No. 371

Mercedes-Benz

2.2022

TECHNOLOGY AND SOUL


DH 34911

Dear readers,

We combine the most advanced technologies in every new Mercedes-Benz model. Our overarching goal: your safety – and, of course, your well-being. But it is about more than just the unity of vehicle and driver. Our aspiration is to use technology to make this connection even more seamless, more personal, more human – in short: more emotional.

Our EQXX test vehicle provides an impression of this. With it we set a record range of over 1,000 kilometres with just one battery charge. And not only that: the vehicle uses neural networks to understand its driver even faster and more comprehensively to give them the best possible support.

The emotional impact of technology is also the subject of our story on the 55th anniversary of Mercedes-AMG, our performance brand. We have selected five current models that signpost the way to an exciting future.

Rest assured: Mercedes-AMG is more dynamic than ever after 55 years. We mirror the sentiments of BMX professional Nigel Sylvester, an enthusiastic G-Class driver, whom we interviewed in this issue. He has resolved to devote himself only to what he does best and loves most. Just like us.

Yours sincerely,

Britta Seeger
Member of the Board of Management of
Mercedes-Benz Group AG
Mercedes-Benz Car Sales

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

me

PUBLISHER

Mercedes-Benz Group AG
Mercedesstraße 120
70327 Stuttgart
Germany

RESPONSIBLE ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLISHER
Dominik Greuel
Kai Deuble
Silke von Homeyer

POSTAL ADDRESS

Mercedes-Benz AG
HPC L538
70546 Stuttgart
Germany

Issue number 371 (69th year) of the Mercedes-Benz customer magazine, published on 18 November 2022, appears in 27 languages around the world.

CONCEPTION AND REALISATION

Looping Group,
an Olando GmbH brand
Prannerstraße 11
80333 Munich
Germany

MANAGING DIRECTORS
Dr Robin Houcken
Dr Dominik Wichmann
EDITORIAL PARTNER
Gerald Selch
EXECUTIVE
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Dominik Anweiler
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR
Gwendolyn Eckert

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Hendrik Lakeberg
(responsible pursuant to German press law)
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Friederike Hamann
ART DIRECTOR
Ayhan Belge
PROJECT MANAGER
Sarah Franke
CLIENT SERVICE
Heinke Pietsch
EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
Nicolo Fischer
Josefine Klatt
Dawn Parisi
Benjamin Can
ART BUYING
Katja Nicklaus
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
Mahsoumeh Nedjat
LAYOUT
Nikolay Radchenkow
Ulrike Hemme
Ekaterina Kachavina

FINAL COPY-EDITING AND TRANSLATION
wordinc GmbH
Bahrenfelder Chaussee 49
22761 Hamburg
Germany

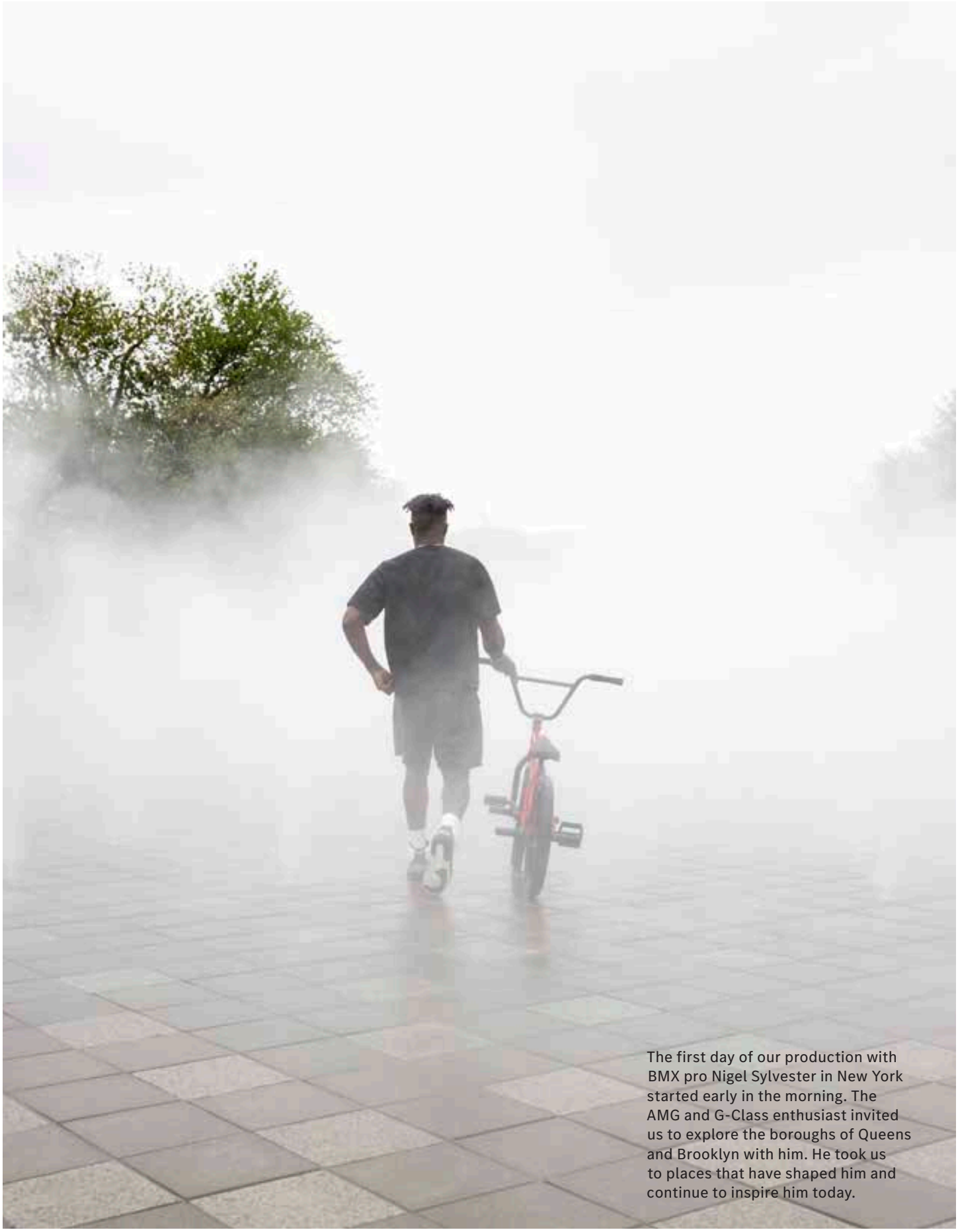
PRODUCTION
Laudert GmbH + Co. KG
Magellanstraße 1
70771 Leinfelden-Echterdingen
Germany

6720 0363 02

*** Consumption data**
The values stated were determined in accordance with the prescribed measurement procedure. These are "WLTP CO_2 values" as defined in Art. 2 No. 3 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1153. The fuel consumption values were calculated on the basis of these values. The electricity consumption was determined on the basis of Regulation 683/2008/EC. The figures do not refer to an individual vehicle and are not part of the offer, but are solely for the purpose of comparison between different vehicle types. The values vary depending on the optional equipment selected.

Testing procedures
Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Guide to fuel consumption, CO_2 emissions and electricity consumption of all new passenger car models", which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH at www.dat.de.

The theme of this issue is technology and how it affects us emotionally. We explore Norway with the EQE and discover the sensuous qualities of the electric saloon, drive through New York in the G-Class with a BMX pro and address the increasingly seamless connection between vehicle and driver. It's about big emotions and small things that make our world a little better.



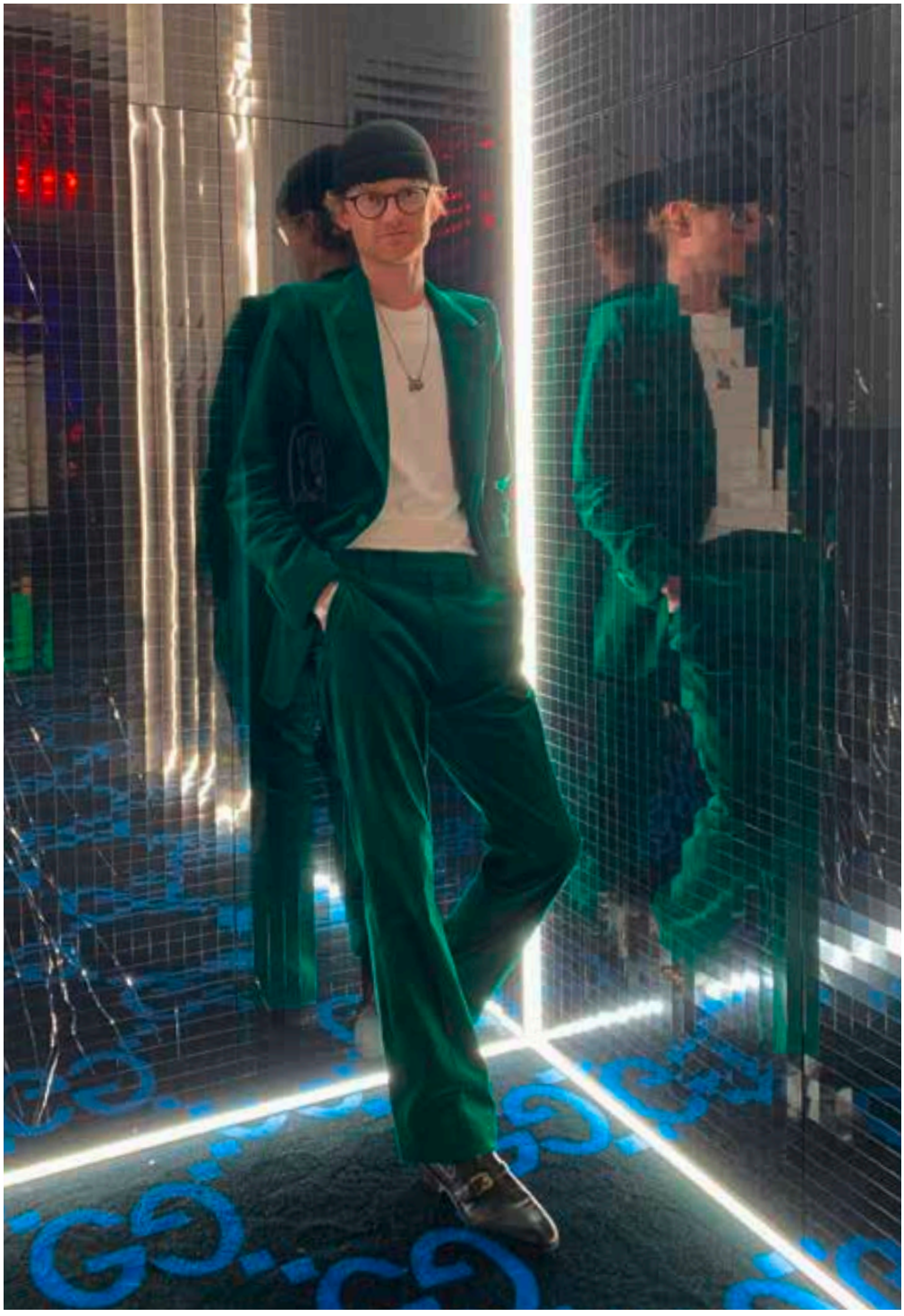
The first day of our production with BMX pro Nigel Sylvester in New York started early in the morning. The AMG and G-Class enthusiast invited us to explore the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn with him. He took us to places that have shaped him and continue to inspire him today.

Photo: Sidney H. Gomes, cover photo: Max Threlfall

CONTENTS

Photos: Tereza Mundilová, David Goldberg, Sidney H. Gomes, Max Threlfall, Marvin Zilm

CONTRIBUTORS



DENNIS BRAATZ
As the style expert for the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" and fashion features director at "Vogue", Dennis Braatz knows why certain trends emerge in the fashion and luxury industry. This means he was predestined to write an article about the future of luxury made to measure, including a visit to the Mercedes-Benz MANUFAKTUR studio in Sindelfingen.
You can read the whole story from page 130.

Photos: private (6)

SIDNEY H. GOMES
A home game for the New York City-based photographer Sidney H. Gomes: he accompanied BMX pro Nigel Sylvester and his red G-Class through Brooklyn and Queens.

TEREZA MUNDILOVÁ
"I love fast cars and have a thing for light" – these passions are reflected in the futuristic "Drive & style" section, which Tereza Mundilová photographed for us.

EKATERINA KACHAVINA
The art director gives the magazine a special touch with innovative creative concepts: for the article "5× future", she and her team spectacularly showcased five AMG models using CGI.

MAX THRELFALL
This Berlin-based photographer describes his work as "documentary adventure lifestyle". On a road trip in the EQE, he captured the magic of the Norwegian landscape.
Read more about it on page 52.

SARAH FRANKE
Strict but caring: this is how our project manager keeps everything running smoothly behind the scenes in magazine production. Her superpower? Keeping a cool head and a smile on her face even in the most stressful moments.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Text by Benjamin Can and Josefine Klatt

The path to a sustainable beauty industry, modern banking for children and innovative alternatives to the classic aperitif: JENNI BAUM-MINKUS, CHRISTOF TREMP and MORGAN WIRTZ take the plunge and find out how a change of direction opens up new perspectives for them

Photo: Patrycia Lukas

Photo: gitti

THE NAIL POLISH REVOLUTIONARY: JENNI BAUM-MINKUS

What would you do if you had no fear? When Jenni Baum-Minkus was asked this question a few years ago, only one thing sprang to her mind: glittery nail polish. At the time, she didn't have the courage to say it out loud. But she couldn't get the idea out of her head. She spent nights researching nail polish and was shocked when she discovered what harmful ingredients could be in conventional products. She saw an opportunity to revolutionise the market. "I wanted to develop a product that our customers feel good about and wouldn't leave them wondering whether they were harming themselves or the planet," the Berliner says today.

So she listened to her gut feeling and left her full-time job at a large corporation. She refined her vision at the Grace Accelerator Summer Camp, sponsored by She's Mercedes. She found support and a network of experienced female mentors and founders there. Taking part in it paid dividends: in the same year, Jenni Baum-Minkus officially founded her company – gitti Conscious Beauty. She pulled together a team of experts to work on solutions for a responsible beauty industry.

Her first product is still the brand's centrepiece today: a water-based nail colour. A plant-based version was added later, which promises to last up to seven days. She finds an enthusiastic clientele for both that appreciates responsible and sustainable solutions every step of the way. This is not just about ingredients, but also about packaging solutions, production and logistics. "When we launched the first collection from my living room table and it sold out within two hours, I knew for certain that we were on the right track. The stock was meant to last the whole year."

Much has happened since then. The company is growing rapidly, forming a lively community, and the product range now includes make-up, face and skin care as well as nail colours. Jenni Baum-Minkus has lost none of her courage and ambition: "We want to become the biggest conscious beauty brand. A brand that is better for people and the planet." A new beginning for which trusting her own gut feeling fully paid off.

JENNI BAUM-MINKUS (p. 13) creates new standards for sustainable and responsible beauty products with GITTI CONSCIOUS BEAUTY.

Find out more at gitticonsciousbeauty.com

THE CONSCIOUS CONNOISSEUR: CHRISTOF TREMP

"The last gin and tonic is always the one you regret the next morning," says Christof Tremp. Having worked in the corporate sector for a long time, including for food companies, there came a point when the Swiss man realised that he wanted to be his own boss. Instead of waiting for the bright idea to come to him, he actively researched developments in the food and beverage industry. And that was how he came across the megatrend of alcohol-free aperitif alternatives. "It already existed in the UK, and was just taking off in Germany too. I knew: it's now or never. You don't have to be a first mover, but it's important to be an early mover."

He first heard about alcohol without alcohol during his sabbatical on the Camino de Santiago. To begin with, he found the idea irritating. But the more he thought about it, the more the trend seemed to make sense to him. According to market research company Nielsen, sales of products in the no/low-alcohol sector have increased by over 500 per cent since 2015. A new health consciousness, especially in Generation Z, and the lack of alternative delicious alcohol-free drinks on the market provided the ideal environment for Tremp to found his start-up REBELS 0.0%. Together with co-founder Janick Planzer, he developed equivalents for amaretto, gin, rum, spritz and vermouth.

Founding their company right at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the duo needed plenty of stamina, for example when production was delayed due to faltering supply chains. But the two were lucky in some ways; because clubs and bars remained closed, home consumption went through something of a boom. Since then, REBELS 0.0% products have won several industry awards.

The secret to making their drinks special is a double distillation process based on water, which ensures an intense flavour. "We tried different methods in our quest to get as close as possible to the classics. Distilling away the alcohol was not an option for us because we set ourselves the goal of zero per cent," says Christof Tremp. They are not against alcohol, but rather in favour of a new social drinking culture in which everyone is free to choose. No moralising fingers being wagged, but with the fun of healthy and impressive drinks. Which one does the founder himself prefer to toast with? "With the no-groni."

CHRISTOF TREMP (left) and his co-founder JANICK PLANZER stand for conscious drinking pleasure with alcohol-free spirits from REBELS 0.0%.

More info and recipe ideas at rebels00.com

Photo: Steven Kohl

Photo: RISE

THE SOLUTION SEEKER: MORGAN WIRTZ

The Belgian media hail Morgan Wirtz as the next Steve Jobs. The young entrepreneur, although flattered by these comparisons, says himself that he is still at the beginning of the road. And yet there are certain parallels.

