

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus accelerates lifestyle strategy as automakers move beyond cars

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Lexus' new lounge acts as a window into its brand image. Image credit: Lexus

By DANNY PARISI

As automotive brands look to expand their influence into general luxury lifestyle, Lexus is fueling its own ambitions with the opening of a high-end lounge at the Brussels Airport in Belgium.

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Lounge by Lexus, as the new project is called, is a 7,500-square-foot luxury lounge for affluent travelers passing through the airport. The lounge is one of many projects in recent months from major automotive brands that seek to establish an entire set of lifestyle products and services beyond just simply manufacturing vehicles.

"With half a million international guests visiting Brussels Airlines' Business Lounge each year, Lexus sees this partnership for the Lounge by Lexus as a unique and exciting opportunity to bring its core brand values to a global audience, reaching beyond the automotive world," said Pascal Ruch, head of Lexus Europe, Brussels, Belgium.

"This is a place where people can enjoy and get to know Lexus without getting behind the wheel of one of its cars."

Lifestyle of luxury

Customers who buy high-end cars do not think of them the same way they might think of other products they purchase.

When one spends several hundreds of thousands of dollars on a car, it tends to be a big part of his or her life. Whole communities have sprung up around auto brands such as BMW and Rolls-Royce.

Many luxury auto brands are embracing this phenomenon and seeking to create entire lifestyle brands around their cars.



Lounge by Lexus. Image credit: Lexus

Lexus' airport partnership is the latest example of such a strategy. The auto brand has created a new lounge at the Brussels Airport as a place where affluent travelers can rest and enjoy their stay while they wait for their flights.

Some who visit the lounge may be Lexus owners, though ownership is not necessary to enter.

The lounge acts simultaneously as a resting area and a gateway into the world of Lexus. The brand has carefully curated the decorations and attractions throughout the lounge to offer visitors an example of what Lexus stands for.

For example, some of the chairs are modeled after seats from Lexus vehicles, and furniture throughout the lounge comes from Lexus Design Award winners.

Lounge by Lexus

The lifestyle push from automotive brands has been a major trend over the last year, affecting all of the biggest names in luxury automotive.

For example, British automaker Aston Martin opened its online shop in a bid to push its status as a lifestyle brand.

Shop.AstonMartin.com hosts a series of products created by the automaker including luggage, artwork, vehicle accessories, a ready-to-wear line and more. To celebrate its racing team, a Red Bull racing collection will also be available on the site coming soon ([see story](#)).



Lexus has branched out into yachts. Image credit: Lexus

Toyota Corp.-owned Lexus previously brought the luxury automotive world closer to the water with its yacht concept that goes a step further than other automakers' seaworthy designs.

Lexus is putting its Sport Yacht concept into actual production with real models going out to customers by the end of next year. The design was awarded by Japan's "Boat of the Year" committee at the Japan International Boat Show in Yokohama, as a flood of automakers look for their own yacht interpretations ([see story](#)).

Last year, British automaker Rolls-Royce Motor Cars spent the summer among the most discerning luxury patrons as they holiday in destinations dotting the Mediterranean coastline.

Each summer, Rolls-Royce heads to the "playgrounds of the wealthy and influential" with a number of partners to build brand awareness. In 2017 Rolls-Royce selected Spain's Andalusian coastline and the Cte d'Azur in Southern France ([see story](#)).

These lifestyle pushes from automotive brands will only continue to expand, particularly as customers continuously identify auto brands with more than just cars.

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