

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW teases electric, automated model

May 17, 2018



BMW iNext modeling. Image courtesy of BMW Group

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker BMW is giving a first look at its upcoming iNext vehicle, which aims to combine future mobility technologies in a road car.

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During its annual general meeting on May 17, BMW previewed initial designs for the iNext to shareholders. The iNext, which will officially debut later this year, is poised to put pressure on Tesla with highly automated electric driving.

iNext steps

Few details were shared about the iNext on May 17. However, BMW's chairman of the board of management Harald Krüger shared during a presentation that the iNext would be premiering later this year as a Vision Vehicle.

Described as a "modular system for the future," the electric and technology-focused iNext will be produced at BMW's Plant Dingolfing in Germany starting in 2021.

"The iNext project is our building kit for the future," Mr. Krüger said in a statement. "It will benefit the entire company and all our brands.

"For the first time, we are combining all key technologies for future mobility in one vehicle," he said. "The iNext is fully electric, fully connected and also offers highly automated driving."

The iNext reflects BMW's focus on electric cars. Last year, BMW Group sold more than 50,000 electric vehicles, exhibiting the importance of electric-powered automobiles in today's auto industry.



BMW's headquarters was transformed into batteries to celebrate its 100,000th EV. Image credit: BMW

Electric vehicles have slowly become a significant portion of the automobile industry, forcing automakers to embrace the eco-friendly strategy. By 2030, India's serious pollution problem will be supported by an initiative from the country's energy department that will attempt to cease the selling of gas-powered vehicles ([see story](#)).

"In December 2017, I handed over our 100,000th electrified vehicle at BMW Welt: a BMW i3," Mr. Krüger said during his speech. "I admit, I expected the customer to be a young person who was already familiar with electric driving.

"But, it was actually an 80-year-old gentleman, standing in front of me with a big smile on his face. He had spent his whole life driving rival models with a combustion engine. I think this demonstrates: It is never too late to switch to BMW and our electric models."

The group is aiming to have 25 electrified vehicles by 2025, with 12 of these fully electric. The automaker is also aiming to sell 140,000 electric vehicles in 2018.

As consumer behavior and needs change, BMW is adapting to the future of mobility.

BMW and Daimler, two of the biggest names in luxury automotive today, have announced that they are joining forces to merge their urban mobility and car-sharing units.

The two companies have both invested heavily in ridesharing services, smartphone applications for calling taxis and other on-demand mobility services. As car brands seek to compete with the likes of Uber and Lyft, this merger will allow them to pool their resources and present a stronger challenge ([see story](#)).

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