

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes brings luxury to vehicle sharing

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*Mercedes partners with car2go, image courtesy of car2go*

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is finding a way to stay relevant with consumers who do not feel the need to own their own vehicles by partnering with sharing service car2go for a fleet of rental cars.

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As mobile has thoroughly disrupted any past standard of consumer behavior, vehicle sharing platforms such as car2go and Zipcar are becoming more popular with consumers that live in urban areas who only need to use cars once in a while. Mercedes is making sure its place with drivers is secure through a partnership that will provide what will eventually be thousands of vehicles for users to rent through car2go.

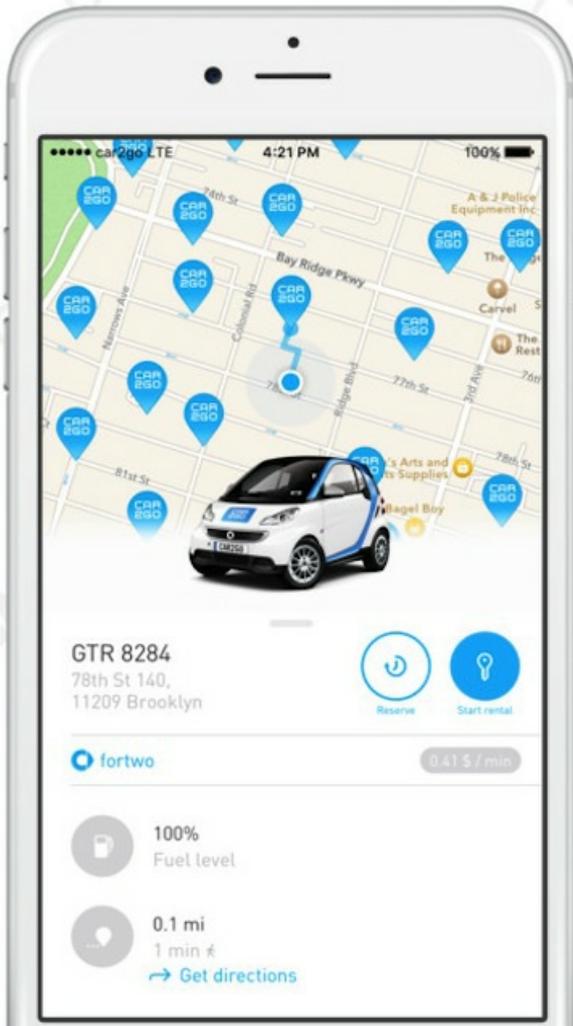
"Our 2017 CLA and GLA vehicles have proven to be extremely popular with American and Canadian drivers," said Dietmar Exler, president and CEO of Mercedes-Benz USA and NAFTA. "We are offering these outstanding new vehicles to car2go's North American members, who will now have exclusive carsharing access to Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

"Mercedes-Benz believes in car2go, and in carsharing," he said. "In fact, Mercedes-Benz has worked closely with car2go North America since it launched in 2009 with the iconic smart fortwo vehicles. car2go's new Mercedes-Benz vehicles will enable hundreds of thousands of people outside our traditional customer base to experience the CLA and GLA in the car2go fleet, as well as the outstanding new smart fortwo."

Going mobile

Car2go is a new form of car rental that allows users to rent one of its vehicles on short notice through its **mobile application**. The app will find the nearest available car2go vehicle, which users can start to rent immediately without a reservation.

Customers can unlock the vehicle through the mobile app and begin their trip, which car2go will automatically keep track of and charge. To end a trip, users park the car in a free, legal parking space within the designated "home" area and select end trip in the app.



*Cars2go app screen shot*

Mercedes is providing the platform with a fleet of 2017 Mercedes-Benz CLA and GLA vehicles. The cars will be four-door five passenger vehicles.

Austin, TX; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; Toronto, Vancouver and Washington will be the first to roll out the vehicles. Car2go hopes to see the majority of its rollout complete by the end of 2017.

The rollout comes after a three-city pilot program that saw success. Mercedes and car2go believe its luxury style and popularity will make car2go more appealing, driving even more sign ups.



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Participating cities in the United States will see the first rollouts starting now, and the Canadian cities will see the Mercedes vehicles in early February.

## Mercedes marketing

Mercedes-Benz is often known for its innovation in marketing. The brand recently got a head start on Super Bowl LI promotion and got consumers excited for the premiere by teasing its television spot on social media.

Throughout the week, Mercedes shared snippets of its Super Bowl ad through social media, getting fans pumped up to see the full vignette. The teased narrative seems to be centered around a plotline at a biker bar with the hashtag #EasyDriver heavily promoted ([see more](#)).

The German automaker also recently aimed to make driving safer, more entertaining and simpler with technology revealed this past week.

During the 2017 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, held from Jan. 5-8, Mercedes presented its CASE solutions, which stands for Connected, Autonomous, Shared & Service and Electric Drive. Mobility is in a period of change, as automakers race toward autonomous vehicles and continue to connect drivers to their cars via digital channels ([see more](#)).

"Mercedes-Benz has been a strong partner of car2go since we launched in 2009, delivering car2go's original network of smart fortwo vehicles," said Paul DeLong, CEO of car2go, North America. "Today our service is an important part of over 800,000-plus people's lives, and it's so satisfying for us to be able to reward our members with incredible new Mercedes-Benz car2gos that are just as good at taking people on long weekend getaways as they are at running errands and making short trips with friends.

"Together, car2go and Mercedes-Benz are taking a next big step by giving our members choices the competition can't match the best car on the road for parking in tight city spaces with our smart fortwo, and now our larger and more luxurious Mercedes-Benz vehicles," he said.