

AUTOMOTIVE

Automakers balance accessibility, exclusivity with interactive experiences

February 5, 2019



Aston Martin's new AMR experience will provide training on driving its vehicles on a racetrack. Image credit: Aston Martin

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Britain's Aston Martin is the most recent luxury automaker to update its experiential offerings in an effort to draw a new class of affluent drivers.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

From pop-ups to exclusive test drives, more automakers are taking luxury experiences to a new level. While some are geared towards current owners, other experiences are meant to make high-end vehicles more accessible.

"Interactive experiences are so crucial for luxury automakers because they broaden the appeal of these vehicles to younger Instagram-hungry audiences who are more likely to pay for experiences, not only for their enjoyment but to also share on social media," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at iSeeCars, Woburn, MA.

Exclusive experiences

As car buyers' interests and habits evolve, luxury automakers are going in new directions to get more consumers in the driver's seat.

This year's offerings from Aston Martin's Art of Living program include behind-the-scenes access to Le Mans, road trips through Utah or the Swiss Alps and factory access. The new AMR Driver's Club experience will provide training on driving its vehicles on a racetrack, categorized by different levels of experience ([see story](#)).

Costs for the packages will range from 750 pounds to 7,600 pounds or \$978 to \$9,910 at current exchange, which can include car, hospitality and accommodation depending on the course selected. While still an investment, the pricing structure is more accessible than purchasing an Aston Martin outright.



Porsche is selling customers experiences. Image credit: Porsche

Experiences can also come in the form of alternative ownership. Last year, Porsche Cars North America launched a short-term rental pilot and a peer-to-peer car sharing pilot.

Porsche Drive gives drivers access to new Porsche models for up to a week. The vehicles in Porsche Host are owned by private individuals who rent their cars through car sharing company Turo and may be older or vintage models ([see story](#)).

The German automaker also teamed up with Forza Motorsport and ESL, the world's largest esports company, for its 911 GT3 RS Challenge. The competition engaged gamers from around the world as they begin racing online, with the eventual winners getting behind the wheel of Porsche's cars ([see story](#)).

In the United Kingdom, Track Days offers drivers the chance to get behind the wheel of models from Lamborghini, McLaren, Ferrari and more. These driving experiences take place at a variety of courses, including famed circuits such as Silverstone.

Other automakers choose to travel to reach potential new drivers.

British automaker Rolls-Royce will bring its bespoke vehicles to France's Courchevel 1850 this ski season.

Resort guests can ride in a chauffeur-driven Cullinan to and from the slopes. During the evenings, Rolls-Royce will also host exclusive informational events about its brand and heritage ([see story](#)).



Clients can experience Cullinan on and off-road in the French Alps. Image credit: Rolls-Royce

In a similarly travel-centric move, Italian automaker Maserati is heading to winter resorts to reach the affluent on their seasonal holidays.

The Maserati Winter Experience will span five countries, as the brand hosts test drives, events and displays. For Maserati, this initiative will act as a launchpad for its 2019 models, allowing consumers to try out the vehicles in winter's adverse conditions ([see story](#)).

Following months of campaigns and stunts surrounding the I-Pace, British automaker Jaguar hosted pop-up exhibits in the top electric vehicle markets throughout the nation. The experience gave consumers the opportunity to test drive the new I-Pace and also featured the entire 2019 Jaguar lineup, including those with hybrid and traditional engines ([see story](#)).

Changing course

As affluents grow more accustomed to the sharing economy, especially younger generations, luxury automakers need to emphasize the unique experiences that come with ownership.

For instance, Italian automaker Ferrari invites clients from around the world to participate in its Ferrari Cavalcade.

In 2014, the event hosted 90 drivers from 27 countries on a course through Sicily, Italy. The annual drive celebrates the brand's Italian roots through art, history and landscapes ([see story](#)).

Automaker McLaren works to maintain a level of exclusivity while also being inclusive to all auto fans, an executive from the company revealed during a panel at Luxury FirstLook 2019, adding that its millennial audience has much different motivation behind its purchases.

It is important to craft one-of-a-kind experiences that consumers will cherish and remember. McLaren organized a playful group outing in which 25 McLaren owners formed a group and took a ride to order through a drive-through window at a fast food joint.

Those customers remain in contact and communicate through a special group chat on the mobile platform WhatsApp. The automaker's strategy makes McLaren customers feel as though they are in a special club ([see story](#)).

"Automakers can stand out by creating the right interactive experience that encourages its customers to share it with their audiences," Ms. Blackley said. "This creates more buzz for the brand and would likely attract future customers."

"As luxury vehicles become more opulent, automakers have to create over-the-top experiences that are a reflection of these vehicles," she said.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.