Just like the Apple founder, Wirtz dropped out of his studies – too theoretical. He already had the germ of an idea for his dream of owning his own business. He rented a co-working space, met his future co-founders there and together they developed RISE, an account specifically for children aged ten and over. The principle is very simple: parents open an account, invite their children to order their payment card and can track how they use their pocket money via an app. At the same time, the young account holders can independently set savings goals and track their budget. All this in a protected space that is modern in design and easy to use. Parents have individual setting options, such as spending limits.

"Teenagers today talk about bitcoin and investments during school breaks. Money is becoming more and more digital, children get their pocket money by direct transfer. But you don't learn this at school, you learn it by trying it out," says the 23-year-old. Learning by doing is one of the guiding principles of RISE. The CEO needs no further convincing. "If the children make a mistake – no problem, because they learn from it and become better able to handle money as adults."

Morgan Wirtz does not come from a banking background himself. But he is driven by an aspiration to develop a perfect product to solve social problems. Even as a teenager, he strived for top performance when training in professional sailing. "The metrics for success are no different in sailing than for start-ups: ambition, creativity, teamwork. Looking back, I would say that sport was my first entrepreneurial journey."

RISE launched on the Belgian market this summer and has ambitions to enter other European countries next year. The mission is to give children confidence in their own abilities. Morgan Wirtz leads by example.

MORGAN WIRTZ wants RISE to make dealing with finances attractive for a young target group – risk-free.

Find out more at risecard.eu

ON BEAUTY

HAUTE VOITURE

Text by Nicolo Fischer

The details that make Mercedes-Benz models desirable: BELINDA GÜNTHER, head of Color & Trim, on the combination of high fashion and automotive design in the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture


Concept Mercedes-Maybach
Haute Voiture

Rosé meets nautical blue
The typical Maybach two-tone paint finish reinterpreted.

Haute couture materials
High-quality bouclé fabric, fine nappa leather and individually hand-applied decorative rivets adorn the interior of the Haute Voiture.

From the Maybach to the catwalk
A handmade collection inspired by the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture includes barrel bags and two different outfits.

“What might combining haute couture with our products look like?” This question from chief designer Gorden Wagener was the starting point of the development of the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture in 2019. Belinda Günther was in charge of the development: the head of Color & Trim worked with her team on all the surfaces, materials and shapes in the interior and exterior. “The Haute Voiture is the project I have longed for all my life as I originally studied fashion design. The challenge of merging fashion and automobile could have been made just for me.”

The Mercedes-Maybach S-Class formed the starting point for the concept. There were no limits for the team during development. “We often sat in the vehicle and asked ourselves what needed to change. The experiment was unprecedented, both in variety and form.” This is clear right from the two-tone paint finish typical of Maybach: the combination of dark nautical blue and light rosé sits somewhere between classic and trendy, Belinda Günther explains.

The designer transposes two aspects of haute couture in particular to the development of the vehicle: exclusivity and the celebration of high-class craftsmanship. “It is this sophistication that shows how much time went into the conception and realisation.” As just one example, looking inside reveals individually hand-applied decorative rivets and nappa leather printed with Mercedes-Benz stars.

As in fashion, textiles play a formative role in Belinda Günther’s day-to-day work. So it’s no surprise at all that the designer raves about the contrasting bouclé fabric made of blue, beige, rosé and gold yarns: “It is the embodiment of quality and luxury. As with impressionism, you also have an incredibly beautiful overall impression here of colour and effects working together.”

The materials used – including the bouclé fabric – are also showcased in an accompanying collection consisting of handbags, suits and dresses. The Haute Voiture will be launched in early 2023 as a strictly limited edition. Belinda Günther still gets goosebumps as she recounts the story when asked about the first internal unveiling of the vehicle: “I was speechless at first. And then came the tears of joy.”

BELINDA GÜNTHER
Belinda Günther got a foothold in the automotive industry straight after her fashion design studies. Since 2019, she has been in charge of the Color & Trim division at Mercedes-Benz.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

OLA KÄLLENIUS

Interview by Josefine Klatt

He is driving the transformation of the automotive industry with Mercedes-Benz: OLA KÄLLENIUS, chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz AG, explains how science fiction has become reality and how sustainably and safely we will drive in the future

You joined what was then Daimler-Benz AG in 1993 as part of the international junior staff group. Much has changed since then and the industry is going through a major transformation. What developments over recent years are you particularly proud of?

We have successfully managed to realign ourselves structurally and strategically – as a pure-play company with a full focus on decarbonisation and digitalisation. We have achieved this in parallel with the challenges of the past two years: from the Covid-19 pandemic to the impact of the shocking war in Ukraine. The Mercedes-Benz team has responded to each challenge with flexibility, cohesion and creativity. I am proud of that.

In addition to our many colleagues, I would also like to thank our clients for their patience and loyalty. I thank them in particular for their understanding if delivery of their new vehicles is delayed due to the challenging situation.

Which developments will you be particularly involved with in the next five years?

When I started at Mercedes-Benz, automated driving and fully electric and fully connected cars were pure science fiction. Today, this is reality and we continue to develop these. We want to continue rolling out e-drives across the entire portfolio, accelerate software development and further strengthen Mercedes-Benz as the leading manufacturer of luxury cars and premium vans. In other words: we want to build the most desirable cars in the world – irrespective of the drive form.

The shift to an all-electric future brings with it many challenges, such as changed raw material requirements. How do you deal with these sorts of situations?

In the wake of the global shortage of semiconductors, we have thoroughly examined and optimised our entire value chain. The transition to electromobility will bring with it much more movement in the demand for raw materials. One of the consequences of this is that we will diversify our supply chains even more to further minimise our risk. That's why we recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian government, for example, to strengthen cooperation along the entire automotive value chain.

Synthetic fuels – some see them as an opportunity, others view them critically. Which alternative drives to the electric motor are particularly appealing to Mercedes-Benz?

The battery is currently superior to the fuel cell in terms of large-volume market introduction. The higher energy density in battery technology has reduced the fuel cell's range advantage in passenger cars. And their efficiency has also made huge strides: we have an efficiency of around 90 per cent with the EQS. This means that up to 90 per cent

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

of the energy stored in the battery reaches the wheels. By way of comparison: a vehicle with an efficient combustion engine achieves only about 30 per cent. As far as the use of fuel cells is concerned, we continue to monitor the market and are keeping the option open to offer this technology as well in due course.

Regarding sustainability: Mercedes-Benz Group AG supports the EU "Fit for 55" climate initiative. So, what will mobility look like in 2055?

Of course, it's not possible to reliably predict from today's knowledge exactly what the future state of the art will be. The automobile will certainly change even more and even faster in the next ten years than in the past decades.

Around 70 years ago, people were imagining cars powered by a nuclear reactor as an energy source and a range of 8,000 kilometres. This shows that questions about the future of mobility have been around for a long time, but that the resulting predictions have rarely been accurate. My hope is that by 2055, humanity will be 100 per cent sustainable in as many regions of the world as possible. We want to achieve the goal of CO_2 neutrality along the entire value chain in the new vehicle fleet by 2039 at Mercedes-Benz and to become 100 per cent electric as early as 2030 wherever market conditions permit.

To what extent does the VISION EQXX provide a glimpse of the future here?

It is particularly remarkable that in just 18 months, using a worldwide cross-divisional team, we have devised the most efficient Mercedes ever from the proverbial blank sheet of paper and given it wheels. Our ambition was to drive over 1,000 kilometres in real road traffic on a single battery charge – powered by a battery that fits in a compact car. The VISION EQXX actually managed 1,202 kilometres during the drive from Stuttgart to Silverstone, Great Britain. Needless to say, this was a huge success for all involved. Our customers can certainly look forward to many innovations that we will bring through to series production.

This section is called "Moments That Matter". What are those moments for you?

Professionally speaking, for me it has to include the moments when we present a new vehicle. Because this is the culmination of extremely hard work by countless colleagues, sometimes over years, to bring the car onto the road with the Mercedes quality and perfection that everybody expects. That's why a world premiere like this is a well-deserved reward for all involved and definitely a "Moment That Matters".

In your position as chairman of the Board, you carry an enormous amount of responsibility – what keeps you grounded when you are not working?

It's my family that grounds me most and helps me switch off. The children have left home now, so I enjoy it all the more when my wife and I get to spend time with them. I also enjoy playing tennis. And OK, I won't become a

"When I started at Mercedes-Benz, automated driving and fully electric and fully connected cars were pure science fiction. Today, this is reality and we continue to develop these"

Roger Federer in this life, but sport is a way to achieve balance for me. The same goes for a good book or an exciting film.

One last question: How did you imagine the automobile of the future when you were a child?

With a star on the bonnet [laughs]. Seriously though: unfortunately, I have never had anywhere near the design talent that our head designer Gorden Wagener and his team have, neither as a child nor now as an adult. For me back then, a car had four wheels, a steering wheel and an exhaust pipe. Today's generation probably draws their cars without an exhaust by now. Children's fantasies aside, though, we are working on this in a very tangible way.

Innovation meets efficiency: the VISION EQXX can cover over 1,000 kilometres on a single battery charge, offering a glimpse into the future of e-mobility.

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

FROM THE ARCHIVES

GUAN XIAO

Text by Renate Wiehager

The MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION is one of the most important corporate art collections in the world. The director, Renate Wiehager, regularly presents highlights from the archive. This time: the Chinese artist GUAN XIAO, who creates multimedia works that reveal profound truths about our digitalised world

A simulated sunset in a light box on the wall; in front of that, car rims decorated with plastic flowers: "The Sunset" installation by Guan Xiao is a surprise, only gradually revealing itself. It is an invitation to reflect and linger.

Two polyurethane-covered wood sculptures stand in front of the light area; the rims are adorned with Google lettering and artificial floral decorations. Guan Xiao stages the surface of the light box as an interface where the tangible and intangible, the online and offline, the East and West, meet. The other objects in the installation are hybrid entities that do not belong to any sphere we are familiar with. Fossils that no longer bear witness to past life. Wheels that no longer drive anything. Artificial nature that knows no seasons. You could even say it is an apocalyptic romanticism that draws you in.

The Chinese artist combines personal history, cultural background, media animations and found artefacts from the consumer world in her space-related constellations. Her multimedia works embody the immediacy of our time: "You can find almost anything that interests you online. Everything spreads out before your eyes – within a second. Things meet each other and things meet you," says Guan Xiao about the starting point of her sculptures and video works. Her work was already awarded a prize at the abc Berlin art fair in 2014. Since then, Guan Xiao has taken part in numerous international exhibitions spanning Antwerp, New York and Vienna.

The Mercedes-Benz Art Collection has spent over a decade intensively researching the recent history of Chinese art. The rapidly growing number of artists' studios, academies, museums, galleries and private collections in China have been visited in the course of this research. Around 50 works by around 20 Chinese artists, including Guan Xiao, many of which are multi-part, now enhance the international profile of the collection.

Find out more about the MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION and current exhibitions at mercedes-benz.art

Guan Xiao, “The Sunset”, 2012. LED light box, artificial flowers, coloured metal, car rims, wax.
Courtesy of Guan Xiao; Antenna Space, Shanghai; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin.

Photo p. 34: Mathilde Agius for Cultured Magazine. Photo p. 35: Courtesy of Guan Xiao; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin; Antenna Space, Shanghai

DRIVE & STYLE

FUTURISTIC PICNIC

Styling by Carmen Färber
Visual Concept by Ekaterina Kachavina and Sofia Apunnikova
Photos by Tereza Mundilová

Him: Jumper by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, automatic chronograph 41 Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team edition by **IWC** from iwc.com. Her: Polo neck jumper by **SPORTMAX**, sunglasses by **CELINE,** rings by **BLACK PALMS X SASKIA DIEZ**.

Cashmere blanket and strap in naturally tanned leather by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, dress and bangle by **SPORTMAX**, jewellery by **SASKIA DIEZ**.

When futurism mixes with a touch of romance: join us on a trip in the EQC as we celebrate future technologies and exclusive materials. Inspired by the digital Metaverse look, the focus is on the luxurious Capsule Collection by Proenza Schouler x Mercedes-Benz – complemented by products that themselves are the perfect complement to every road trip

MERCEDES-BENZ EQC 400 4MATIC:
Combined electricity consumption*:
25-21.3 kWh/100 km
CO_2 emissions combined*:
0 g/km

Him: Jumper by **TIGER OF SWEDEN**, t-shirt by **SCHIESSER**, trousers by **LORO PIANA**, earcuff by **SASKIA DIEZ**. Her: T-shirt and cashmere blankets by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, trousers by **MOTHER**, jewellery by **SASKIA DIETZ**.

Cashmere blanket by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, polo neck jumper by **SPORTMAX**, Sunglasses by **CELINE**.

Blankets and leather shoulder strap by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**.
Her: Polo neck jumper and knitted skirt by **TIGER OF SWEDEN**, boots by **BY FAR**.
Him: Jumper by **PAUL SMITH**, trousers and boots by **LORO PIANA**.


EQC 400

Her: Cashmere blanket and jumper by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, trousers by **SPORTMAX**.
Him: Jacket by **JIL SANDER**, t-shirt by **GCDS**, sunglasses by **ANDY WOLF**, automatic chronograph 41 Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team edition by **IWC** from iwc.com.

T-shirt by **PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ**, trousers by **BALDESSARINI**, earring by **SASKIA DIEZ**.

Weekender by
PROENZA SCHOULER X MERCEDES-BENZ.

Him: Jacket by **JIL SANDER**, t-shirt by **GCDS**, trousers by **LORO PIANA**, sunglasses by **ANDY WOLF**.
Her: Dress by **TIGER OF SWEDEN**, boots by **BY FAR**, rings by **BLACK PALMS X SASKIA DIEZ**.

Earcuff by **SASKIA DIEZ**.

PHOTOGRAPHY
Tereza Mundilová c/o Shotview

LIGHT OPERATOR
Felix Gundlach

LIGHT OPERATOR
Max Judith

DIGITAL OPERATOR
Hannes Hartwig

HAIR
Ruby Howes c/o Shotview

MAKE UP
Leana Ardeleanu

STYLING
Carmen Färber

STYLING ASSISTANT
Anastasia Vraka

CASTING

Veronica Ruai c/o CORE

Julius Gehrhardt c/o KULT

The limited Capsule Collection from New York fashion label Proenza Schouler in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz is inspired by travel and traditional craftsmanship. Themed as “The Power of Two”, passions shared by the two brands come together: contemporary luxury design and responsible manufacturing processes. The gender-neutral garments, for example, are made primarily from sustainable, recycled materials such as cashmere, leather and organic cotton.

The collection is available exclusively at mb4.me/proenzaschouler

EQE – A PLACE FOR ALL SENSES

Text by Josefine Klatt
Photos by Max Threlfall


DH 34 911

Architect LINE SOLGAARD designs houses that blend seamlessly with nature. A trip with the EQE to a weekend house in the south of Norway that entices you to slow down

As soon as you land at Oslo Airport, you sense that you have arrived in a place where sustainability is a key part of life. Besides the reinforced concrete, there are many organic materials such as natural stone, wood and indoor greenery on the walls. Hardly surprising, then, that the building won a sustainability certificate as the greenest airport in the world. This is only a first impression of what still awaits us on this journey.

We start our road trip through the Norwegian province of Viken, which stretches around the capital and borders Sweden in the south-east. Our travel companion from Oslo is the EQE, the electrically powered business saloon from the EQ family. The battery range shows over 600 kilometres, so we easily take the one-and-a-half-hour drive in our stride without stopping. And if you do need to charge en route, the EQE comes with an intelligent feature: select the charging station in the navigation system (optional extra) and the vehicle prepares the battery for charging. Long waiting times are a thing of the past; it can charge up to 80 per cent of full capacity in just 30 minutes.

We are on the motorway heading south. Fields of grain and flowers and the characteristic red and white wooden houses are typical features in the passing landscape. The further we drive down the Oslofjord, the more nature transforms into our preconceived perception of Norwegian flora: lush mixed forests, shrubs close to the ground and moss-covered rocks. We can already glimpse the sea on the horizon. We seemingly float through the landscape in the EQE – a completely new experience enhanced by the generous front end and panoramic sunroof. The ride almost gives us the feeling of diving into the breathtaking landscape. We reach the small town of Fredrikstad, where we have an appointment with the architect Line Solgaard. Our destination is her weekend house – one which is radically different from the typical summer domicile of many Scandinavian city dwellers.

THE ARCHITECT
Line Solgaard founded her eponymous architecture firm with offices in Oslo and Fredrikstad in 2012, where she now employs eight people in all. Her main discipline is sustainable family homes that respect nature and the environment.


