

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi gives Santa an upgrade, pursues a progressive future

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Audi e-tron GT concept vehicle. Image credit: Audi

By NORA HOWE

German automaker Audi is cherishing the old and embracing the electrifying future of mobility in a sleek new holiday campaign.

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In an effort to reduce their carbon footprints and embrace sustainability, luxury automakers are opting for electrification and renewable energy. Through a modern and festive narrative, Audi introduces the fully electric e-tron GT concept vehicle.

"During a year when we could all use a little inspiration, or even reinvention, the story of Santa getting a new, more electrifying version of his sleigh is our way of celebrating the holiday season in an inspired and unexpected way," said Amanda Koons, brand and marketing communications manager for **Audi of America**, Washington, D.C. "In October, we kicked off our new global campaign Future is an Attitude,' which showcased how we envision what the future of mobility could look like.

"In Audi: Upgrade' we give you a quick glimpse into Audi's vision of what tomorrow will bring," she said. "A future that promises the thrill of electrification mixed with modern sophistication, and right now, a dash of a holiday mischief and magic."

Ambassador for a new era

The holiday film follows Santa Claus as he prepares to embark on his annual Christmas Eve journey. However, instead of the traditional jolly man in a large red suit who lives in a cabin in the North Pole, this Santa wears a tailored grey suit and lives in a contemporary mansion, reminiscent of James Bond.

He stares at the northern lights through a large window in his living room, then checks the time on his pocket watch. His assistant, or head elf, walks into the room and calmly tells Santa, "It's time."

They walk to the elevator where a futuristic iris recognition technology scans the assistant's eye and the door opens. They ride the elevator in silence until the door opens again, this time into a massive basement room where an Audi vehicle sits in the center.

"Your new sleigh," says the assistant. Santa smiles gently and walks toward the car with intrigue.



The e-tron GT is a concept car and is not available as a production model. Image credit: Audi

Pleasantly surprised, Santa walks around examining the vehicle's exterior details. "No runners," he says excitedly to his assistant.

"Welcome to the future," his assistant replies.

They load the trunk with presents and Santa speeds through a winding wintery road on his way to deliver Christmas gifts, passing reindeer along the way.

The fully electric concept vehicle was inspired by Audi's vision for the future and its dedication to challenging the status quo in order to shape a progressive future. Through modifications to supply chains, vehicle design and engineering and production emissions, Audi commits to reducing CO2 emissions and becoming carbon-neutral by 2050.

Santa's sleigh gets an electric upgrade

While Santa's new sleigh is merely a concept vehicle and not available as a production model, Audi has introduced a new era of electrification with the e-tron SUV and the e-tron Sportback, committing to a goal that one-third of all new Audi models will be electrified in the next five years ([see story](#)).

Push to renewable auto

As consumer interest builds and governments pursue restrictions on combustion engines, luxury auto manufacturers are beginning to make strides toward electrification and renewable energy.

Last month, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a ban on new vehicles with combustion engines to begin in 2030, which was pushed up from 2035.

China has set a target for 20 percent of the vehicles sold in the country to have plug-based powertrains by 2025, while Paris will be banning gas-engine vehicles by 2030. In September, California governor Gavin Newsom signed legislation barring the sale of new fuel cars, SUVs and light trucks in the state beginning in 2035 ([see story](#)).

Last week, British automotive company Bentley Motors became the first luxury auto company to run its in-house logistics on 100 percent renewable fuel.

Ensuring that environmental factors are at the center of current and future supply chain design is core to the company's vision of sustainability. Following the installation of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fueling facilities in Crewe, Bentley has taken another step closer to its goal of becoming the most sustainable luxury automotive manufacturer ([see story](#)).

Audi's own "Future is an Attitude" philosophy is putting sustainability, digitalization and design at the forefront.

The automaker has been centering sustainability for some time. In particular, Audi's first electric vehicle, the e-tron, has been the centerpiece of major marketing campaigns including Super Bowl spots ([see story](#)).

"At Audi, our brand is not just about focusing on technology," Audi's Ms. Koons said. "It's also about showcasing how technology is making a meaningful and positive contribution to people's lives."

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