

AUTOMOTIVE

Automakers make marketing a family affair, while others stay in their lane

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Several luxury automakers center families in their marketing in an attempt to expand audiences. Image courtesy of Lexus

By KATIE TAMOLA

Gone are the days of luxury automotive ads that only illustrate a need for speed.

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What may have once been viewed as an arena for single people looking solely for excitement and expression through their luxury vehicles, has evolved into a more thoughtful space. While some brands center on family values and sentimentality, others remain in their thrilling, independent lane.

"Luxury car ownership continues to steadily grow," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at [iSeeCars](#), Boston. "With the rise in popularity of crossover SUVs, the perception of luxury vehicles has evolved from being impractical joyriding cars to also being a smart choice for family vehicles thanks to their safety and technology."

Family ties

Luxury automotive brands are continuously contemplating family values and societal issues in their marketing efforts and, for many, luxury has become woven into the family outing.

From Lexus to Bentley, automakers are casting a wider net in their marketing strategies, catering to larger units like couples and families.

For instance, Lexus' advertisements have gone from thrill and entertainment-based to portraying their vehicles in more emotional settings.

In the 1990s and early aughts, Lexus' marketing seemed less about the family and more about the need for speed

In 2018, Lexus focused on the memories families can make together after they add a new Lexus to their households. While nostalgia remains a strong current throughout the vignettes, the advertisements are also forward-thinking and highlight the longevity of a Lexus vehicle ([see story](#)).

In a July 2021 Lexus safety vignette, a mother drives her daughter around a residential neighborhood in a cobalt Lexus ES. As they drive past residents construction workers, students, traffic guards the mother sees each person as if they were her own daughter ([see story](#)).

More recently, the brand debuted two national broadcast ads that celebrated the magic of the season through the eyes of children for its 22nd annual "December to Remember" marketing campaign last year ([see story](#)).

As evidenced in a historical video produced in-house, French automaker Bugatti has served as a pillar of excellence and glamour for more than 100 years.

A look back on the elegance and amazement of Bugatti

Bugatti also recognizes the familial market, however. In 2019, the automaker announced production of the Bugatti Baby II, based on a half-size Type 35 that Ettore Bugatti made for his 4-year-old son Roland in 1926 ([see story](#)).

From the brands built on excitement to those that symbolize luxurious magnificence, family-oriented marketing is spreading in the sphere.

"Bentley is unique in that it is known for its opulence and comfort over its performance," Ms. Blackley said.

The British automaker recently took an opportunity to meld sentimentality and sustainability. Last December, Bentley appealed to drivers' emotional side in an imaginative campaign centered around its new Flying Spur hybrid.

In the campaign, "Transform Your Perspective," Bentley acknowledges that the world is changing in the hopes of a more sustainable future with several references to the protagonist's family ([see story](#)).

Regardless of the approach, luxury automakers ostensibly want their messages to reach anyone and everyone.

"I think the best luxury brands have figured out how to create a connection by reflecting the values of individuals, rather than portraying themselves as elitist and asking consumers to aspire to theirs," said Cary Ruby, group creative director at [Innocean USA](#), Los Angeles.

Fast-paced lifestyle

Some luxury automotive brands continue to emphasize their adventurous spirit.

Last December, Italian automaker Ferrari invited consumers to embark on a new journey through a multichannel campaign.

Through a video series and microsite, the Ferrari Portofino M goes global, bringing its sleek performance to some of the most famous cities in the world. Featured locations include Lucerne, Sedona, Gstaad, the Florida Keys and Gangwan-do, with the latest video taking place in Dubai ([see story](#)).

For those who solely seek thrills and independence from their luxury automobiles, there are plenty of offerings.

Last August, Italian automaker Lamborghini highlighted the unique versatility of the Huracn STO with an inviting new series.

The "Inside Huracn STO" film campaign spotlights the multitude of features the Lamborghini vehicle has to offer, while providing insight from some of the automaker's leaders. In the first three episodes, drivers learn about the attractiveness of the vehicle's design and adaptability as well as the automaker's plans and goals for the future ([see story](#)).



The MC20 Fuoriserie Edition for David Beckham serves as a love letter to the city of Miami, the home of the soccer superstar's U.S. football club. Image credit: Maserati

Last December, Italian automaker Maserati once again teamed up with a champion to customize an automobile that joins stylish and sporty.

The MC20 Fuoriserie Edition for David Beckham has transformed sports icon David Beckham from automaker ambassador to designer with the help of the Maserati Centro Stile. Mr. Beckham and Maserati produced a customized car that reflects the performance and sportiness inherent in both parties while inviting consumers to design their own bespoke vehicles ([see story](#)).

"Brands like Lamborghini or Maserati are known for their performance and are viewed more widely as sports cars," Ms. Blackley said. "We're seeing superluxury brands targeting new audiences like younger demographics, and with the rise of Instagram and TikTok as platforms to market luxury concepts to younger audiences, I think this will continue."

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