DH 34911

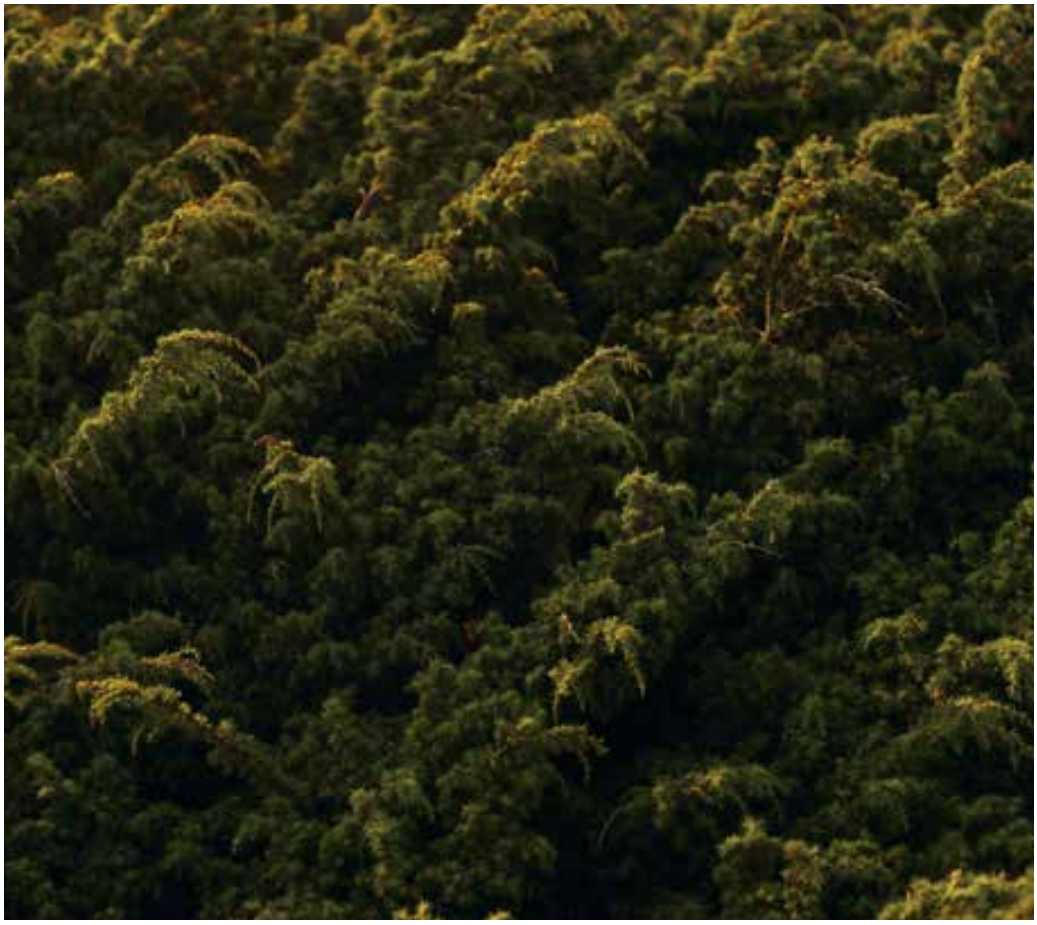
The Mercedes-Benz EQE 350:

Combined electricity consumption*:
18.6–15.9 kWh/100 km

Combined CO_2 emissions*:
0 g/km

BACK TO THE ROOTS

Solgaard sees the project as a kind of homecoming. She grew up in the region around Fredrikstad, then studied in Oslo, Italy and Japan. After ten years in large architectural firms, she set up her own business. Her main residence is in Oslo, but she still retains a strong connection to home because of her many projects in the area. She opened a second, larger office in Fredrikstad – a modern-looking showroom in the heart of the historic fortress town. Solgaard's main discipline is family houses and smart apartment complexes. You could say that she has a passion for developing solutions for a family's individual needs. She attaches particular importance to integrating the entire construction area. "Seldom is enough attention paid to the neighbourhood in large-scale projects. Beautiful and well-thought-out spaces between buildings make such a big difference," she says. Incorporating the outside into the architecture, making nature an extension of the living space – that is her speciality. This comes across most impressively in her summer house, her "hytte", where we visit her.



CARVED FROM A SINGLE PIECE OF WOOD
With a few exceptions, all the furniture in Line Solgaard's weekend house is unique. The large glass front turns the natural garden into an extended living area.

We steer the EQE into a village residential area a few minutes from Fredrikstad city centre. It's fun following the navigation route. Thanks to the head-up display, we have all the relevant traffic information we need in view without missing any of the surroundings. We enjoy the route past small settlements, sitting in comfort and feeling safe all around. Whenever a car in front of us brakes or makes a turn, innovative assistance systems such as Active Distance Assist DISTRONIC[1] support the driver. High-quality materials, avant-garde lighting and the intuitively operated touchscreen with state-of-the-art MBUX technology give you a real impression of experiencing the automotive future today. We get a feeling of weightlessness when driving. Doubtless, this is in no small part due to the aerodynamic exterior design of the EQE, which adds a certain sportiness to its business-class character.

[1]Our driver assistance and safety systems are only assistive devices. You still have full responsibility as a driver. Please take note of the information in the operating instructions and any system limitations explained in them.

LOVING ATTENTION TO DETAIL
Subtle touches of colour and selected textiles round off the furnishings. Touch is at least as important a part of architecture as visual perception for Line Solgaard.

The intelligent AIRMATIC air suspension helps the EQE effortlessly make the journey to Line Solgaard's summer house along the narrow forest path. It pushes forward with agility and without a hint of jerking, even in the tighter bends. The almost silent engine and the calm of the outside world make for a respectful coexistence, interrupted only by the gentle rumble of the tyres on the pebbly ground.

We almost miss the house. It is so well camouflaged by the surrounding trees that you only really notice it when you are practically standing in front of it. We park the EQE in front of the building, whose straight edges contrast nicely with the elegant single-bow curvature of the car. Our host welcomes us with cool drinks – hospitality is very important in Norway. To the left of the house, a path leads directly into the garden. An impressive scene awaits us there: wild herbs, oaks and pines border the spacious property. Rocks and stones create an adventure course through the garden, the centrepiece of which is a modern outdoor kitchen. You can admire the sea from the gallery-like terrace of the house. An instinctive sense of serenity sets in and you find yourself breathing deeply in and out. Line Solgaard had been searching for a site in the area for five years. In the end, her patience paid off.

This is where nature shows itself in its origins. The formal language of nature contrasts with the house, with its precise planning and clean lines. Viewed from the end of the garden, it almost disappears into the landscape. It is inspired by Japanese and older Norwegian architecture. The foundations are integrated into the rocks instead of removing them for a larger plot. This gives the second floor its "floating" feel on the sea side. "The house has to have quite a solid base because of its environment. Nevertheless, it radiates lightness due to this elevation. I always find that fascinating," Solgaard explains.
The building is basically a square shape, with a staircase in the centre. Around this are several bedrooms, the kitchen and an open-plan living area. The architect is mother to two children, so communal spaces are important to her, as are places of retreat. She works almost exclusively with sustainable, durable natural materials that, in her words, "age with dignity" and continue to adapt to their surroundings over time. She mostly uses wood from locally grown trees, which is reflected in the house as an overall design. Despite its clean structures and few decorative elements, there is plenty of cosiness and warmth.

A PLAY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

The literal highlight of its architecture is the upper part of the pointed roof. Its full glazing lets plenty of daylight into all the rooms. The ceiling cladding of narrow, bevelled oak panels joins the sides. A custom-made design that creates unique lighting situations at different times of day and seasons. There is virtually no art on the walls. Solgaard prefers to interpret the changing movements of light and shadow as a work of art in itself.

The house is not just a weekend retreat. It is a family project made for generations. The architect's brother built it almost entirely singlehandedly, and almost all the furniture was made by a local furniture down the road. The sofa, dining table, beds, chests of drawers and even the ceiling are custom-made. This is particularly useful for small rooms, meaning excellent use can be made of the space.

MAGIC OF LIGHT
The glazed roof peak and open room design allow plenty of daylight to flood into the interior of the house. The step-like ceiling panelling creates a special play of light and shadow as the times of day and seasons change.

It also comes into its own when building on very uneven ground, as with one of Line Solgaard's current projects: we accompany her in the early evening to Kjerringholmen, a group of islands in Ytre Hvaler National Park. Her clients bought a small private island here to build a holiday home on. We park the EQE at the local harbour and continue with a short boat trip.

"We long for this untouched nature. It brings us calmness and maybe even helps us be more in touch with ourselves"

The building bears her signature: lots of wood, a construction on steel pillars to disturb as little of the landscape as possible, and smart planning of available space – just 63 square metres. Solgaard disagrees with the idea that large houses mean more quality of life. Her clients are often surprised when they get a house that ends up only half the size, but still has plenty of usable space – such as a beautiful outdoor area, for example. When asked why people build in such remote places, she replies: "We long for this untouched nature. It brings us calmness and maybe even helps us be more in touch with ourselves."


DH 34 911

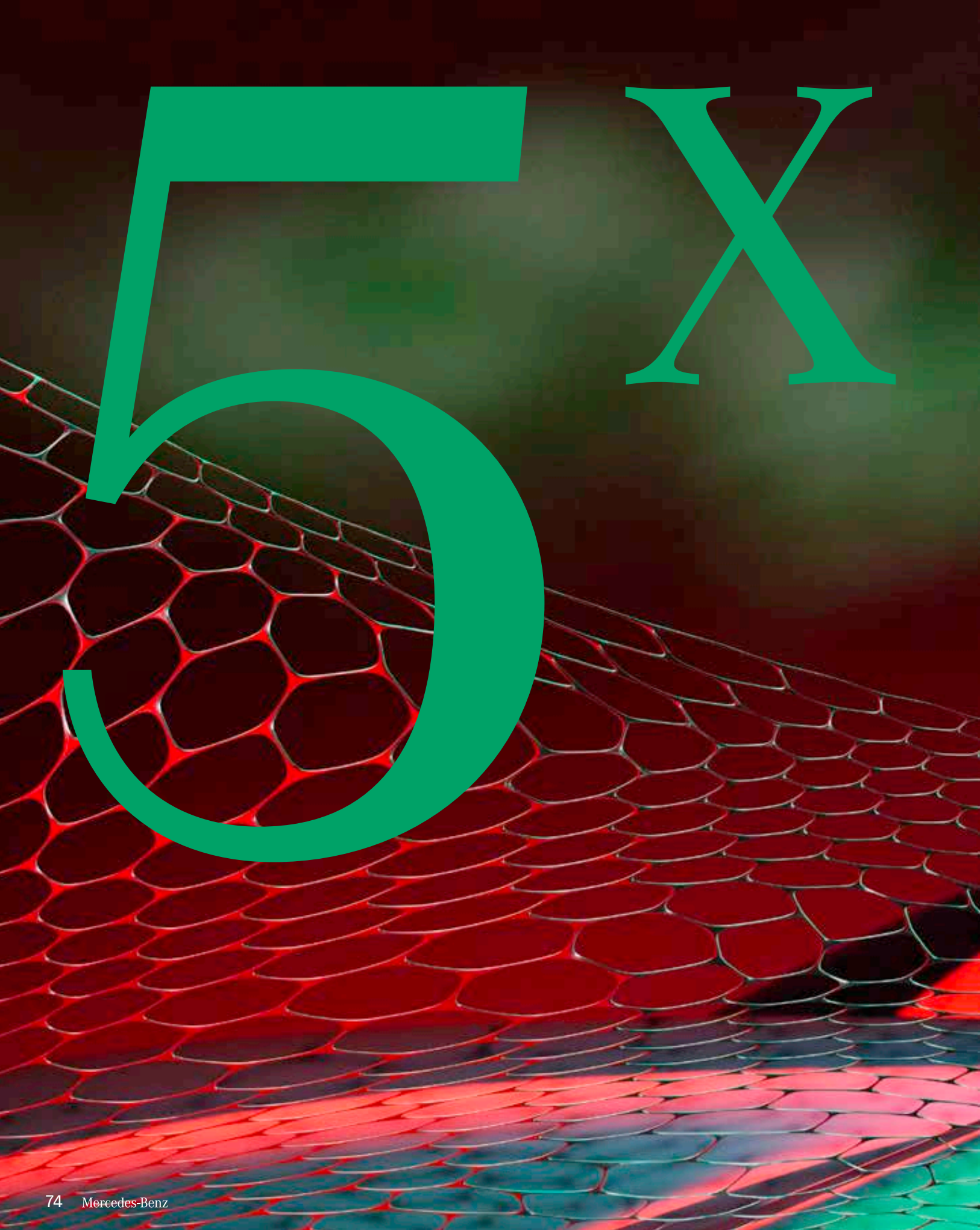
RESPECTING CONDITIONS
Building near water means developing a responsible understanding of the environment. The reward is an individual spectacle of nature at different times of the year.

The houses and the car each appeal to all the senses. And it is the attention to detail that makes them special. The philosophy of working with nature instead of against it

This approach of "build smaller, build smart" leaves a lasting impression on us. Treating nature with respect, keeping the ecological footprint as small as possible – this all seems to be in the Norwegians' DNA. This also goes for electromobility, in which the state plays a pioneering role. According to Statista, the statistics platform, almost 65 per cent of all newly registered cars in Norway last year were electric.

We make our way back to Oslo and draw certain parallels between Line Solgaard's architecture and the EQE. The houses and the car each appeal to all the senses. And it is the attention to detail that makes them special. The philosophy is to work with the environment instead of against it. They both encourage us to enjoy the journey, nature and life.

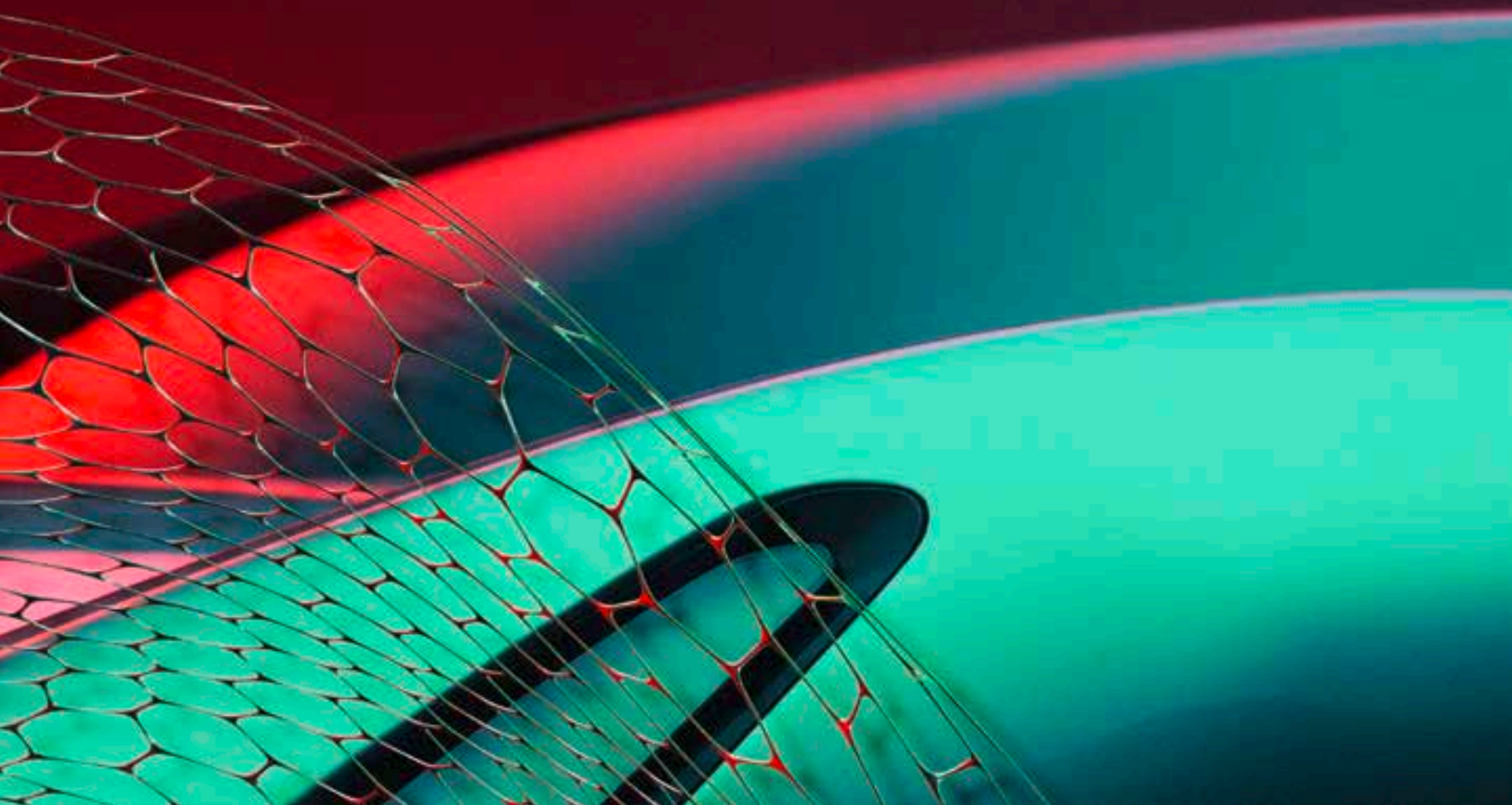

DH 34911


5X

FUTURE

Mercedes-AMG reflects on a unique history and is helping to shape a mobile age that still lies ahead of us. To mark the 55th anniversary, we analyse the brand's special DNA – and five models that offer a glimpse into its future

Text by Bastian Fuhrmann
Visual concept by Nadeen Alattar and Ekaterina Kachavina
CGI backgrounds by David Goldberg

