

'Maserati to be 1st luxury brand to complete EV line-up by 2025'

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As Indian luxury car consumers move towards electric vehicles, Italian luxury carmaker Maserati is betting on its SUVs and aiming to launch its first electric offering, GranTurismo, in India soon. Bojan Jankulovski, Head of Operations for India, spoke to *businessline* on the company's expansion plans, penetration into tier-2 cities and the bringing of new automotive technology to the country. Excerpts:

This is Maserati's second stint in India... what are the changes the company has undertaken?

Maserati is committed to the Indian market and our India operations are an integral part of our regional and global strategy. Traditionally, we have enjoyed steady patronage in the metro cities. Even though the expansion in terms of physical network presence in these cities depends on our partners, we are pushing for the demand of our product offerings in tier-2 and -3 cities.

The Indian luxury automobile segment has witnessed an uptick in SUV demand. How is it for Maserati?

For Maserati, globally and in India, substantial sales come from the Levante and 15 per cent of these sales come from women buyers. Even though India's luxury SUV penetration level continues to grow, leading luxury car manufacturers are betting on the market potential. We have

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BOJAN JANKULOVSKI
Head of Operations — India,
Maserati



seen a boost in sales in the luxury crossover and SUV segments owing to launches of multiple, strategically priced models, coupled with smart financing schemes.

What are the key consumer trends the company is witnessing?

A big focus is on digitalisation because online sales are going to become a new trend. While adapting to the new normal, digital and contactless experiences are going to play a more crucial role.

Consumers are focused on whether the brand resonates with their personality and lifestyle choices. Hence, the challenge at the carmaker's level is to understand this developing market segment and to offer a product line-up to suit the evolving palates of consumers.

Exclusivity and craftsmanship set us apart and we ensure that our customisations are tailored to suit the client and his needs.

Indian luxury car consumers are preferring electric vehicles. What is

Maserati's outlook?

In February 2022, we announced the development of the new GranTurismo and GranCabrio, the first models that are completely electrified. The new GranTurismo will be the first model in Maserati's history to adopt 100 per cent electric solutions, and the India launch plan of the GranTurismo will be announced soon.

With the new Ghibli Hybrid, we announced our entry into the world of electrification recently. The model represents one of the most driven projects for Maserati and the decision to introduce the hybrid technology on the Ghibli sedan is no coincidence.

How do you plan to compete in the luxury electric mobility space in India?

The future of electric mobility is a combination of three key viewpoints and these need to work in harmonisation with each other for a full-fledged electrification trend to kick in. Consumers factoring sustainability into their buying

decision, increase in the standard of living and evolving consumers laying focus on whether electric mobility as an option resonates with their personality and lifestyle choices, will be the significant causes for the outperformance of electric mobility.

A strong regulatory ecosystem can fuel electric mobility growth. Purchase-price subsidies and tax exemptions will have a major effect on consumer demand. It's truly an exciting time because we're on the verge of a new era. Electric mobility is the future and every automotive manufacturer, including Maserati, is working towards that. However, automotive brands need to combine their traditional values with the electrification project. That's why we need to find the balance in meeting the market's demands that push toward green mobility.

What is Maserati's plan to introduce future automobile tech?

Maserati will set the benchmark in every market segment and will be the first luxury brand to complete its electric line-up by 2025. With a smartphone or smartwatch, drivers will be able to stay in contact with their car via the Maserati Connect App; this is also possible from home via their virtual personal assistant (Amazon Alexa and Google Assist).

We are looking ahead into the future, therefore Formula E was a natural choice for the Trident brand, which was the first Italian marque to compete in the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship.