

AUTOMOTIVE

## Porsche, Genesis turn to Super Bowl to court luxury's next generation

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Genesis' Super Bowl ad stars Chissy Teigen and John Legend. Image courtesy of Genesis

By SARAH JONES

During Super Bowl LIV on Feb. 2, automakers Porsche and Genesis are introducing their new visions of luxury to a massive television audience.

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Porsche is courting new clientele with an ad centered on its electric Taycan, while Genesis is using a star-studded spot to present a new "Young Luxury" positioning. Marking Genesis' first Super Bowl commercial and Porsche's return to the big game after more than 20 years, these placements are indicative of the continued power and promise of exposure available during the widely watched sporting event.

"We have just taken our first steps into the electric age with the launch of the Taycan," said Klaus Zellmer, president/CEO of [Porsche Cars North America](#).

"With the new technology, new audiences are looking at our brand," he said. "We want to reach out to those people with a fun story about what makes a Porsche a Porsche.

"We want people who may be less familiar with Porsche to know the true sports car DNA of the Taycan. We say that every Porsche has a soul, and the Taycan is soul electrified. We want the ad to make an emotional connection to Porsche soul for a new generation."

Automotive ads

Porsche has not broadcast a national television ad during the Super Bowl since 1997. For its return to the big game, Porsche worked with agency Cramer-Krasselt to create a 60-second spot that blends action and humor.

Titled "The Heist," the short opens at the Porsche Museum. A security guard is making the rounds with a flashlight, unaware that there is a hooded figure sitting in the driver's seat of a Taycan.

Taking advantage of the quiet electric engine, the thief rolls the car away from its display and onto an elevator. The staff do not notice the breakaway until a motion-sensor alarm in the elevator is triggered.

Springing to action, the security guards race to get into a number of the historic models on view to chase the thief.

Two guards play a game of rock paper scissors to determine who will drive off in a Spyder, while the "new guy" is stuck driving a Porsche-Diesel Super tractor.

In a comedic moment, the high-speed car chase slows to a crawl as the line of cars passes two policemen in a cruiser. Eventually, one of the guards takes a shortcut that puts him face-to-face with the thief, ending the chase.

Instead of a confrontation, the guard simply says, "I got you." After taking off his hood, the robber is revealed to be one of the staff at the museum as he asks, "Who wants to be the bad guy next?"

Porsche leaves viewers with the tagline, "Finally, an electric car that steals you."

### *Porsche's The Heist*

By including a line of Porsche cars throughout history, the automaker is aiming to show that the Taycan is one with the rest of its sporting identity.

"[We're showing] that driving a Porsche is always thrilling, and Porsche sports cars are iconic," Mr. Zellmer said. "Each of the cars in this ad was a game changer in its time. The Taycan has the same Porsche soul. It is the new icon of electric sports cars."

In a recent interview with Bloomberg, Mr. Zellmer said that half of the consumers who have bought Taycans are new to the Porsche brand. This Super Bowl spot is an opportunity for the automaker to introduce itself to even more new buyers.

Similarly to Porsche, Hyundai-owned Genesis is making its Super Bowl debut with the help of celebrities Chrissy Teigen and John Legend.

Tied to the launch of its first SUV, Genesis' commercial is also rolling out a new "Young Luxury" positioning.

Ahead of the game-day ad, Genesis has shared short teasers. Contrasting the couple's approachable personas with more traditional ideas of luxury, the spots place them at an upscale party.

In one clip, the couple approaches an oyster tower. As Ms. Teigen excitedly grabs one of the mollusks, the entire tower collapses.

Rather than taking the blame, the model throws her husband under the bus and then scurries off with one of the oysters that landed on the floor.

Another short finds the couple talking to the host, who is explaining that he had the ice for a sculpture brought in from the Arctic. Responding, Ms. Teigen takes a bite of a cracker that she says was "brought in from my purse."

Both spots include the tagline, "Old luxury gets a wake-up call."

### *Teaser for Genesis' Super Bowl spot*

"Genesis is the youngest luxury automotive brand in the industry," said Mark Del Rosso, CEO of **Genesis Motor North America**. "We're determined to make impossible extinct through infusing everything we do with a spirit of youth and wonder. We're a young brand, why not act our age and disrupt the luxury space a bit to stand out?"