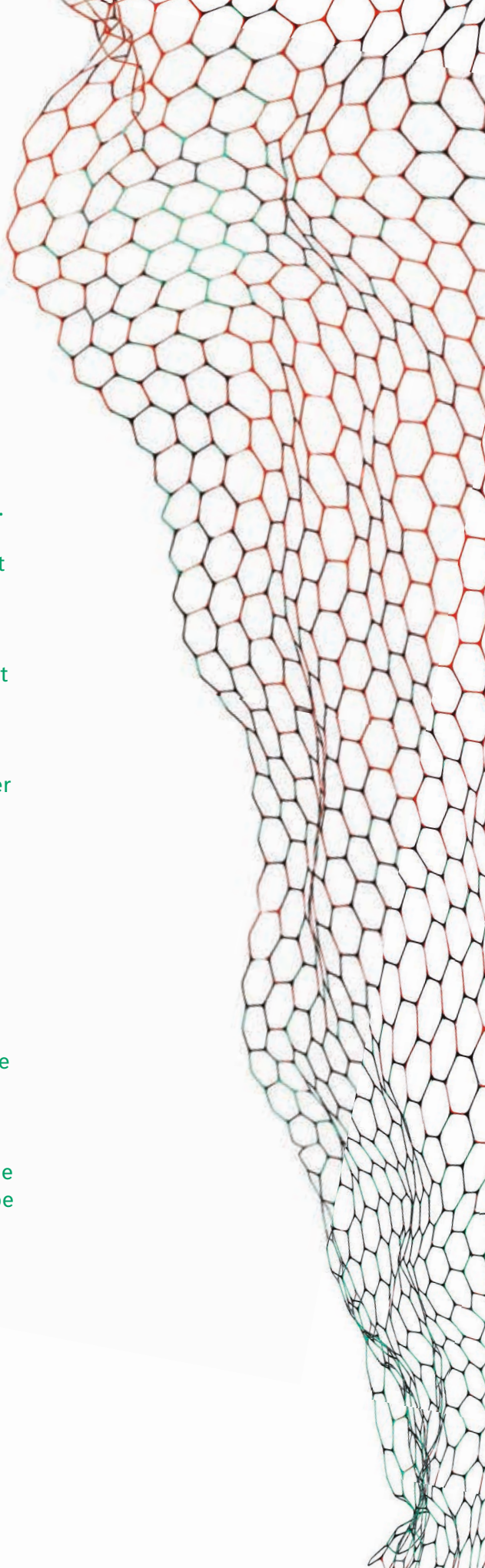


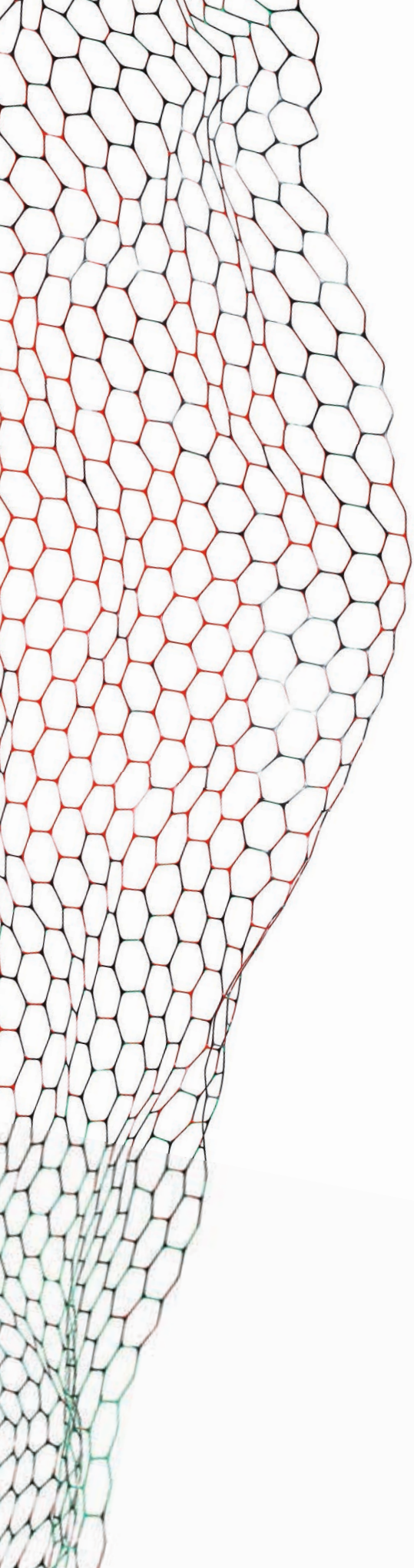
Anniversaries are not only to celebrate the glorious successes and achievements of the past, but also to take a reflective look at what has gone before. So let's go back to the big bang for AMG, which basically began with an ending and makes the fascination of this brand so wonderfully clear. It was the 1965 racing season. A new set of motorsport regulations only permitted factory teams to race cars derived from a small series of road-legal vehicles. The new certification seemed too costly to the Daimler-Benz board of directors at the time, so they decided to leave racing for the time being – except for the rally and touring car championships. Hans-Werner Aufrecht, the A in the AMG acronym that would appear later, was working on the engine test bench at the time and witnessed the end of Daimler-Benz's racing activities with some pain. It's also the time when he met Erhard Melcher, the M in AMG. They both turned their boundless passion for racing to developing touring cars. The Mercedes-Benz Type 300 SE built by Aufrecht and Melcher won the German Touring Car Championship no fewer than ten times – a more than impressive example of their blossoming partnership.

Spurred on by their success, Melcher and Aufrecht continued to tinker in a garage in Großaspach after work. That birthplace of Aufrecht completed the puzzle, the G, the last of the three letters. Their engines built with direct injection were stirring up the enthusiast scene nicely with the duo making more and more of a name for themselves. In 1967, Aufrecht and Melcher rented a small workshop in Burgstall, Swabia, set up their own business and called themselves 'Aufrecht Melcher Großaspach Ingenieurbüro, Konstruktion und Entwicklung von Rennmotoren' (engineering office, design and development of racing engines). They soon built more racing cars and the first private customer conversions of series-production models with support from Daimler.

Then, in the early 1970s, the small company suddenly sprang overnight onto the world stage: their first racing car took second place at the 24-hour race in Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium, and even took the class victory. Even the 8 p.m. news on the Tagesschau, the German public TV news, reported on this racing success. The legendary bright red AMG 300 SEL 6.8 is the embodiment of the AMG ideal to this day. If the limousine was treated with derision in the beginning on the racing asphalt – from then on it was highly respected.

After its debut on television and continuing racing successes, more and more customers worldwide were taking notice of the Swabian engine manufacturer. Enthusiasts from the USA as well as Arab and Asian countries joined AMG's customer list. The premises were no longer suitable for this increased demand and so the decision was made to move to nearby Affalterbach. The progress of the industry took shape in the purpose-built workshop there. Instead of getting hung up on the pure principle of enhancing performance, AMG began to develop and establish the concept of individualisation, with which customer wishes of all kinds could be met. The company was setting a new, international trend with this philosophy.





Together, we are stronger – DaimlerChrysler AG also recognised this and became a partner in 1999: AMG became Mercedes-AMG GmbH. The merger also brought Mercedes-Benz closer to the elite category again. The use of Mercedes-AMG Safety Cars in Formula 1 racing impressively demonstrates how intertwined the racing DNA of AMG is: packed with pure production and road technology, the Mercedes-AMG C 63, for example, is an incredibly sprightly mover in front of the Formula 1 pack. Even the Formula 1 drivers respect that.

In 2009, Mercedes-AMG finally presented their first independently developed road vehicle: the SLS Gullwing. Almost simultaneously, other partnerships were forming behind the scenes and focusing cooperation in the electrification area.

The perennial fascination across the globe has impressively carried the brand into the present. As was once the case with the founding fathers Aufrecht and Melcher in Großaspach, there is a real spirit of optimism in Affalterbach today. The company's own credo Driving Performance will be carried through purely electrically in the future. The company is opening a new chapter with its entry into electromobility, while still remaining faithful to its roots. The old halls and even the former Aufrecht family home are still part of the factory premises of today's Mercedes-AMG GmbH. The original racing link-up with Mercedes-Benz has become a bond for life and the performance brand has become a particularly vibrant part of the Mercedes-Benz brand family. The legendary history of AMG has also made it a unique brand with an aura all of its own: AMG is about performance, but also about lifestyle. The brand is popular with technology enthusiasts and individualists, but is also appreciated by a young lifestyle-oriented generation. This has led to AMG growing rapidly in recent years – thereby becoming an increasingly important part of Mercedes-Benz AG. Today, AMG seems more vibrant than ever: whether with its innovative collaborations in the field of fashion or historic projects such as the Mercedes-AMG ONE, in which a Formula 1 engine was transposed into a road vehicle for the first time. Design and brand history are just as tangible in the new Mercedes-AMG SL as in the hand-built high-performance engines – including the personal signature of the mechanics.

And perhaps this is precisely the secret to the successful alliance between Mercedes-Benz and AMG. Just as with interpersonal relationships, isn't it mutual respect that counts the most? Or in Werner Aufrecht's own words: "You can't improve a Mercedes-Benz, you can only make it different."

This is a limited-edition tribute to a unique legend: the Mercedes-AMG G 63 Edition 55. Together with the foiling, which is on the sides of the vehicle, the edition impressively carries the power from the inside to the outside. Special signets and a bold red are in the interior, while its exterior is available in a choice of Obsidian Black Metallic or Manufacture Opalite White Bright. “AMG” and “55” emblems in the interior quote the special birthday, making the model an exclusive collector’s item and a powerful statement in terms of design and performance. The typical AMG Driving Performance based on the AMG 4.0 litre V8 biturbo engine with 430 kW (585 hp) and 850 Nm maximum torque. An untouchable classic – yesterday, today and in the future!

Mercedes-AMG G 63 „Edition 55“
Combined fuel consumption*: 16,0 l/100 km
Combined CO_2 emissions*: 363 g/km


AMG

Mercedes-AMG C 63 S E PERFORMANCE

A new era began with the C 63 in 2007. More than was the case with any model before, this AMG stood out from its Mercedes-Benz counterpart. The new launch of the C 63 S E PERFORMANCE in 2022 also proves that AMG makes visions of the future a reality. Just as with Formula 1 technologies, which are used in the new C 63: the combination of an electric motor positioned on the rear axle and the world's most powerful production four-cylinder virtually eliminates the turbo lag. In this combination, the hybrid vehicle achieves an output of 500 kW (680 hp). Philipp Schiemer, chairman of the Mercedes-AMG Management Board: "Even 55 years after our foundation, we continue to show the courage and the will to implement the creative and the extraordinary at AMG. The new C 63 in particular is a true game-changer."

Mercedes-AMG C 63 S E PERFORMANCE
Fuel consumption weighted, combined*: 6,9 l/100 km
CO_2 emissions weighted, combined*: 156 g/km
Electricity consumption weighted, combined*: 11,7 kWh/100 km


AMG

The all-electric luxury class from Mercedes-Benz, the EQS, has revolutionised the luxury segment and ushered in the electric age. The AMG variant is as powerful as ever: with the AMG DYNAMIC PLUS package, the race start including boost of the Mercedes-AMG EQS 53 4MATIC+ enables acceleration from 0-100 km/h in 3.4 seconds. It also has impressively fast charging times. Power can be recharged for up to 300 kilometres (WLTP) after just 19 minutes at fast charging stations with direct current. The EQS 53 4MATIC+ demonstrates that the performance models of the future will also be electrifying.

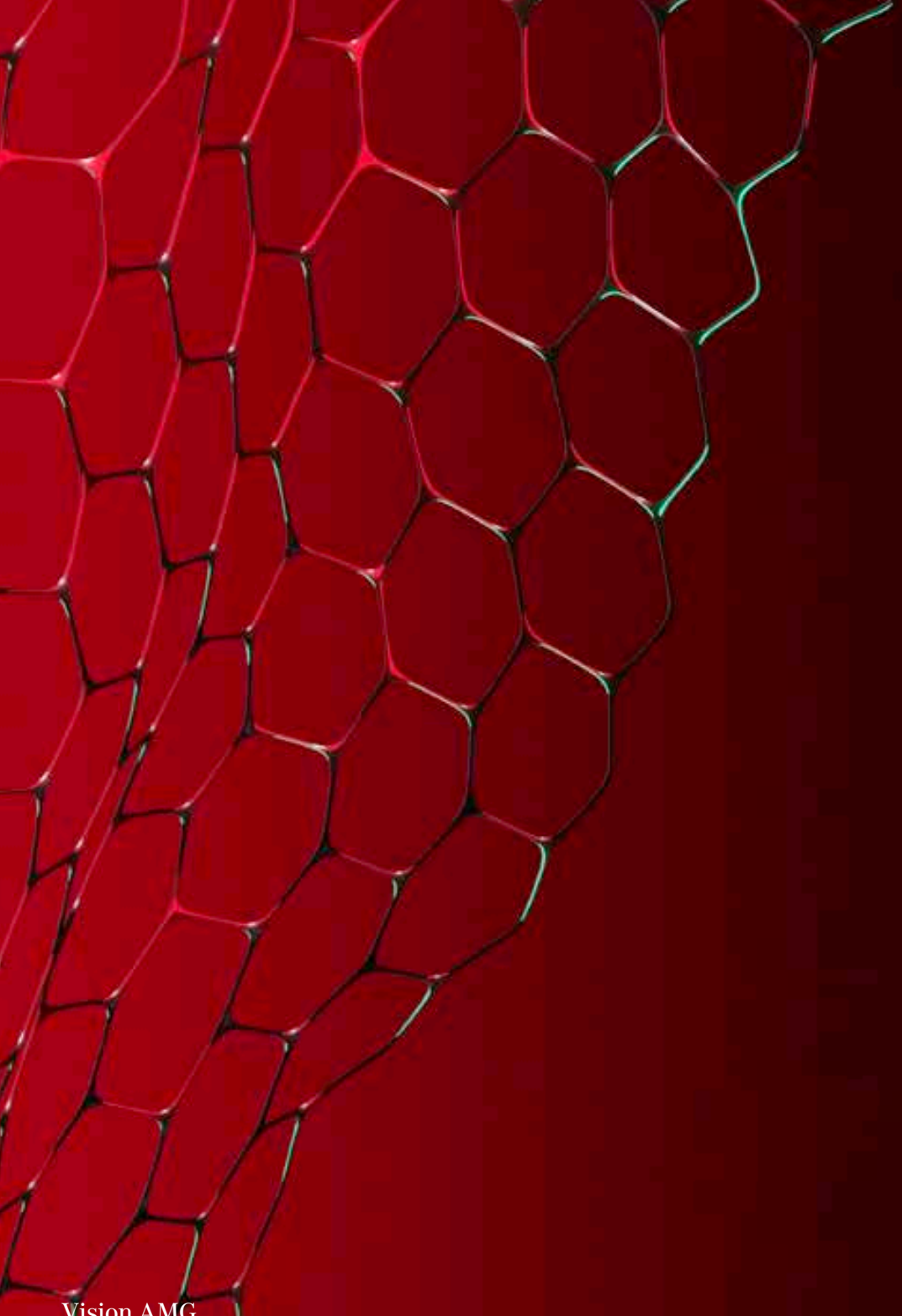
Mercedes-AMG EQS 53 4MATIC+
Combined electricity consumption*: 24,3–21,8 kWh/100 km
Combined CO_2 emissions*: 0 g/km

Mercedes-AMG SL 63 4MATIC+

Like the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG, the Mercedes-AMG SL 63 was developed entirely by Mercedes-AMG. The open concept exudes that unfiltered roadster feeling with its powerful drive. A state-of-the-art chassis impressively combines sport and comfort. This is the first time that a fully-variable all-wheel drive system, the AMG Performance 4MATIC+, has been used in an SL.

