

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes explores Japanese culture with content creators

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*A group of creatives road tripped around Japan in a G-Class. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is embracing the rugged nature of its G-Class with the help of photographers and filmmakers on a two-week road trip through Japan.

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The off-road vehicle is the ideal companion for the group of creatives who documented their journey across the Asian country's diverse landscapes. Recent efforts from Mercedes have offered more in-depth looks at different cultures, helping relate the brand's vehicles to exploration and other values embraced by younger affluents.

**Mercedes-Benz** was reached for comment.

### Japan Explorers

Mercedes enlisted photographers Alen Palander and Max Muench, filmmakers Oliver Astrologo and Simone Sampo and vlogger Carlos Kurschilgen to be the "Japan Explorers." The group spent two weeks traveling the country in two 2018 G-Class models.

Mercedes has shared three vlogs covering the road trip, each with a run time of about 10 minutes. The shorts cover Japan's urban culture, spirituality and other characteristics, as well as the men's creative processes.

### *The trailer for Mercedes' Japan Explorers vlog series*

The first episode begins at Tokyo's Kanda Myojin Shrine, where the two G-Class cars receive a traditional Japanese car blessing.

Afterwards, the men drive to a garden in Roppongi Hills and casually interview a Japanese photographer they meet. The photographer speaks about how he turns to nature as inspiration, a concept that is tied to the country's appreciation of the natural world as a whole.

The group is followed by a camera crew and each man does on-camera interviews. The vlogs also include some of the creatives' own work, such as their photography or other videos capturing their individual perspectives.

After the explorers leave Tokyo, they also visit the Japanese countryside.

Accompanied by the crew and translators, they drive the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route in the southern part of Japan. On day five, the explorers watch the sunset over the Kii mountain range.

Their journey concludes with a return to Tokyo and a visit to the Mori Building Digital Art Museum, which reflects Japan's advanced technology culture.

#### Content and culture

Recently Mercedes-Benz also appealed to a new generation of Middle Eastern drivers with a female-centered film set in Dubai.

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.

As in Japan Explorers, the automaker turned to another content creator for an added layer of authenticity and relatability. Influencer and visual artist Leena Al Ghouti stars in "My Chosen Family" and narrates the film in her native Arabic ([see story](#)).

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus also recently collaborated with a group of athletes and creatives in a digital series that emphasizes the design and craftsmanship behind its first ES F Sport.

With a diverse cast including a watchmaker, a former Harlem Globetrotter and a street artist, Lexus is once again hoping to connect with a new class of contemporary drivers. The six "Lexus Accelerators" are each featured in a short film and discuss how values such as precision and passion are reflected in both their craft and the Lexus ES F Sport.

Each episode follows a similar formula, in which a voiceover accompanies scenes of the collaborators at work and driving the ES F Sport ([see story](#)).