"'Old luxury,' we feel, takes itself too seriously. Experiencing luxury should be fun," he said. "The best thing is 'young' isn't meant to express an age, but rather a mindset, so everyone can come along. Whereas 'old luxury' tends to leave the velvet rope to the VIP area up to maintain exclusivity, 'young luxury' pulls the rope up and holds it up for others to walk under and join we're totally inclusive."

Founded in 2015, Genesis is a much younger brand than many of its competitors. The automaker took the top spot in J.D. Power's most recent Initial Quality Study, and the marque's sales grew 106 percent in 2019.

In October, Genesis appointed Mr. Del Rosso, the former president of Audi of America, as its CEO for North America as it looks to take on a bigger piece of the luxury auto market.

"There's no bigger stage of 'event television' where many viewers watch as much to see the commercials as much as to see the game itself," Mr. Del Rosso said. "Also, we're in the early days of telling the world about our first-ever luxury sport utility vehicle, the Genesis GV80 SUV, and there's perhaps no more effective way to quickly expose the GV80 than through a great Super Bowl spot."

Brands should consider how they launch their Super Bowl ads.

"If you want engagement from your Super Bowl commercial, you should invest in a holistic marketing campaign pre- and post-air that teases leading up to the spot and has additional content and social media following it," said Neal Hughes, brand strategist for [Sol Marketing](#).

"Releasing the full spot before the airdate puts your spot at risk to be ignored by people who have already seen it," he said. "Often pre-released spots will get a bump in news articles leading up to the Super Bowl but rarely dominate the conversation the next day."

#### Super Bowl spots

It is estimated that a 30-second Super Bowl ad this year costs about \$5 million. While it may seem counterintuitive for a luxury brand to broadcast to a mass audience, the game drew 98.2 million viewers last year, many of whom are likely able to afford high-end products.

"The Super Bowl is the ultimate platform," Mr. Hughes said. "If done correctly, it is the most guaranteed advertising avenue to launch your brand into the public conversation.

"If you have the funds, you can make a statement that people will remember for decades," he said. "Take Apple's '1984' ad; it has become so ingrained in our public culture that advertisers began to make parodies of it. That is true staying power.

"So while the price point of luxury vehicles may be prohibitive to some viewers, you will not get a larger platform to make a brand announcement, which is why year after year, brands flock to the Super Bowl and the media buy breaks the previous year's record."

In recent years, other luxury brands have made their own Super Bowl debuts.

During the big game in 2017, U.S. jeweler Tiffany & Co. debuted a new fashion jewelry collection during a 60-second television spot.

In a first for the brand, Tiffany's commercial featured singer Lady Gaga, who also performed during the Super Bowl Halftime Show. Part of the Grace Coddington-produced "Legendary Style" campaign ([see story](#)), the commercial promoted Tiffany's HardWear collection ([see story](#)).

LVMH-owned cognac brand Hennessy embraced the spirit of competition in its first Super Bowl advertisement that ran in 2019.

Although Hennessy was rearing an earlier campaign, its involvement in the Big Game was still notable. While the National Football League ended its ban on liquor advertisements during games starting with the 2017 season, spirits commercials remain limited due to other network television regulations and contract stipulations, which allowed Hennessy the chance to stand out in its category during the prime marketing event ([see story](#)).

Porsche and Genesis' choice of humor will likely resonate with football fans.

"For the Super Bowl, humor is the expectation of the audience," Mr. Hughes said. "It is a day predicated in casual drinking and chicken wings. People get frustrated when ads aren't funny.

"Humor isn't the only way to cut through the noise, but it is the safest. Some brands will opt for a moving or awe-inspiring ad and at times, will get a very positive reception, and Chrysler does an excellent job of this," he said. "However, if too many brands take this approach, people begin to see it as not genuine, and it becomes background noise.

"Also, moving ads usually require brands to make a statement, further putting them at risk for public ire. I believe that brands should stand for something, and society expects that brands show up with a set of values and beliefs. I also believe that brands can do this in a much more cost-effective way instead of spending millions on a single media buy."