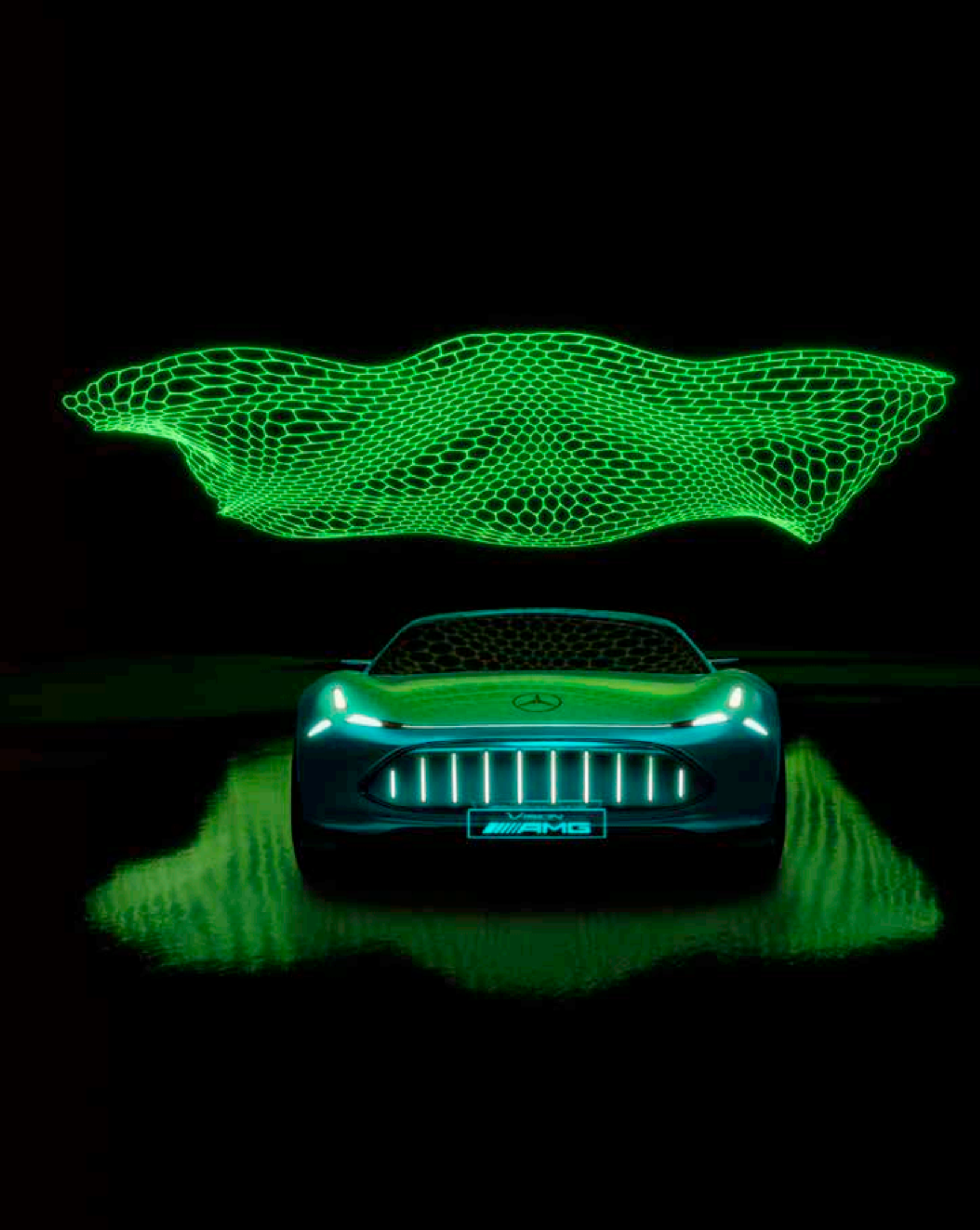
Mercedes-AMG SL 63 4MATIC+
Combined fuel consumption*: 13–12,5 l/100 km
Combined CO_2 emissions*: 294–282 g/km


AMG



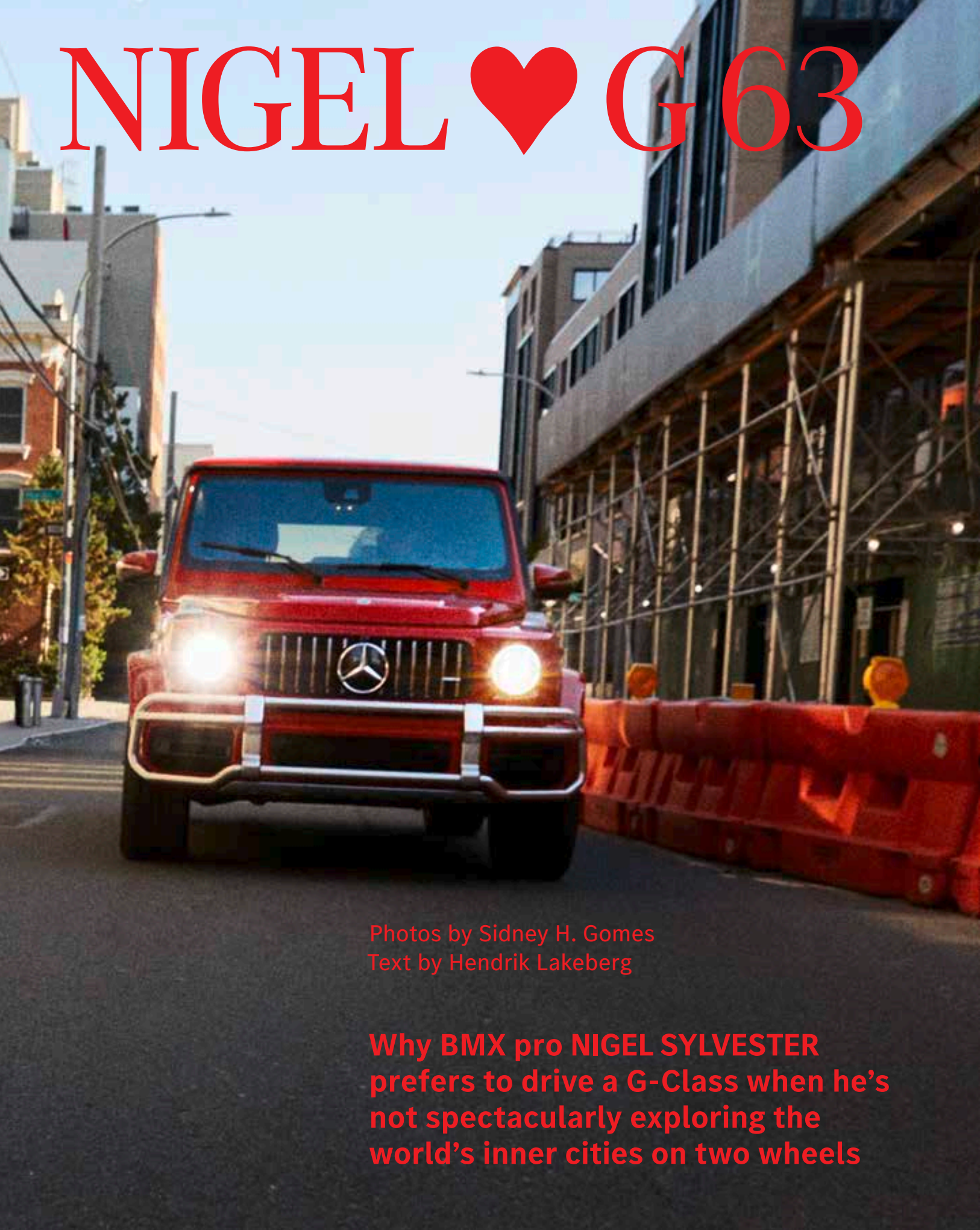
Vision AMG

Mercedes-AMG is taking electric mobility to the next level with the Vision AMG concept car: beneath the stylish shell of the four-door coupé sits the AMG.EA platform, which is as unusual as it is unique and is currently being developed in Affalterbach for all other fully electric models. This gives assurance that AMG will continue to shape the world of performance vehicles in the age of e-mobility with breathtaking performance, emotional design and a fascinating driving experience – and more besides.


AMG

MERCEDES-AMG G 63:
Combined fuel consumption*:
16 l/100 km
Combined CO_2 emissions*:
363 g/ km

NIGEL ♥ G 63



Photos by Sidney H. Gomes
Text by Hendrik Lakeberg

Why BMX pro NIGEL SYLVESTER prefers to drive a G-Class when he's not spectacularly exploring the world's inner cities on two wheels

“Riding my BMX around the city makes me feel free. I think it’s the purest form of creativity”

Nigel Sylvester has shared his BMX passion with his closest friends ever since the beginning of his career: “I believe in teamwork. It’s important to have your friends close by.”

"I have loved the G-Class since I was a child and always dreamed of driving it," says Nigel Sylvester. The Manhattan skyline now rises across the East River into the cloudless early afternoon sky. The BMX professional's bright red Mercedes-AMG G 63 stands in glistening light, right on the shore. Even during breaks in filming, Nigel Sylvester loves jumping on his bike and riding across the open space in the middle of New York.

This view of Manhattan is, in its own way, also a view of another world. The Manhattan skyline tower towards the sky, shares worth billions are traded daily on Wall Street, and at the end of 5th Avenue – around Central Park – are traditionally the most expensive properties in the world. You'll hardly find any international high finance in Brooklyn and the neighbouring borough of Queens. But that's only one reason for the rents being cheaper here. Though Brooklyn and Queens have long been poor boroughs, they have always been rich in culture.

Nigel Sylvester's bright red G-Class makes a statement. It is a special and incomparable vehicle, says the BMX pro.


Green St
ONE WAY

Megastars of today like the rapper Jay-Z grew up and laid the foundation of their careers there. The street culture that thrived for decades in districts such as Brooklyn, Harlem and even in the foothills of Queens, shapes an alternative image of New York. One that has become just as important to the city's image as Manhattan itself: creativity, music, fashion and sports like skateboarding and BMX flourish in Brooklyn.

BMX has made Nigel Sylvester world-famous. And the fact that he drives a G-Class today is about more than just his fascination with engineering. That's certainly part of it, but the red Mercedes-AMG G-Class here on the banks of the East River is both an expression and a badge of having made it. "A Mercedes-Benz is something for people who grew up in Brooklyn and Queens to work towards. It takes some all their lives. They save hard to grasp just a small piece of the brand," Sylvester explains in a calm, confident voice. "My grandfather drove a Mercedes-Benz truck. I have always admired him and the vehicle. He was an important influence in my life."

“My grandfather drove a Mercedes-Benz truck. I have always admired him and the vehicle. He was an important influence for me”

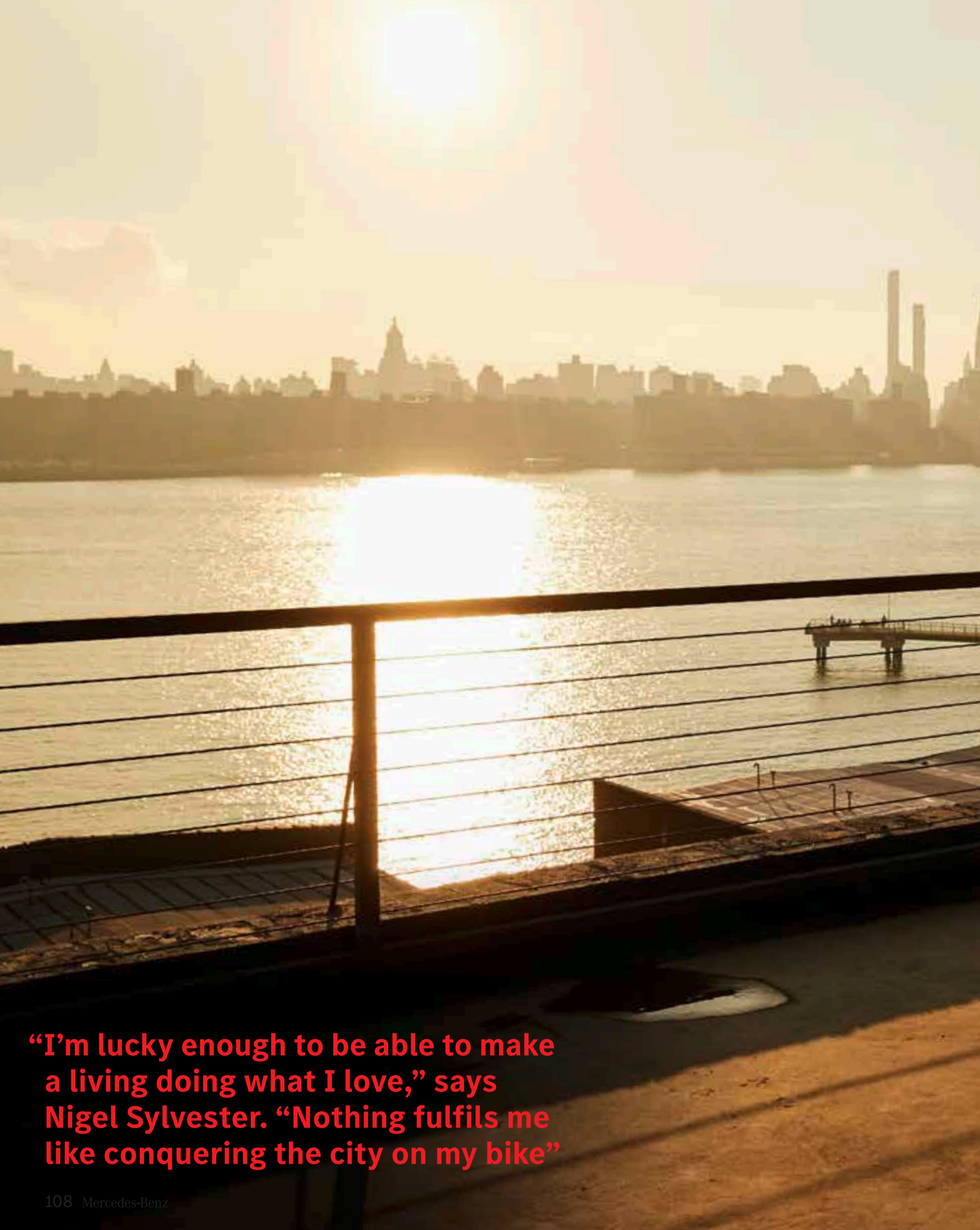
Sylvester says this under a parasol during a break in filming, adding: “The G-Class is special, unique.” The shadows get longer, the light softer. A few final driving shots are still to be taken. We want to ride with him through the streets of New York to document the lifestyle that makes BMX so special and exciting.

We stow the bike in the G-Class boot and drive through Brooklyn towards Queens. Back to where it all began and where he started to discover what drives him to this day: “When I pass cars on the street, swerve over to the kerb, then swerve back out into the middle of the empty street, I feel free. I think it’s the purest form of creativity. I still notice today how much driving fulfils me. How much fun it is for me every time.”

The performance brand, and the G 63 model in particular, are a perfect fit for sportsman Nigel Sylvester, who earns his living by performing to his limits in the toughest conditions. Because that’s what BMX riding is all about: the city and the streets are where Sylvester excels.

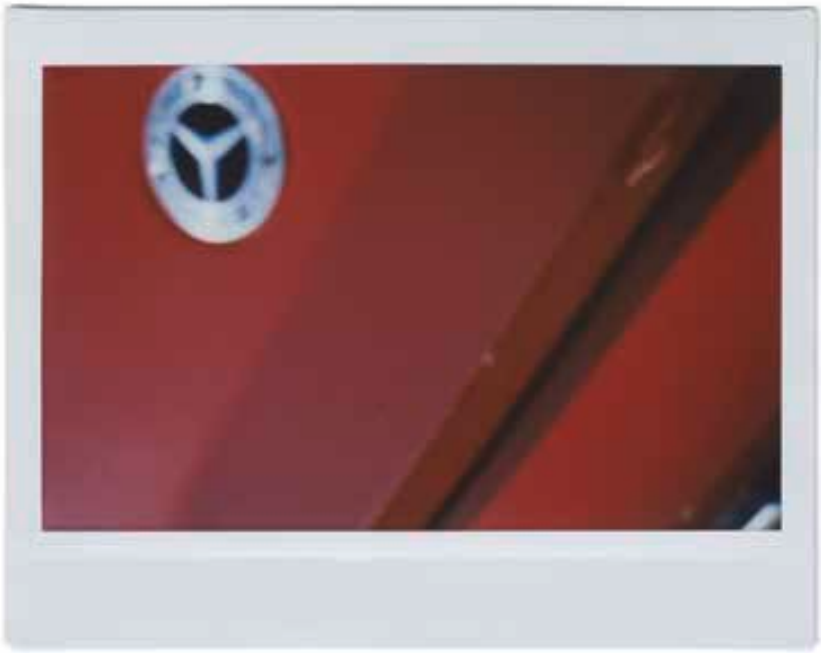

WLH386

Just as the G-Class does. Because it allows the driver to conquer even the most adverse circumstances. The G-Class is particularly sought-after, since it is unique in function and form. So it's no surprise that Mercedes-AMG is marking its 55th anniversary by launching a special G-Class model (read more on p. 74) and creating a fitting monument to the iconic car. BMX was also seen as an unconventional sport for a long time; a sport that works particularly well when it is not practised on a training ground, but on the urban landscape of the world's cities. That's where Sylvester found his fame. His YouTube videos document how he crosses inner cities – sometimes effortlessly, elegant, sometimes with a lot of humour, but always in a thoroughly entertaining way. A Nigel Sylvester video feels like watching a video game. The videos are filmed from his perspective. He meets people on the street, stops to play basketball, rides on – sometimes straight through a hair salon. Nigel Sylvester is not only an athlete, but an entertainer as well.



“I’m lucky enough to be able to make a living doing what I love,” says Nigel Sylvester. “Nothing fulfils me like conquering the city on my bike”

A breathtaking view of Manhattan: the promenades along the East River are made for BMX riding.



Watching the videos, you get the feeling that even after a career that has now spanned almost two decades, he has not lost sight of the fun in the business. Sylvester also understood early on how to work with brands. To build up his own world of sponsors and his own companies. After all, there was sponsoring framework in BMX sport but not in an extent as you would find in other professionalised sports for a long time – at least, not at all on the level of basketball or football in the US.

Sylvester has re-established BMX as a sport with a lifestyle background – with increasing success. Not only does he love sport, he loves fashion too. As well as his bike for Louis Vuitton, Sylvester has already designed collaborations for brands such as Levi's and Moncler, the New Era sportswear brand, and, of course, Mercedes-AMG works closely with the athlete. And the upscale publishing house Rizzoli has just released a photobook of the BMX-pro.

