

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz casts 'Riverdale' star in CLE campaign

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Revealing the new CLE Coup and Cabriolet to the world via an unboxing video, the brand is tapping *Riverdale* star Madelaine Petsch and her famous friends in a social-driven campaign. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is letting the youth lead the way for a new series.

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Revealing the latest CLE Coup and Cabriolet models to the world via an unboxing video, a popular internet trend, the German automaker is tapping *Riverdale* star Madelaine Petsch and her famous friends in a social-driven campaign. The new, independent line is comprised of what the brand is calling "dream cars," slated to arrive in United States dealerships in 2024.

Star power

The new CLE Coup shares the spotlight with Ms. Petsch in the digital world premiere.

Mercedes-Benz took to social media and online platforms to announce the fresh vehicles, posting an almost six-minute video on YouTube for the occasion.

Ms. Petsch's house and social circle sets the scene for the automaker

The teen drama star and brand partner serves as the protagonist, with the campaign, divided into theatrical chapters, taking place partly at her Californian home.

Shown rehearsing for her role, Ms. Petsch lounges relaxedly on her living room floor, her lines serving to narrate the video. The shots are paired with footage of the new models driving and up-close angles of their designs.

In the second chapter, a ginormous box appears in her front yard, adorned with the Mercedes-Benz logo.

Ms. Petsch proceeds to press a button, which turns into what the brand calls "an unboxing of a very special kind." Unboxing videos have taken over the internet in recent years, gaining large view counts from young consumers across TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.



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A post shared by Mercedes-Benz (@mercedesbenz)

After a performance in which she calls her agent, thinking her shoot is in a few days, Ms. Petsch realizes she is incorrect and needs to enlist her friends to help her get the job done. All of her friends are tagged with their social media handles on the screen, each of them boasting a hearty following on their respective accounts.

Going through the various chapters of the campaign, the celebrity's fellow public figures join together to get the job done, the new features and amenities are shown throughout the visuals.

Thanks to enhanced touchscreens and connective capabilities, access to TikTok and games such as Angry Birds are advertised in the slot, embracing youthful habits and preferences exhibited by a rising demographic.



Popular apps are accessible via in-car technology, as hailed by Ms. Petsch and her friends in the premiere. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

The sporty models not only embrace technological innovation, something Mercedes-Benz has been stepping fully into ([see story](#)), but comfort and sustainability as well; the hybrid CLEs are claimed to be the most spacious in the midsize segment by the brand. Additionally, the upholstery is made from recycled materials to varying degrees, depending on the section of the car and customization choices.

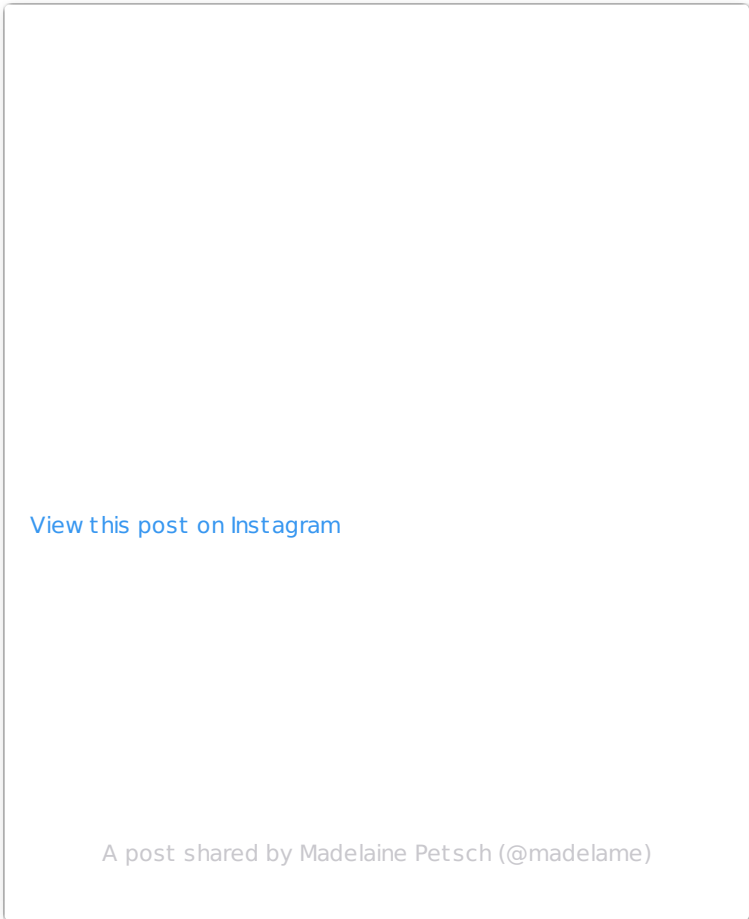
With two base options available, both with various color options, the 2024 Mercedes-Benz CLE Coupe will enter U.S. dealerships early next year, with the open-top CLE Cabriolet following sometime after that.



According to posts made by the brand, the "dream cars" are expressions of "individuality" and "exclusive style." Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

Ms. Petsch will continue to work with Mercedes-Benz in the months ahead as the face of the CLE. Already, the star has taken to Instagram, stating that she has found her dream car.

The *Riverdale* actor is consistently a favorite among luxury brands since her meteoric rise to fame, working with the likes of French fashion house Louis Vuitton ([see story](#)) and, more recently, French fashion label Givenchy ([see story](#)).



With the television series a hit among teens and young adults and in its final season, Ms. Petsch's costars also are considered assets for the sector's advertising efforts, the latest example being Italy's Armani Beauty including two of them in a February 2023 initiative ([see story](#)).

Unboxing marketing movement

Though unique in approach, Mercedes-Benz's choice of presentation is hyper-relevant to social media culture.

Influencers and internet personalities are increasingly becoming the inspiration of choice for spenders in today's market, viewing product recommendations from them as more trustworthy than traditional campaigns. As a result, U.S. influencer marketing spending on the part of brands is expected to reach \$4.6 billion this year, a doubling from five years ago, as labels dedicate 25 percent of their marketing budgets to influencer deals, on average ([see story](#)).



In Mercedes-Benz's newest campaign, a giant-sized unboxing takes place. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

Now, unboxing videos are not only coming from independent creators but from brand-affiliated content, making the trend all the more common on platforms.

With this latest campaign, Mercedes-Benz is showing off its own version of the video genre.

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