

EVENTS/CAUSES

## How to inaugurate a new luxury car showroom: Ask Mercedes-Benz

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By RACHEL LAMB

NEW YORK – German automaker Mercedes-Benz is highlighting customer care and product value with the opening of its new flagship Autohaus in Midtown Manhattan and demonstrated these facets with an exclusive event that revealed its new concept car for the press April 19.

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The five-story property on 11th Avenue and 54th Street is smack in the middle of the auto hub in midtown. The concept A-class car, showcased along with other new models this year, is meant to bring in the next generation of Mercedes customers.

“Our dealership 12 blocks down was right near the Lincoln Tunnel and it was very frustrating for our customers to get their cars serviced and visit us during rush hour,” said Ernst Lieb, president/CEO of [Mercedes-Benz USA](#), Montvale, NJ, at the event.

“Overall, the philosophy behind this building is everything matters,” he said. “It’s built for our customers and it’s built to ensure that we deliver on the dream they expect when they buy a Mercedes-Benz, and I think we will.”

The current Mercedes flagship is located on 41st Street, next to New York's Lincoln Tunnel that connects the city to New Jersey. It is the third-largest Mercedes-Benz

dealership in the United States in terms of new vehicles sales.

There is also a dealership on Park Avenue in uptown Manhattan.

The Autohaus on 11th Avenue will open May 2.

Hauspitable

During the event this week, many Mercedes models were showcased, including the “Fashion Police” 2010 CLS63AMG model used to tout fashion-savvy pedestrians at New York Fashion Week ([see story](#)).

Guests were given a fact sheet about the Autohaus along with cocktails and dinner.

There were also brochures featuring the new dealership.

The tri-fold pamphlet detailed each floor, included a welcome note from Mercedes-Benz's U.S. chief and explained the brand's commitment to the customer, ownership, brand and navigation experiences.

The Mercedes Autohaus is 330,000 square feet.

Mercedes' Autohaus is a service station, showroom and dealership rolled into one glass-enclosed package.

“One of the main things that matters in Manhattan is parking,” Mr. Lieb said. “This building is built exactly for that purpose.”

The facility can accommodate more than 550 vehicles on-site.

The showrooms feature new and pre-owned vehicles, Smart brands and Sprinter models.

The structure hides three of its floors underground. Customers can drive into the service entrance via side streets.

Customers can take advantage of the amenities that are offered throughout the dealership such as a children's playground, wireless capability, café and customer lounge.

Drive buy

Another main part of the Mercedes event was to preview the new A-Class concept car before the New York Auto Show, beginning tomorrow.

The new model, a sleek two-door model with lots of curves and angles, will be premiered during the show. It will also debut at the same time during the Shanghai Auto Show in China.

The concept car is targeted toward a younger, female audience, per Mercedes executives.

Mercedes is planning to release more new models for the next year, including the CLS, SLS Roadman and C-class Coupe.

“They have the potential to attract new customers for the brand,” said Joachim Schmidt, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Mercedes-Benz, Stuttgart, Germany.

“In fact, our new line of sports cars will be more younger, more desirable and more versatile than anything you know in this effort,” he said. “It will not just surpass its predecessor, but bring in a new generation.”

Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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