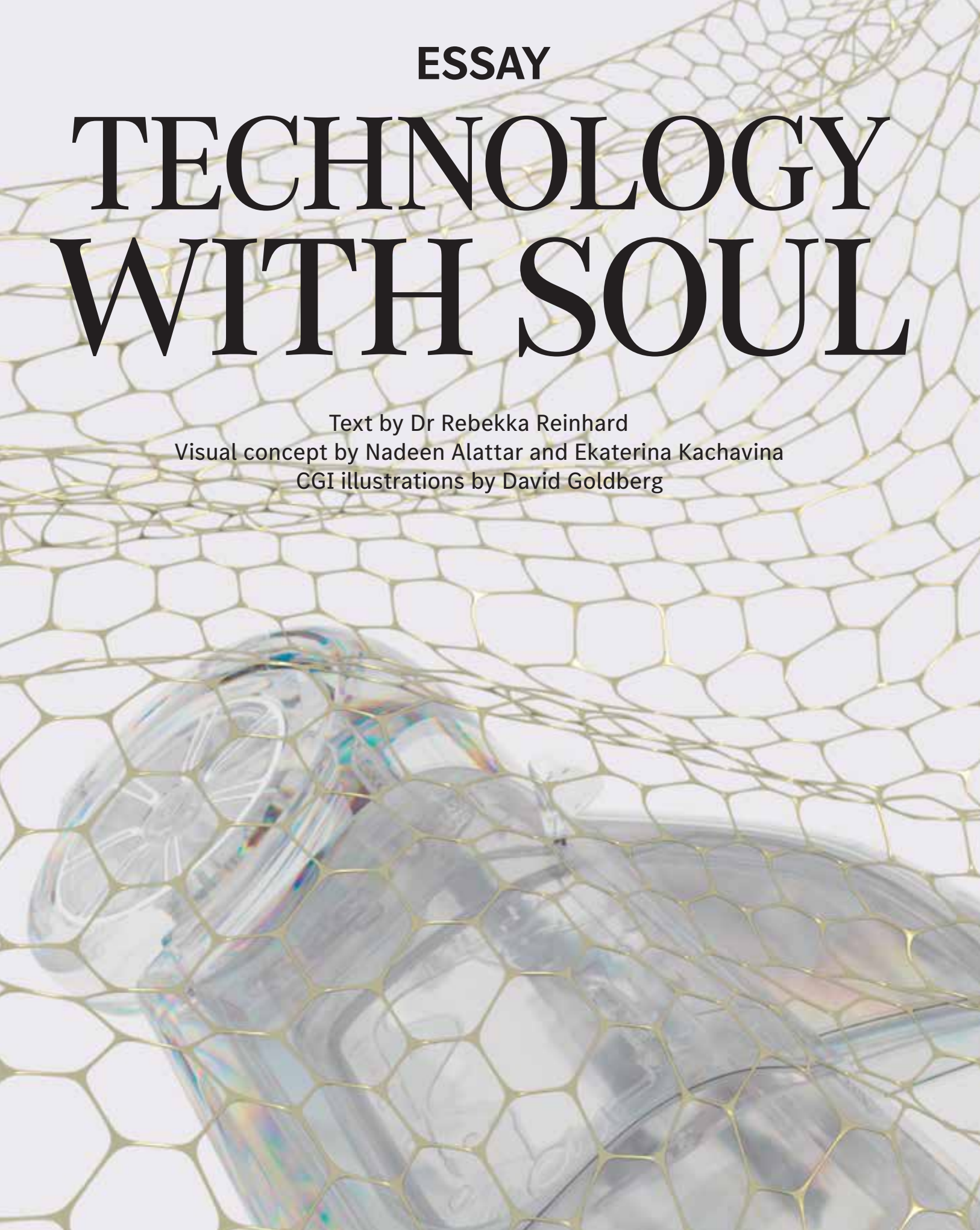
A stopover at a bike dealer he can rely on: Nigel Sylvester had already been in and out of here on a regular basis with his father as a child. A place that feels like home after all these years.

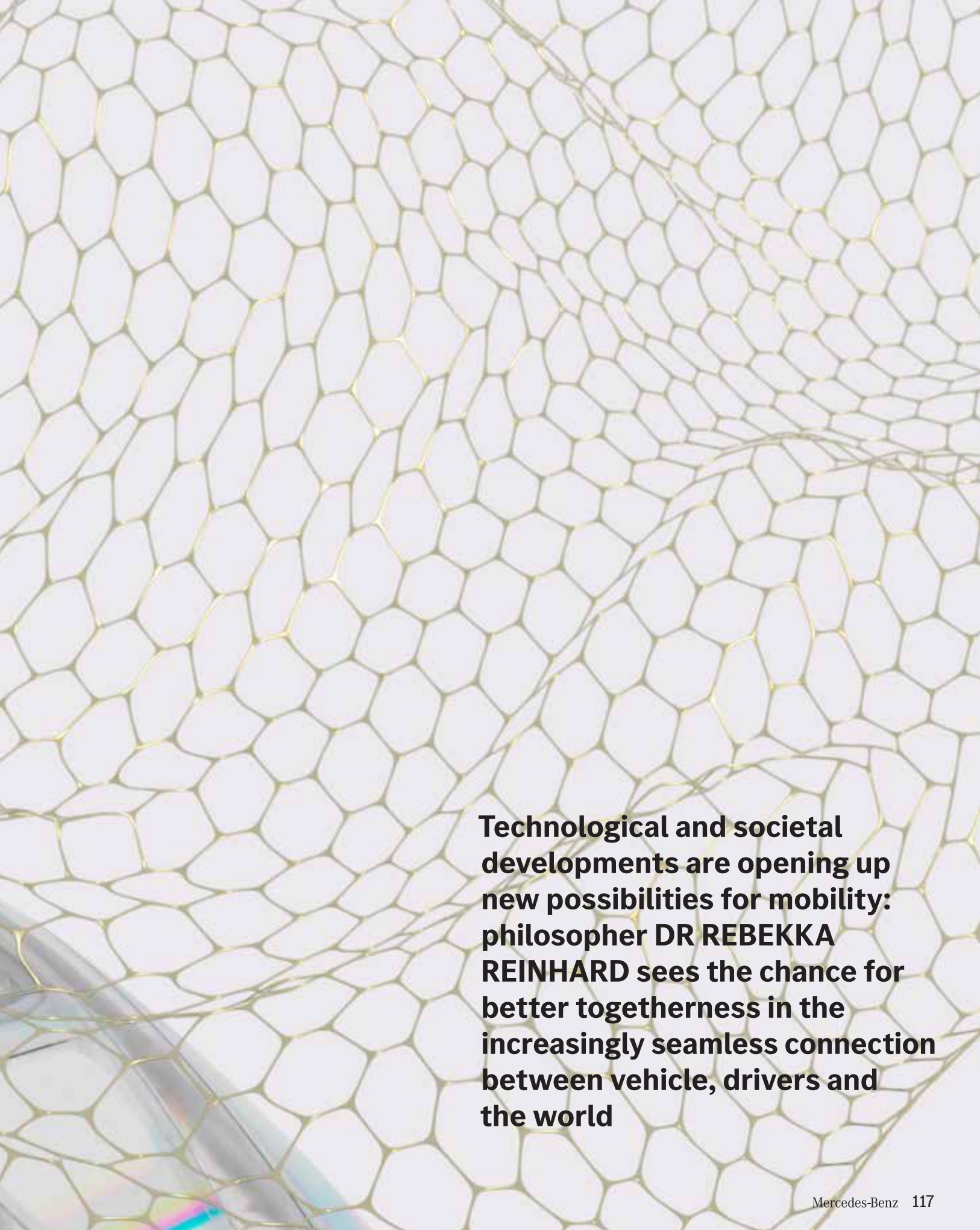
All that, and his steadily growing follower numbers on social media prove that Nigel Sylvester has his finger on the pulse of the times with his content. Sometimes you might think it's only just getting started. But no one who has followed BMX sport so far is likely to share that impression. That's because it all started with a passion for a sport that, before Nigel Sylvester, was firmly established in California but hardly at all in New York. "People didn't get it at first: a BMX pro from Queens?" recalls Sylvester with a laugh. No one says that any more. And his buddies from the early days of his BMX career are still his best friends – Sylvester sees them as part of his extended family. The thing to remember is that it's not just about the career with sports like BMX. You don't ride BMX in New York City to become rich and famous. The driving force has always been very different, and it still is. It's the feeling you get watching Nigel Sylvester criss-cross the city streets on his bike. It's as if he owned them. "I'm lucky enough to be able to make a living doing what I love," says Nigel Sylvester. "Nothing fulfils me like riding my bike super fast through the city." This is about more than happiness. It's the freedom to live in a way that feels right.

ESSAY

TECHNOLOGY WITH SOUL

Text by Dr Rebekka Reinhard
Visual concept by Nadeen Alattar and Ekaterina Kachavina
CGI illustrations by David Goldberg





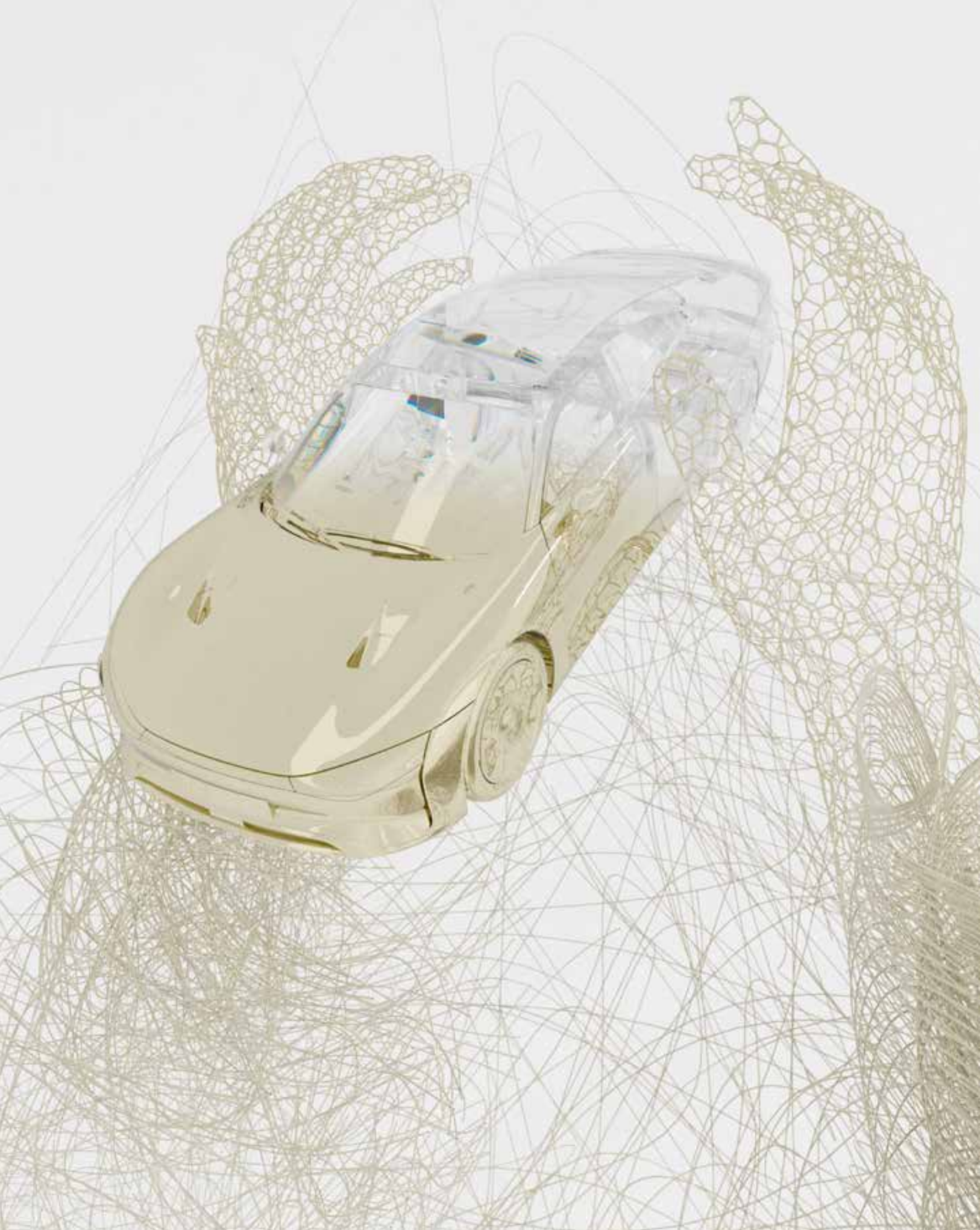
Technological and societal developments are opening up new possibilities for mobility: philosopher DR REBEKKA REINHARD sees the chance for better togetherness in the increasingly seamless connection between vehicle, drivers and the world

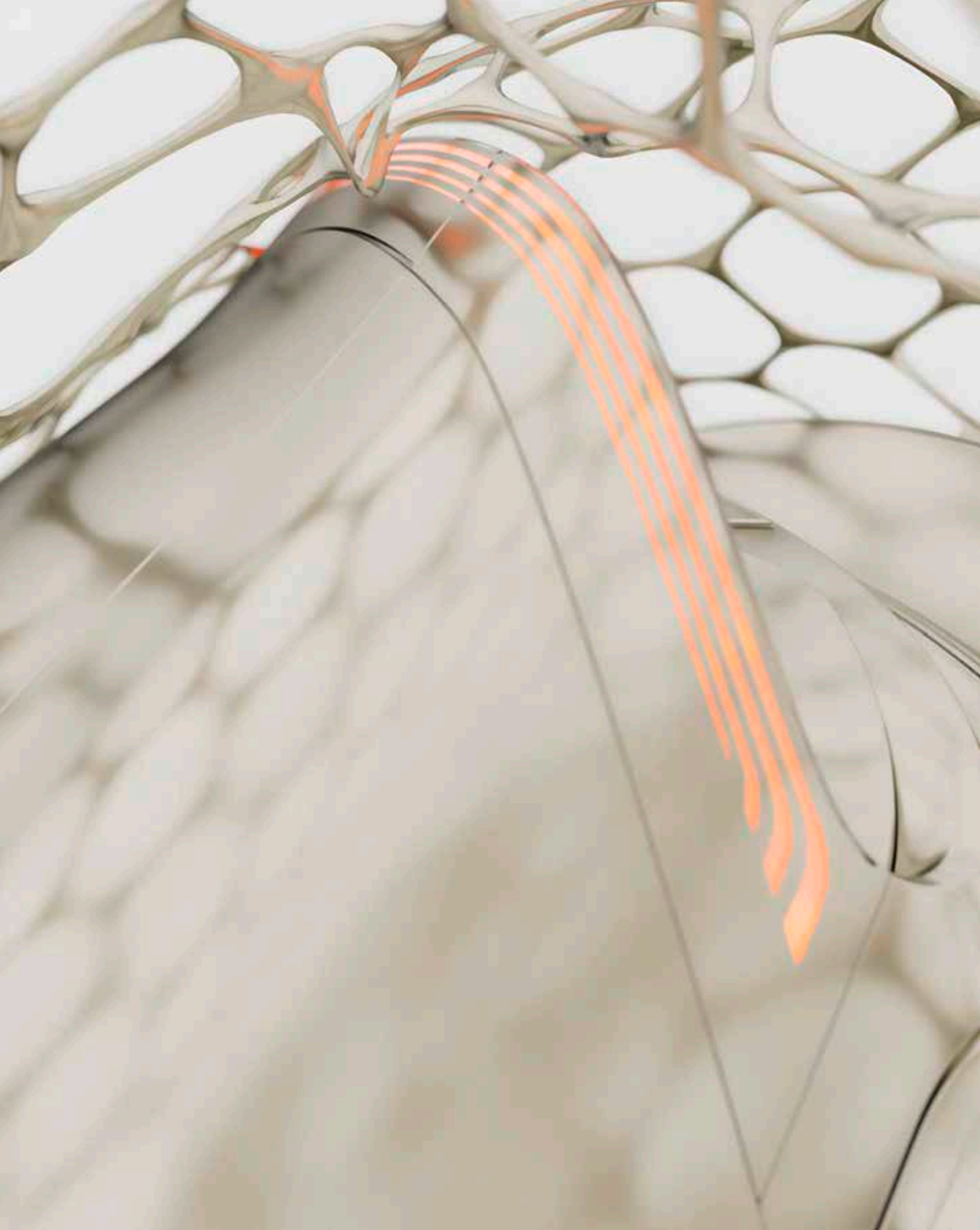
Where do we come from, where are we going? Human life on this planet is one exciting journey. No one can work out the future from the past. Every day holds surprises, every day can become a road trip through still undiscovered terrain. This year, 2022, the year of the turning point, has shown us what we must all carry in our car boot: the vision of a better world. A world in which freedom and connectedness are not contradictory; in which we can feel at home wherever we are. Wherever we may be.

Ever since Carl Benz invented the automobile in 1885, it has represented the longing for freedom. In the 1950s and 1960s, this "self-movement" (Greek: "autos" = self and Latin: "mobilis" = mobile) had a good run. It became a matter of course for the general population to be able to cover even long distances effortlessly with their own car. The driver's life was not just about the spontaneous departure, never just about being on the road. The goal was and is the perfect symbiosis of human and machine; the quasi-natural interaction of heart and lever – or to put it in somewhat more contemporary terms: touchscreen. Highly efficient technology and great feelings are interdependent. Positive emotions alone can no longer legitimise the career of the automobile though. Sustainable mobility now means developing and using vehicles that not only look good and meet the highest technological criteria, but also meet strict ethical standards. Climate change and its consequences for people and nature are becoming increasingly visible in many regions of the world. This calls for a new awareness of the context in which we transport ourselves – a sense of responsibility for our limited ecological resources. How we live can no longer be a matter of purely subjective preferences. The pure "me" perspective is out. Now a "we", networked with the environment, must plan the itinerary. What could this "we" look like?

