

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes explores friendship, youth culture in new film

February 8, 2019



*Mercedes-Benz is appealing to Middle Eastern women in a new campaign. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is appealing to a new generation of Middle Eastern drivers with a female-centered film set in Dubai.

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

The film follows a young woman and her friendships with women in a rapidly-changing culture. Mercedes balances appealing to younger drivers with a special focus on Middle Eastern women who are gaining more freedoms.

"Mercedes is a legacy luxury automaker with global appeal known for its craftsmanship, forward design and high performance," said [Jim Gentleman](#), independent marketing consultant for lifestyle brands. "The entire She's Mercedes video series and its newest release featuring Dubai visual artist Leena Al Ghouti promotes a sense of ambition, creativity, boldness and success all in line with the Mercedes brand.

"Storytelling is important for all brands as a means to translate functional, somewhat distant products and services into an emotion-based language that consumers can relate to on a more personal level," he said. "This approach helps potential buyers see how a brand like Mercedes might fit into their lives."

Mr. Gentleman is not affiliated with Mercedes-Benz, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Mercedes-Benz](#) was reached for comment.

### Dubai drivers

Influencer and visual artist Leena Al Ghouti stars in the new film for Mercedes, titled "My Chosen Family." She narrates the film in her native Arabic, and it is accompanied with English subtitles.

Ms. Al Ghouti boasts more than 269,000 Instagram followers, making her an important figure in an untapped market. To further the reach of the campaign, Mercedes posted its new video on YouTube as well as IGTV and its "She's Mercedes" Instagram page.

### *Leena Al Ghouti stars in the new She's Mercedes film*

As the film begins, there are glimpses of the young men and women who live in the city along with establishing

shots of Dubai.

"The more we express ourselves as a community, the more visible we are in society," Ms. Ghouti says. "Our generation represents something different as we support and inspire each other."

In one scene Ms. Al Ghouti is at the movie theater with her friends, and in another instance they are playing cards at a bustling restaurant.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Get in @shesmercedes #shesmercedes #MercedesBenz #MyChosenFamily #ad

A post shared by Leena Ha (@leenalghouti) on Feb 5, 2019 at 3:47am PST

#### *Instagram post from Leena Al Ghouti*

To add a sense of timelessness and relatability, Ms. Al Ghouti and her girlfriends take a road trip through the desert in a vintage Mercedes-Benz sedan. Sharing a long drive together is a quintessential moment of friendship that is recognizable across generations and cultures.

"The memories we share with each other give us the courage to flourish," Ms. Al Ghouti says.

#### Middle East market

The Middle Eastern market, including women drivers, is increasingly becoming a priority for Mercedes-Benz and other premium automakers.

As of 2017 Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates hold the top two spots, respectively, as the largest auto markets in the Gulf region.

Over the last 10 years the luxury goods sector in the Middle East has had an incline of 8 to 10 percent, but low oil prices and global macroeconomic factors are set to drag the market down to 4 to 5 percent in the next few years.

However, the sales of luxury cars per capita are still the highest in the Middle East ([see story](#)).

After Saudi Arabia officially ended its longtime ban on female drivers, luxury automakers were among the first to welcome women to the driver's seat

Since the end of the driving ban was announced in fall 2017, auto manufacturers have had time to evaluate how they will market to changing demographics of Saudi Arabian drivers. Audi, Jaguar and Ford were among the automakers that released short films commemorating the historic occasion ([see story](#)).

"There have been recent gains and progress for women's rights in the Middle East [and] they represent a substantial audience of potential buyers for premium automakers around the world," Mr. Gentleman said. "Mercedes wants to be on the right side of history."

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

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