

COMMERCE

## Maserati boasts highest US monthly sales in brand history

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*Maserati Ghibli*

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Italian automaker Maserati is on pace to substantially surpass its 2013 sales numbers primarily because of the recently released Ghibli model.

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The Ghibli model starts at \$66,900 and opens Maserati up to a swath of consumers previously barred from considering the luxury brand. As more consumers capitalize on the car's accessibility, the brand will have to navigate the inevitable restructuring of its identity.

"Maserati is one of those Italian brands that gets lost behind Ferrari and Lamborghini," said [Lauren Fix](#), automotive expert and author of "Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car," Lancaster, NY. "They produce a quality product, built in Italy with plenty of style and performance.

"Now that Fiat has reach the U.S. marketplace they plan to offer more product at reasonable prices in comparison to other Italian brands," she said.

Ms. Fix is not affiliated with Maserati but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Maserati](#) was unable to comment by press deadline.

## Zero to 60

Maserati calculated the release of the Ghibli to coincide with its centennial celebration, a move that softened the potentially disruptive effect of the entry-level vehicle. Consumers expect bold moves that shake up the status quo from brands that reach rare milestones, which essentially provides a launch pad for transformative initiatives.

The automaker has gradually expanded its production lines to reach higher annual sales targets, with the eventual aim of reaching 75,000 vehicles sold by 2018. While these numbers are still paltry compared to volume juggernauts like Audi and Mercedes-Benz, it still marks a shift for Maserati.



*Maserati Quattroporte*

Indeed, the brand's sales have risen so dramatically this year that they will likely surpass sales from the past three years combined.

This May, the brand sold 1,144 units in the U.S. compared to 226 from the year-ago period, a jump of 406 percent.

In the coming years, the Ghibli model will play a vital role in helping the brand reach 75,000. The brand's two largest markets, the U.S. and China, will likely pounce on the rare opportunity.



*Ghibli frame*

The brand currently has 83 dealerships in the U.S. and plans to expand to 120 by the end of the year.

Maserati launched its Ghibli model at the Los Angeles Auto Show with a campaign that aimed to disrupt the entry-level luxury automotive market.

The “Absolute Opposite of Ordinary” campaign revolved around the theme that Maserati will never succumb to cookie-cutter designs, giving its vehicles an edge over others. By

pricing the Ghibli model at the fringes of entry-level luxury automotive, the brand is able to tap a much wider consumer-base without risking brand dilution ([see story](#)).

### Clearing the path

Maserati began its 2014 centennial celebrations with a microsite that acquaints fans with the brand's history.

A series of events and digital content will systematically emerge over the next 12 months to keep the celebratory mood alive. The current 2014 centennial schedule, as displayed on the microsite, designates various wallpapers for availability during various months. This singular focus on wallpaper likely indicates that the brand wants to maintain a surprise factor for its significant celebration activities ([see story](#)).

Now that the brand has achieved such a rare status, it has more room to experiment.

"I expect to see more product and more volume as time goes by," Ms Fix. said.

### Final Take

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

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