Humans and machines jointly create a new way of life that combines being free and being connected

The car of the future will no longer only work when actively controlled by people, it will be able to move autonomously and communicate with other digitally networked objects as well. Future-proof automobiles already base their efficiency on digitalisation and AI, electric drive and the key technology of lightweight construction. In other words, they think along with you. The VISION EQXX experimental future vehicle embodies the avant-garde of these developments. It has artificial neural networks modelled on the human brain and interacts with the drivers via an interface. It helps the driver to proactively reduce energy consumption and to select the ideal speed in all environmental conditions. One of the ways this is done is through sensory support that can "feel" changing meteorological and geological conditions beyond human perceptual limits. An avatar enables this prototype to even speak to the drivers and passengers in a natural voice – it's like adding an authentic extra person to the discussion.





The best automobile in the world will be made with “good” human values, thoughts and feelings

Photo: Peter Lindbergh

DR REBEKKA REINHARD
The philosopher, keynote speaker and bestselling “Spiegel” author wants to use philosophy to give society the tools to get its bearings in our changing world.

NEW AUTOMOTIVE LIFESTYLES

This heralds a radical redefinition of the relationship between humans and machines. The intelligent, sentient vehicle will in future increasingly become the trusted companion of mobile people. It thereby even more strongly fulfils the role of a constantly (self-)learning teacher and mentor. This can create a “we” of human and machine through a continuous dialogue – not only about data and numbers, but also about ethical horizons. The strict separation between subject and object dissolves. Drivers feel emotionally and ethically connected to the car’s “expertise” – because they feel “understood”.

Humans and machines thus jointly create a new way of life that combines being free and being connected. Thomas Vašek – author of the book “Land der Lenker” (Country of Drivers), which traces the historical development and significance of the automobile from its beginnings to the digital age – writes of a “multiplicity of perspectives”, a whole “collection of connections” between the human organism and quasi-organic machine that constitutes this new automotive way of life.

It stands for:

– Freedom that can do without wasting resources and the reckless, limitless push for faster-higher-further.

– Freedom that cannot do without self-imposed boundaries or the infinite realisation opportunities of a “we” that realises its impact and power equally with idealism and pragmatism.

– Responsibility that connects the brain and heart for the good of the environment, and the threatened foundations of humans and nature, technology and health. For the value of sustainability to become a natural part of everyday practice.

– Emotions that motivate us to achieve new goals. To be more curious and open. To complement our rational perceptions and ideas with emotive judgements – not to divide the world into black and white, but to view and shape it differently.

– Humanity becoming the guiding medium. In the field of technology and in all areas of our future (working) lives. In digital as well as analogue contexts, in the workplace as well as in the metaverse.

Wherever we are, whatever we do, we are in relationships with other people and things. We have been on the road for as long as we have lived, and our journey is far from over. Someday, maybe tomorrow, the vision in our boot will become reality. The future will be intelligent. But automobiles and AI systems are only ever as “good” as the human who created them. So, until further notice: human is the next big thing. The best automobile in the world will be instilled with “good” human values, thoughts and feelings. It will help us to do justice to what we call “human”.

CONVERSATIONS

ALEXANDER MANKOWSKY MEETS DANNY SHAPIRO

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG, NVIDIA

Interview by
Hendrik Lakeberg

Both are working in the field of future technologies while at the same time sharing a passion for old objects: NVIDIA Automotive Vice President DANNY SHAPIRO and Mercedes-Benz futurologist ALEXANDER MANKOWSKY talk about empathy and technology in times of social change and rapid innovation

Professionally, you basically need to live and think in the future, anticipating trends and the use of technology. At the same time, both of you share a passion for modifying and renovating historic houses. What makes the past so appealing when it comes to your living situation?

SHAPIRO: I live in a historic home, which is over 110 years old. When I bought it over 20 years ago, it needed a great deal of renovation. However, it was important to maintain the character of this beautiful craftsman home, all while infusing it with modern conveniences. So, we worked with an architect to preserve everything and make modifications that would make it more energy-efficient, including installing solar panels. It was early on in the "solarisation" of houses in the US, and in California in particular, when I started this endeavour. Just the concept of doing something that was good for the environment was motivation enough. And, it ultimately had a positive return on investment. We would produce more energy than we consumed during the day, and we could push energy back out to the grid. Then, in the evening when the sun went down, we would consume energy back from the grid, but at a lower rate. It was an interesting early adoption of the technology. It would be ideal to have panels that rotate and follow the sun. But unfortunately, my system doesn't have that, yet.

MANKOWSKY: We have an old house in Swabia; it's from 1835. You can't insulate it. It's a similar issue that you have, Danny. But we don't want to destroy the original character. So, I built a greenhouse on one side to the street where the sun is shining. It was made from high-tech polycarbonate with seven walls, which has good insulation that also blocks out street noise. We made many other improvements, while at the same time you don't want to ruin these old buildings. We will install solar panels in the next phase.

This process of finding a solution for a day-to-day problem is similar to the professional work both of you do. To succeed in your jobs, is it helpful to always have one foot in the past, or in the present at least?

SHAPIRO: When you look at things around us, there's an appreciation for art, or heritage – something like an old home, or a beautiful classic car. Mercedes-Benz has a rich history with many iconic models and we love their appearance, and the stories connected to them. Being able to take vintage items forward, to merge them with new technology, is a big challenge, but also exciting. I constantly look for examples or possibilities to fuse quality, aesthetics, and technology in the best possible way. I was so excited when Mercedes-Benz was bringing electric cars to the market. I was one of the first people in the United States to get the all-electric B-Class. So being able to drive around in Silicon Valley in an eco-friendly Mercedes-Benz was a great feeling. But it was also a symbol for what I described above. The B-Class that brought together quality, craftsmanship and the aesthetics Mercedes-Benz is known for with cutting-edge electric vehicle technology. That's also what's fascinating about my job, where we get to look at different dynamics and technologies, then fuse them together in order to build a better product.

MANKOWSKY: I completely understand this, because in a company like Mercedes-Benz, you must be a pragmatic visionary. It's meaningless to come up with so-called futuristic fantasies, which are then turned around and disrupted because they were nothing more than a trend of the time. For example – like installing a fusion energy reactor in your car. Pragmatism is way more productive: it's like in these houses with all these old things, and old technologies. I love old technologies. And I believe many still have a value for us today. I prefer to own music physically for example, because I don't want to be interrupted by a phone call or an email on the computer. When I put on a record, it's just music and nothing else. These technologies may have disadvantages, but we shouldn't throw old solutions away just because something new is coming up.

Mr Shapiro, how do you see the balance between analogue and digital?

SHAPIRO: So much of design and development today is hybrid, where the physical and digital merge.

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

“Think of a farmer’s market: a booth can come to where the people are instead of the people having to come to the booths,” Alexander Mankowsky says in our interview. He visualised this future way of shopping (below) for a project. Danny Shapiro and his team at NVIDIA work on the technology that could make visions like that possible. However, the priority is to pave the way for fully automated driving functions in Mercedes-Benz cars to make driving safer and more convenient.

“With safety at the forefront, our self-driving cars are not going to be aggressive. They’re not going to put themselves in hazardous situations”

Danny Shapiro

Digital’s role of course has grown, enabling products and user experiences to get better and better over time. When the iPhone first came out, it had just a few functions and was therefore somewhat limited in its capabilities. Now, just look at the millions of apps out there and how it’s evolved: it’s phenomenal. This concept of software-defined products and over-the-air updates has rapidly become the expectation. And companies like NVIDIA are dedicated to continually making that software better, throughout the life of the product. As a result, the product is never done; it’s always evolving. You don’t have to throw things away; rather, you can make them better. Take for example the future fleets of Mercedes-Benz vehicles that we’re working together on. Starting in 2024, these will be software-defined cars. Software and hardware from NVIDIA and Mercedes-Benz will make the cars safer, they’ll make them more enjoyable, and these cars will do so many more things than what’s on the road today. Plus, they’ll be able to do things that we haven’t even thought of yet. At NVIDIA, we’ve built a platform that is perpetually upgradeable and leaves the door wide open to future innovation.

Mr Mankowsky, you’ve worked on a project about autonomous driving and empathy. How are those two topics connected?

MANKOWSKY: As a social scientist, I looked at mobility and saw that it’s a cooperative task. That means that we are predicting what the others are doing and then we act accordingly. Then the next question was, how does it work? And what will happen if you introduce a robot to such a communicational context? Think of skaters: they manage to move around without accidents because they can predict what the others are doing. And now introduce a robot: the skaters would struggle to avoid this thing, because they could not predict its movements. Together with neuroscientists, we found out that our perception works with empathy in a way that we continually perceive information from others unconsciously. A robot car, though, is not “alive” – it has no intentions. It is driven algorithmically. Our learned prediction mechanism will very likely run into trouble. We might get anxious or do the wrong things when reacting to the car. What we asked ourselves next was how to communicate without language. We did an experiment and placed cameras on the heads of horses. This way we learned that horses were in a constant stream of communication with us humans and other horses. We then applied this learning to self-driving cars. One main aspect is that cars need to communicate their intentions – they need to show that they are in automatic mode. That’s important. Imagine crossing a road without knowing if the car has sensed you.

What role does safety play in future autonomous driving cars?

SHAPIRO: Safety is our number-one priority. Our aim is to train a car to drive much better than a human. Perception is a key aspect of achieving that goal, as we develop a system of achieving superhuman abilities of detection and understanding of the environment. We have many algorithms and deep neural networks that run inside the car, detecting everything from the lanes, signs and lights to other road users. This is all performed over 360 degrees and more precisely than we as humans could. Through this process, we’re building a digital twin of

the real world as we drive. That way, the car knows everything that's there, whether moving or static. And then there are behaviours that are tied to each of the objects in the environment. A car, for example, moves differently than a truck, which moves differently than a motorcycle, which moves differently than a pedestrian. With safety at the forefront, our self-driving cars are not going to be aggressive. They're not going to put themselves in hazardous situations. In that regard, they're empathetic to the world and the situation. They will proceed with caution and in a predictable manner. We developed a safety system that's called Safety Force Field: it is designed to not create or contribute to an unsafe situation. But there's no way to predict everything. In today's world, crazy events can happen all the time, whether initiated by humans or not. We'll never be able to account for everything. But what we can do is create systems that are far safer than current human-driven systems on our roads today in order to dramatically reduce accidents, injuries and fatalities.

MANKOWSKY: We're still missing a model and theory for cooperation between human perception and machines. You can compare this to a dance floor. Dancing is pure empathy, because otherwise you would stomp on the feet of the others all the time [laughs]. You have to predict the movement, and the rhythm helps you to do so, just like traffic rules, per se. This kind of model is missing in self-driving technology.

SHAPIRO: I think the ability to communicate is not an absolute requirement for autonomous vehicles, but it is a huge bonus when we can have vehicle-to-vehicle communication or vehicle-to-infrastructure communication. Part of the problem we have today is that there are a billion cars that do not currently have this capability. So if we were to introduce vehicle-to-vehicle communications, there would still be legacy vehicles on the road that won't be using it. Of course, the way to solve this is get rid of all cars and just put new cars out that are autonomous and talk to each other. But it's not realistic. Over time, if we have cars that are all talking to each other and the infrastructure, we can eliminate the street lights. You could have that dance floor experience where cars will just safely pass through intersections.

MANKOWSKY: As great as that sounds, I also see a problem here: I fear a future in which cars are communicating invisibly. And the people are standing there, not being able to decide what to do, because they can't predict the algorithm.

ALEXANDER MANKOWSKY
With a background in social sciences, philosophy and psychology, and early encounters with the first wave of AI, Alexander Mankowsky is the futurologist at Mercedes-Benz. His coveted research and studies hint at what the future of transportation and urbanism holds for humanity.

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG

Who is actually shaping the future: is it us with our needs, or is it technology that provides certain possibilities we adapt?

MANKOWSKY: If we're using a very simple model, there are two relevant spheres: culture and technology. Until around 2010, the driving force of our field of work was technology. Now, culture has the lead. And social innovation, or social change, can be abrupt. Think of the fall of the Berlin Wall. For technology on the other side, the time for development is slow. We are still working with programming language C, we still use HTML and nobody can change that because there are so many who still use it and need it. The inertia is so heavy on the technological side. On the social side, that's not the case. We have the climate crisis. We will have many people fleeing their countries roaming around the planet. That is totally predictable, since it's already there. So, the cultural wheel will be the dominant one. Whether that's a good or a bad thing, that's another question.

SHAPIRO: I agree. Both worlds are merging more and more now. In some cases, it's the technology that has enabled society to move at a different pace, for things to shift radically. Think about social media: there are tools that have enabled massive shifts in ways people communicate and organise, for good or bad.

MANKOWSKY: Now, the cultural and the political are starting to hit back. You can see that by the internet falling apart – everybody is creating their own rules and regulations. This openness, which was strong at the beginning of the digital revolution, is not there anymore. It's not an open field anymore. Therefore, the social part is the bigger driving force. And we have to make the technology flexible enough that it fits the gear on the social side.

We already talked about self-driving cars making roads safer. What are other aspects that could change because of this technology?

SHAPIRO: It's about giving people back their time. The number of hours people spend in their cars, stuck in traffic or just driving on long trips is staggering. As a passenger in a self-driving car, there is no need to pay attention to the traffic; instead they can work, sleep, read books, watch movies, play games or other things – even video conferences are possible. In addition, most cars stay parked the majority of the time, and there are large parking structures and lots throughout cities. But, if we had much more efficient autonomous transportation, we could replace many of those parking lots with parks to infuse more nature into our cities.

MANKOWSKY: We had beautiful visions about shared spaces, where the shared spaces were open

DANNY SHAPIRO
Danny Shapiro is NVIDIA's Vice President of Automotive, where the company is spearheading innovation in car design, autonomous driving and AI-enabled in-vehicle experiences. With over 25 years of computer graphics and semiconductor industry experience, he's one of the leading experts in AI solutions for self-driving cars, trucks and shuttles.

Photo: NVIDIA

“Dancing is pure empathy, because otherwise you would stomp on the feet of the others all the time. You have to predict the movement, and the rhythm helps to do so. Like traffic rules”

Alexander Mankowsky

for people, for cars, and moving infrastructure. I know it sounds futuristic, but it’s not so futuristic after all. Think of a farmer’s market: a booth can come to where the people are instead of the people having to come to the booths. Architects love that idea, and if you provide the technology, it will be feasible. I wouldn’t focus so much on the passenger car, which is a nice thing, but it’s not the whole picture.

SHAPIRO: Absolutely. We’re not just focused on moving people. A big part of what we’re doing is moving goods. Trucking is a huge aspect of our roadways, with a great deal of safety issues that need to be addressed. Also, there’s a global shortage of truck drivers which is further exacerbated by our society increasing online shopping and the need for shipping. In addition to long-haul trucking, we see last-mile delivery to homes increasing, whether it’s vans delivering groceries, or sidewalk robots delivering meals to homes. The benefit, of course, is that the core technology being developed for cars is exactly the same for trucks. We are able to modify the use cases, but leverage all the same AI.

MANKOWSKY: That’s fashionable in architecture, in city planning. To make many things movable or mobile. So you don’t need so many things anymore, it’s way more flexible. That’s a good thing.

Smart cities, so to speak. Speaking of smart homes: are there some home improvement measures that you have planned for the future?

SHAPIRO: I have a new home renovation project. This home was built in the 1960s and needs to be modernised. I want to make it a smart home, like a software-defined home with new technologies, new electronics. There’s also the physical side – for example, we’ll replace the original windows with new, energy-efficient windows. I want to focus on making the house green by equipping it with smart technologies for heating, cooling and even lighting that’s more environmentally friendly. It’s again about blending the digital side with the physical side, and creating a great environment and living experience.

MANKOWSKY: Sounds nice! Our plan is to have a larger garden. For that, we will try to grow more vegetables, for example. And this will also include some automation – because we cannot do that on our own with all the maintenance.

So there will be robots who pick the apples in the garden and bring them to you?

MANKOWSKY: I would love to build machinery that is able to do something like that. There are already machines for that. The funniest machines you can imagine you can find in agriculture. I would love to build one on my own – it would be possible because recognising an apple that’s mostly red and round should be easy.

SHAPIRO: There’s some really exciting work we’re doing in the agricultural space with autonomous vehicles and tractors. They can use AI to determine how to precisely target fertiliser or weed-killer in the most efficient manner. We see AI and robots helping in so many different industries. Robots are of course used in manufacturing cars. But with more AI and technology used in automating factories, we can have robots safely working alongside humans. These cobots improve quality and efficiency, and help prevent human workforce injuries due to repetitive motion. There are so many exciting ways to use this technology to improve the quality of life for all.

FEATURE

LUXURY MADE TO MEASURE: THE FUTURE OF BESPOKE

Text by Dennis Braatz

The Mercedes-Benz MANUFAKTUR in Sindelfingen is a classic atelier: refining customers' new vehicles with custom colour and material combinations. Tailor-made fashion is also experiencing something of a renaissance. A foray into the world of bespoke luxury

"I'm an individualist through and through. I don't tread conventional paths. I often don't like a new car that I order 'off the peg'." People like Maximilian Kehl demand a special kind of customization. One that is tailored to their individual needs. The project developer and investor from Baden-Württemberg is eagerly awaiting delivery of his olive-green Mercedes-AMG E 63 with brown quilted leather seats – a custom-made model not available anywhere else.

