

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz highlights 140 years of automotive progress

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The company is platforming its latest vehicles alongside its archival designs as it reaches an operational milestone. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

By ZACH JAMES

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is launching two global campaigns, which respectively showcase the past and future of the luxury staple.

The first, titled “140 Places,” takes viewers through the company’s global history and evolution since the creation of its and the world’s first automobile in 1886. Meanwhile, the organization is looking forward as well, promoting its latest S-Class flagship model alongside the anniversary retrospective.

“Our 140 Places’ journey will see the new S-Class visiting customers and fans all around the world, bringing the Mercedes-Benz heritage to life in every corner we reach,” said Christina Schenck, VP of digital & communications and investor relations at Mercedes-Benz AG, in a statement.

“We’re truly looking forward to meeting people in six continents, celebrating together and sharing highlights on our brand channels,” Ms. Schenck said. “We can’t wait to catch up with you along the way.”

Moving forward, looking back

Through 140 Places, Mercedes-Benz is launching a year-long, travelling initiative that seeks to engage collectors and the public alike.

Via visits to one emblematic locale for every year of the company’s operation, short films, promotional stills, updated branding and creative crossovers, the campaign aims to elevate both the brand’s heritage and its new S-Class model.

Mercedes-Benz presents “From 1886 to 2026 140 years of Innovation”

The pop-ups are charted along a global path, following upwards of 30,000 miles of road across Europe, South America, North America, Australia, Asia and Africa. Three new S-Class vehicles will embark on the journey, serving as symbolic brand ambassadors.

Along the way, the trio will appear in communities in Buenos Aires, Shanghai and Sydney, as well as on the United States’ Route 66, which is celebrating its centennial this year. The 140 Places drive will come to a close in October, when the automobiles make their return to Mercedes-Benz’s home of Stuttgart, Germany for a final showing.

While forthcoming global activations make up the bulk of the effort, the manufacturer has also launched a corresponding multi-media campaign, comprised of archival imagery and a central short film.



The group is bridging the gap from 1886 to 2026 through imagery. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

In the two-minute promotional release, the group speaks on its innovations over the past 14 decades, showing vehicles from its humble beginnings as the inventor of the automobile to its many concept cars of the future unveiled as technology progressed. Through the advertisement, the brand spotlights its lineage of creations as a crossover of forward-thinking engineering and elevated design, combining to give the operator staying power in the industry and in global culture.

Mercedes-Benz is far from the only luxury staple celebrating an anniversary this year, with global hospitality brand Four Seasons ([see story](#)) and LVMH-owned perfumer Acqua di Parma ([see story](#)) on the list of those reaching operational milestones.

The path ahead

Meanwhile, the second campaign directly focuses on the latest S-Class model, which was revealed during an event held on Jan. 29, at which the vehicle was also showcased for the first time.

Set to launch this spring, the initiative will highlight the future of the label's signatures and design philosophy, platforming the new flagship as a culmination of 140 years of luxury expertise. The push will uplift the vehicle's features, such as the first-ever illuminated Mercedes Star insignia, twin-star headlights, an MBUX Superscreen up front and a high-end dual entertainment system in the back.



The EClass, electrified CLA and all-electric GLC will also be featured in the upcoming promotional endeavor. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

As it looks forward to the future, throughout 2026, Mercedes-Benz will utilize an updated logo, now featuring an archival wheel design, similar to that of its first automobile. To further celebrate the 140th anniversary, the group is planning a continuation of its collaboration with German sportswear brand Adidas, as it will launch a limited-edition 140 Years Sneaker Edition, based on the throwback Samba footwear line, later this year.

With these efforts and the impending release of the C-Class, the company hopes to pave a new path forward, as it recently bid farewell to design chief Gorden Wagener, who is credited with shaping the brand's distinct identity over the past 30 years ([see story](#)).