

MULTICHANNEL

## Luxury automakers to build upon gains in 2014

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Luxury automakers had a strong year in 2013 with new vehicle lines unveiled, greater penetration of emerging markets, sharper marketing and record-breaking sales.

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**Luxury Daily**

Some automakers brands tweaked their brand strategies, while others reasserted longstanding traditions. Looking back at the achievements of 2013 should not leave spectators complacent, since every new year entails disruption and change.

"Luxury automakers had amazing, impressive sales this year," said Lauren Fix, author of "[Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car](#)," Lancaster, NY.

"On a global basis, luxury lines are doing very well," she said.

Notable lines

New lines that hold the potential to change the face of a brand were given greater attention in 2013.

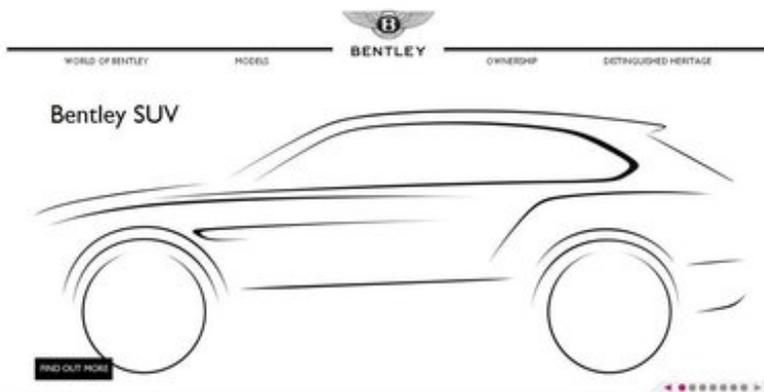
The biggest ripples came from the BMW i series, the concept electric vehicles led by the i8 and the i3 that will arrive in 2014 to rival Tesla.



### *BMW i8*

Since electric vehicles are a new product to many consumers, BMW developed a multi-platform and sustained campaign to convince consumers to buy the new technology. It seems that electric vehicles can help automakers get ahead of competitors because there are more environmentally-conscious affluent consumers ([see story](#)).

Another major announcement came from Bentley. The British automaker is extending its product line by creating a new sport utility vehicle, a decision that was championed by its fans and customers.



### *Bentley's Web site announcing the SUV*

The first Bentley SUV will be produced next year at Bentley's headquarters in Crewe, England. Moreover, the Volkswagen-owned brand plans to invest more than \$1 billion for the development of the newest Bentley car models over the next three years.

Bentley's SUV will be the fourth model available for purchase. It will join Bentley's three existing models: the Mulsanne, the Flying Spur and the Continental GT ([see story](#)).

Audi pushed its clean diesel vehicles with a far-reaching campaign. For the 2014 model year Audi is expanding its clean-diesel lineup with the A6, A7 and Q5 TDI, along with the A8 L TDI and Q7 TDI ([see story](#)).



### *Audi USA Facebook post*

A market-rattling trend gained starker detail as entry-level vehicles such as the Mercedes CLA, the Lexus IS and even the Maserati Ghibli became the centerpiece of promotions. This trend will likely grow in 2014 and may or may not dilute brand equity, since exclusivity is crucial to luxury brands.

### *Hitting the note*

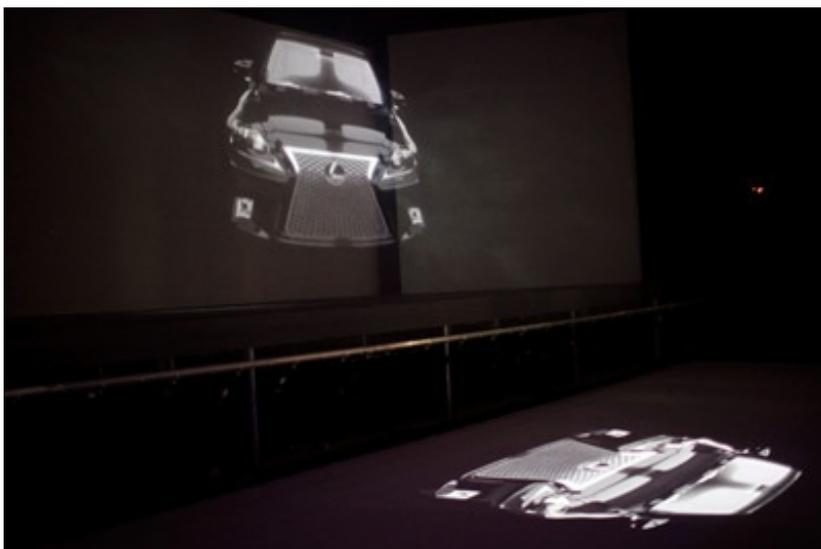
Lexus and Mercedes-Benz set the bar for marketing in 2013 with ingenious campaigns, but across the board luxury automakers reached new heights.

The highlight of Mercedes-Benz USA's efforts was the CLA "Take the Wheel" Instagram contest that tallied millions of likes, captivated fans and showcased the new model in countless organic scenes over a five week period ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/BYQL6-3Q8LI](http://www.youtube.com/embed/BYQL6-3Q8LI)

### *Take the Wheel – Mercedes-Benz CLA*

Lexus enacted a series of creative campaigns dependent on user-generated content for its Lexus IS model to capture the loyalty of entry-level consumers. The Design Disrupted theme culminated in a darkly lavish event at New York Fashion Week ([see story](#)).



### *Lexus Design Disrupted*

Rolls-Royce demonstrated its commitment to Chinese consumers with a bespoke collection that honors the Chinese Zodiac Year of the Horse ([see story](#)).



### *Majestic Horse Collection*

McLaren also increased its focus on China, opening the first four brand dealers in the country and anticipating four more dealers in the year to come ([see story](#)).

Bugatti's "Les Legendes de Bugatti" series may be the campaign that best represents luxury auto from 2013. The French automaker has drawn inspiration from six figures critical to the brand's early success to create six ultra-exclusive lines that cost around \$3 million.

For instance, Bugatti unveiled its third model Nov. 5-9 in its "Les Legendes de Bugatti" series that honors former Bugatti race factory head Bartolomeo Costantini at the Dubai International Motor Show.



### *Meo Constantini model*

The Meo Constantini model is limited to three vehicles and is priced at \$2.82 million before taxes and and transport fees. Although inspired by the two-time Targa Florio, Sicily-winning model, the Bugatti Type 35, the Meo uses the Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse as its base like the other models in the series ([see story](#)).

Although marketing efforts and fresh lines increased awareness, record sales were mainly driven by deep pocketed luxury consumers.

"Those that have money will always have money," Ms. Fix said. "Every manufacturer except for a couple will have a luxury lineup."

Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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