Balenciaga opened their Couture Store in July, selling pieces from the couture collection. The last one consisted of many dresses, coats and trousers made of neoprene, recycled denim suits and futuristic face shields developed in collaboration with the Mercedes-AMG Formula 1 labs. These sorts of creations, handmade and absorbing hundreds of hours of work, are now accessible to everyone in the shop on Avenue George V in Paris, available and – totally befitting the supreme discipline of fashion – customisable in the atelier above the shop. You can have them shortened or lengthened, change the colours or materials. Balenciaga describes the concept not as a retail shop, but the opportunity to experience a dream.

This puts us right at the heart of one of the most important current trends in the world of luxury and design: the return and

The Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture provides a glimpse into the potential for customised vehicle interiors (left). Including a custom blazer made from the interior trim material (right).

popularisation of bespoke design. “Bespoke” means tailor made and describes special designs. Until just a few years ago, appointments for made-to-measure clothing were rather elitist and followed strict codes of etiquette. Above all, they invariably took place behind closed doors. A store you can just walk into to sample couture? Unthinkable. Louis Vuitton presenting its custom-made suitcases called trunks (for everything from home bars to sneaker collections) on its own website? And giving the prices? Unheard of. But fashion is far from the only discipline that is opening up its measure of all things accessible to more masses.

The MANUFAKTUR label from Mercedes-Benz opened its doors to a unique world of colours, materials and finishes last year. The design team offers a lot, from an extensive customisation programme to lavish projects like the Haute Voiture, presented on page 18 in “On Beauty”. The Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture was created at the juncture of haute couture and the Mercedes-Maybach S-Class. Chief Designer Gorden Wagener entrusted leadership of the project to Belinda Günther, head of Color & Trim at Mercedes-Benz. She and her team lavishly fitted out the vehicle with sumptuous bouclé fabric, elegant nappa leather and much more. This strictly limited special edition embodies an exclusive bespoke design.

“The MANUFAKTUR is our studio. We work closely with our partners to define guidelines for the individual customisation options at the outset”

Belinda Günther, head of Color & Trim at Mercedes-Benz

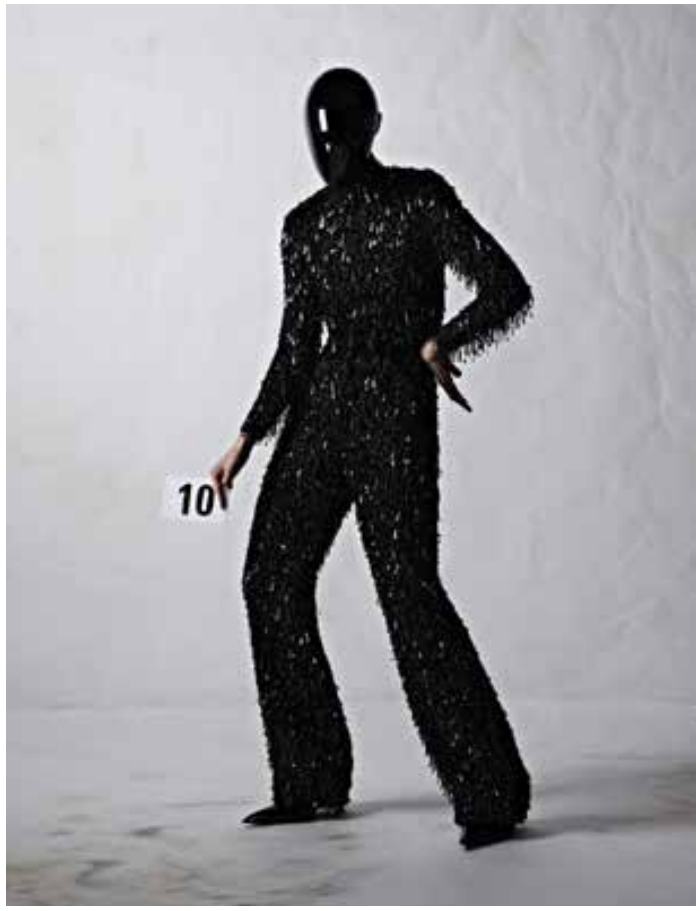
MERCEDES-AMG E 63 S 4MATIC+:
Combined fuel consumption*: 12.6–12.1 l/100 km
Combined CO_2 emissions*: 286–276 g/km

Customers' individualisation wishes are often brought to life by hand in the MANUFAKTUR (left). For example, an exclusive combination of dark-brown leather with porcelain-white stitching and green paintwork on a Mercedes-AMG E 63 (right).

The customisation programme, on the other hand, is even more personal, giving customers the opportunity to tailor the highest-class vehicle ranges from CLS to Maybach with their own ideas of paint finishes and interior trims. Exterior colour, upholstery, trim details and even the vehicle headliner can be selected, combined and tinkered with in a configurator, either at a dealer or on the website. This is Mercedes-Benz making customisation more accessible, more inclusive. Finally, everything is made with painstaking craftsmanship in the Sindelfingen factory.

"The MANUFAKTUR is our studio," says Belinda Günther. "We work closely with our partners to define guidelines for the individual customisation options at the outset." Design parameters are therefore defined for the customer, because not every material or every colour can fit every vehicle series. A modular kind of system from which the customer can choose also makes sense because it guides them and guarantees stylistic consistency. This gives the customer much more


28


10


38


17

“The handicraft gains relevance when put in the spotlight because everything is available. At some point, young people also want more than just a brand’s logo T-shirt. Many luxury customers now value other things”

Demna, creative director at Balenciaga

say in the design, so the car can reflect and complement its owner’s character.

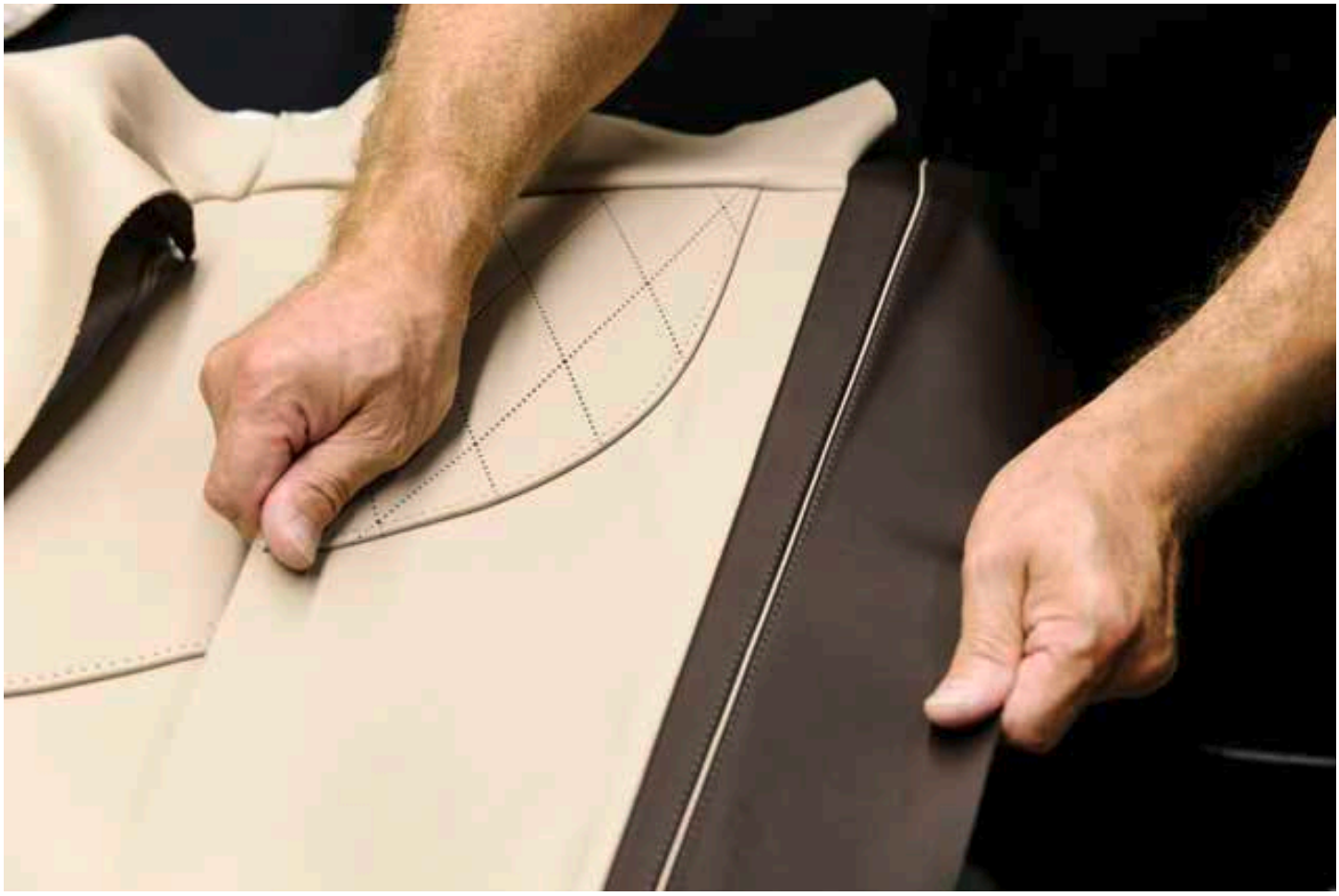
This brings us to the reasons for the reappearance of special and custom-made products. Luxury is no longer defined by a robe and a three-piece suit; it can also be sneakers and a hoodie. Dress codes and style rules have been breaking down more and more in recent decades, meaning that status symbols are also being redefined. Everyday fashion is therefore increasingly being seen in the Paris haute couture scene or on Savile Row in London, the men’s mecca for tailoring. And the offer must be suitably packaged: less buttoned up, more relaxed.

At the same time, just about every product is branded a luxury today. If you want to stand out from the crowd of other brands, you need something truly special. Products that are individually designed and only manufactured on demand have therefore recently grown in popularity. Balenciaga’s creative director, Demna, who now only wants to be called by his first name, puts it this way: “The handicraft gains relevance when put in the spotlight because everything is available. At some point, young people also want more than just a brand’s logo T-shirt. Many luxury customers now value other things.”

Detlev Diehm is one person who benefits from this. The skilled men’s tailor has worked in the Valentino and Hugo Boss creative teams, among others, and was creative director of Regent. In 2017, he founded Diehm Bespoke and since then has been offering bespoke fashion for men at a small and refined establishment in Munich. A new garment needs a minimum of three fittings, and there is a three-month waiting list. Business is booming. It has been doing even better since the Covid-19 crisis. “People have re-evaluated their consumption,” he says. “The desire for something that was made exclusively for them and is long lasting is stronger again.” Some of his clients book their appointment a year in advance because it takes them that long to save up the money for their outfit. Others, with more money to play with, resolve to have everything made to measure in the future. “Then it extends to more than fashion; to furniture, the bathroom and vehicles.”

Back to Maximilian Kehl and his olive-green E 63. When asked about the choice of colour, there is no doubt how important the vehicle is to him: “The car is basically my oasis of wellbeing. That’s why I created a living room feel inside with the brown quilted leather. For the outside, I wanted something that doesn’t exist anywhere else. Grey, black, dark blue – you can get that anywhere, but those are boring colours for me.”

The MANUFAKTUR customer's goal was for his customisation ideas to transform his Mercedes-AMG E 63 (left) into a feel-good oasis – and into a unique piece produced exclusively just for him.



The overriding objective in customising his model? Firstly, to emphasise the high quality of the S-Class in the interior. Secondly, the understatement of the E-Class in the exterior. Discerning? Without a doubt. But it's a path worth following – both for customers and Mercedes-Benz itself.

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG, Marvin Zilm

DIGITAL EXTRAS

CHARGING FOR TOMORROW

Text by Josefine Klatt

Future-proof charging of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids now goes one step further: made possible by the new Wallbox from Mercedes-Benz

It may measure just 25 by 37 centimetres, but the Mercedes-Benz Wallbox is a new dimension of charging convenience. It makes charging at home even faster, smarter and easier. The version with an integrated six-metre cable was launched on the market last spring. Now there is another variant with a socket, giving the option of charging at home with your own charging cable.

The signs of the times point to smart networking, with intuitive operation. What's really special about it is that the new Wallbox is equipped with the technology to accommodate remote functions. For the first time, customers have the option to start and stop charging processes via the Mercedes me app[1], track the current charging status and view the charging history.

THE CHARGING STATION OF THE FUTURE

The unit can be connected to the internet via LAN cable or Wi-Fi and operated conveniently from a distance. Customers only need to open

Photos: Mercedes-Benz AG

their Mercedes me app to do this and can start or end the charging process with just a single tap. The integrated energy meter measures the status of the charge, and the app clearly records all charging processes.

Software updates via over-the-air technology, which customers must agree to in advance in the Mercedes me app, will also be able to be downloaded to the Mercedes-Benz Wallbox in future to keep it up to date. This will allow further functions to be added, such as integrating the Wallbox into selected customers' own energy management systems. The charging power of up to 22 kilowatts makes the Wallbox six times faster than a standard household socket. However, the output can also be reduced by half when installed by a qualified specialist – for example, to meet the respective national requirements of subsidy programmes. The Wallbox is currently available in many European and non-European countries, with availability being further expanded.

SAFE USE VIA APP

Safety is a top priority for Mercedes-Benz. So naturally, the integrated components provide protection against fault currents during charging time. This also guards against the danger of unauthorised use. And those who need to install their own charging station in a semi-public space can rest easy as well. This is because the Wallbox can be locked and unlocked via the Mercedes me app or also via RFID card after activation in the app.

NEW INDIVIDUAL TARIFF STRUCTURE

Home charging is only one element in the further development of electromobility. Mercedes me Charge[2] offers Mercedes EQ and plug-in hybrid customers a new tariff structure[3] for more everyday practicality. As one of the largest charging networks, it bundles more than 350,000 charging points throughout Europe. This provides maximum cost transparency at public charging points, and the optional fixed prices help to circumvent the bewildering muddle of tariffs of the respective operators. The structure works similarly to telephone tariffs for smartphones, always adapted to the individual's own charging behaviour. Customers can choose between three levels: size S for occasional chargers, size M for normal chargers and size L for frequent chargers. All you need to do is activate Mercedes me Charge in your own Services Overview and set up a charging contract with our third-party provider.

The Mercedes me app and the MBUX multimedia system show information such as the exact position, current availability and price at the selected charging station. Navigation with Electric Intelligence is used for fully electric vehicles to calculate a convenient and time-efficient route including charging stops. And best of all, all charging processes are billed monthly – for clear, transparent and forward-looking charging.

[1] The use of Mercedes me connect services requires a personal Mercedes me ID and agreement to the terms of use for Mercedes me connect services.

[2] A separate charging contract with a selected third-party provider is required for payment and invoicing of the charging processes to be able to use the Mercedes me connect "Mercedes me Charge" service. The use of Mercedes me connect services requires a personal Mercedes me ID and agreement to the terms of use for Mercedes me connect services.

[3] A Digital Charging Solutions GmbH service

Learn more about the new Wallbox and the charging services at **mb4.me/charge** and **mb4.me/newwallbox**

ICONS

EVO II

Text by Jörg Heuer

This star had already begun to sparkle in the 1990 and 1991 DTM racing seasons, but the 201 series super sports car with its distinctive rear spoiler really shone bright 30 years ago: the 190 E 2.5-16 Evolution II, affectionately known by fans as "EVO II"

1992: THE YEAR OF A SUPERSTAR

The racing version of the "Baby Benz" (up to 373 hp) won 16 of the 24 DTM races of the season three decades ago and sensationally took the first three places in the overall rankings: Klaus Ludwig took gold, Kurt Thiim won silver, and Bernd Schneider placed third. EVO II drivers Keke Rosberg and Roland Asch also took fifth and sixth place in 1992. The distinctive superstars of the DTM simply left the competition by the roadside.

FROM THE RACETRACK TO THE STREETS

A record for the ages? Not just one! Because hardly any other automotive model athlete – before or since – has won more often, scored more points, set more best practice times, run faster laps or led for more kilometres in the DTM than the EVO II.

Apart from these triumphs, only 502 units of the compact sports car were ever built. These models, with 235 hp under their bonnet and first presented at the 1990 Geneva Motor Show, were sold to customers with racing ambitions: the FIA homologation only allowed vehicles that could also be used on public roads. This resulted in an exclusive small series as a prerequisite for the use of the EVO II in the DTM. The power units for use in the race were derived from the in-line four-cylinder production vehicle version. It was the last DTM power unit designed in engine development at Mercedes-Benz before AMG took over this function.

Today, many fans and collectors hunt for one of these rare sports car icons that have long been trading in the six-figure range: EVO IIs in very good condition cost as much as a house in some places. This powerhouse developed along with the era of legendary automotive designer Bruno Sacco who, as chief stylist from 1975 to 1999 and later as chief designer of Mercedes-Benz, was responsible for the brand's appearance. And if you ask the native Italian about his most amazing business trip, the answer will invariably be this: "I will always remember the trip with the EVO II from Stuttgart down to the Mediterranean Sea in Genoa. I really treasured the many hours spent behind the wheel of this very special car."

Photo: Mercedes-Benz AG


S KM 1793