

COMMERCE

Ferrari offers comfort and drivability with new grand tourer

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Ferrari GTC4Lusso

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Italian automaker Ferrari is offering consumers the pleasures of its brand anywhere, anytime with a new vehicle.

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The Ferrari GTC4Lusso, set to debut at the Geneva International Motor Show next month, aims to position the brand better for younger viewers, who tend to drive their vehicles more. As consumer habits have shifted, automakers defined by sports and racing cars have been especially pressed to adapt.

"Iconic luxury brands tend to have an elasticity reserved for them," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami. "They're able to break rules that might damage a lesser brand: examples include Porsche's Panamera and SUVs, as well as Bentley's Bentayga.

The new grand tourer

The GTC4Lusso will be the latest edition to Ferrari's fleet. According to the brand, it "hails a major revolution of the sporting grand tourer concept" because it integrates rear-wheel steering with four-wheel drive.



Ferrari GTC4Lusso

Hence, the road car is touted as being for those who want to drive a Ferrari for long journeys and short spins alike, whether scaling mountain roads or going to the grocery store, alone or among friends and family.

The GTC4Lusso will have four seats, once relatively uncommon but less so today. The California, including the second-generation model from 2014, and the current Ferrari FF are both 4-seater vehicles.



GTC4Lusso interior

Although 4-seat sports cars, convertibles and other sleeker, design-oriented types are perceived as being vehicles with little legroom for the back passengers, the GTC4Lusso was designed to have optimal comfort and plenty of room for each of the four passengers. Such designs that prioritize comfort rather than merely appearance are becoming more common, with Rolls-Royce's recent Dawn taking the same steps ([see story](#)).

The GTC4Lusso will also have a new infotainment system, including a 10.25-inch HD screen and touch technology. The front passenger will also have a display of vehicle functions as part of Ferrari's "Dual Cockpit" architecture.



GTC4Lusso

The brand also notes that, as with the FF before it, the GTC4Lusso will target a younger clientele. On average, these drivers rack up 30 percent more mileage than older consumers, meaning comfort and all-purpose driving are logical key design points.

A range of the younger consumer's values, most particularly sustainability and a focus on comfort, are particularly troublesome to automakers known for sleek, stylish and fast vehicles. Oftentimes, more room comes at the cost of aesthetically pleasing design, and better mileage and lower emissions result in lower top speeds or slower acceleration.



"Luxury brands plant seeds," Mr. Ramey said. "Today's pool of young affluents with the capacity to afford ~\$330,000 is limited.

"U.S Demographics favor younger affluent consumers," he said. "Not necessarily so in other parts of the world."

While the GTC4Lusso will not be a hybrid or electric vehicle, Ferrari has built such models before, including the 2014 limited-production LeFerrari hybrid and the preceding, ethanol-fueled F430 Spider.

Sporting luxury

Balancing environment-oriented concerns without compromising brand values is a challenge that Ferrari and other similar automakers are currently facing.

For its part, British automaker Aston Martin announced an electric RapidE concept vehicle in October 2015.

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](#)).

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

The Mission E, which debuted as a concept car at last year's Frankfurt Motor Show, 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 ([see story](#)).

For Ferrari, holding off on electric vehicles could even be an advantage.

"Ferrari will enter the electric market when appropriate," Mr. Ramey said. "Luxury never solves problems.

"When demand outstrips supply, acting as a laggard reinforces their authenticity, particularly at this price point," he said.