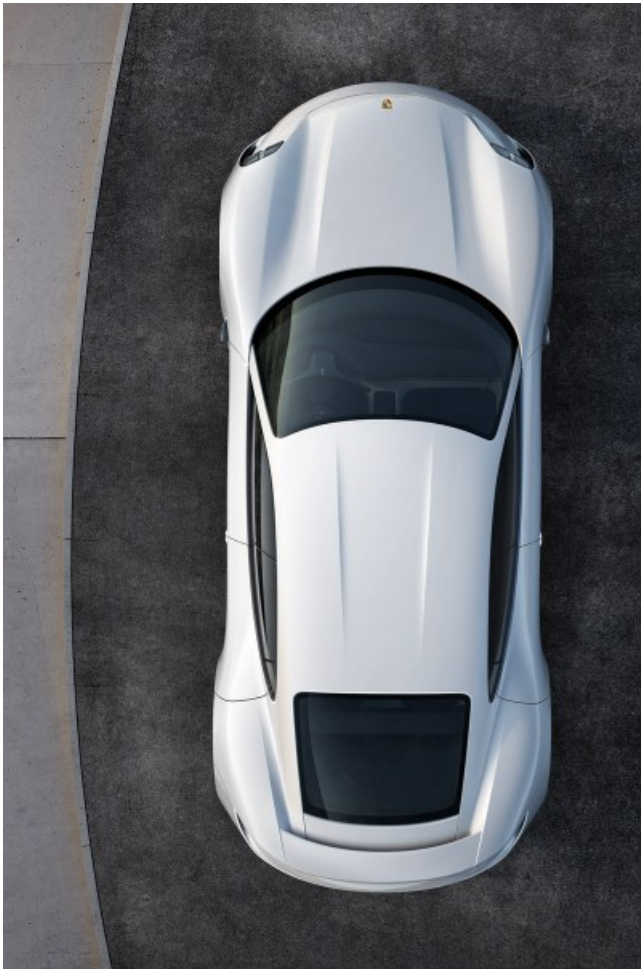
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The Mission E, which debuted as a concept car at the Frankfurt Motor Show ([see story](#)) will be 100 percent electrically powered and will launch at the end of the decade. Environmental concerns are growing among consumers, and the Mission E is Porsche's first step in blending its heritage with contemporary concerns.

"The technological trailblazer Mission E' combines the unmistakable emotional design of a Porsche with outstanding driving performance and the pioneering everyday utility of the first 800-volt electric drive system," said Christian Weiss, corporate spokesperson for [Porsche](#). "It is the first electric sports cars which deserves to be called a Porsche."

Going green

Porsche is known for its sports cars, which are regularly thought of as noisemakers and gas-guzzlers, so the Mission E may appear to be a change of direction. However, the vehicle will have a power output of 600 horsepower and be able to accelerate from a full stop to 62 mph in under 3.5 seconds, impressive numbers for any car.



Porsche Mission E

The brand is billing the Mission E as a new beginning of sorts. Dr. Olivia Blume, chairman of the executive board, said in a statement that Porsche is "beginning a new chapter in the history of the sports car." Dr. Wolfgang Porsche, chairman of the supervisory board of Porsche AG, echoed the sentiments in a statement and assured consumers that "Porsche will maintain its front-row position with this fascinating sports car."

Young consumers are sensitive to the values a brand conveys, and the influx of electric vehicles echoes increasing environmental concerns in recent years. Accordingly, the Mission E will appeal both to loyalists, who will not have to compromise speed or style, and to environmentally aware consumers, who tend to skew young and thereby set up Porsche for sustained future success.



Porsche Mission E

Furthermore, Porsche in fact has a history with electric cars, as the Lohner-Porsche Mixte Hybrid was developed by Ferdinand Porsche himself in 1900 and is often cited as the first hybrid vehicle ever created.

Emblematic of Porsche's social and political concerns, it will also be investing 1 billion euros into a new paint shop and assembly plant and expanding its engine factory for the production of electric motors, a process that will create more than 1,000 jobs.



Porsche Mission E

Although initially thought to be untouched, it was revealed in early November that the Volkswagen emission scandal, in which vehicles were outfitted with software that allowed them to cheat emissions tests, extended to Porsche, albeit to a much smaller extent than the Volkswagen and Audi brands ([see story](#)). The announcement of the Mission E will also provide corrective positive publicity to help limit or reverse any impact the scandal may have had on Porsche's image.

Mission electric

Recently, Porsche has taken steps to show that its fleet extends far beyond sports cars.

For example, it is showcasing a pair of hybrids in Canadian malls into July to recover forgotten heritage.

On Nov. 20, Porsche Cars Canada launched an E-Performance mobile display at Yorkdale Mall in Toronto that will travel around the country to show off a racing and a road-built hybrid. Having vehicles and product specialists on-site will help consumers understand Porsche's environmental ties and assuage any potential worries about too-strong a shift in brand identity ([see story](#)).

Other automakers usually associated with speed and style have also decided that electric vehicles are a necessity.

Since October, British automaker Aston Martin has been speeding into both the future and China with the announcement of an electric RapidE concept vehicle.

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 ([see story](#)).

Despite apparent contradictions on the surface, Porsche is confident that the Mission E is a good fit for the brand.

"Porsche is remaining true to its philosophy and offering the sportiest and technologically most sophisticated model in this market segment," Mr. Weiss said.

Final Take

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