

## Revisiting the Paris Motor Show 2018: Electric enters the French mainstream

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**Even though many important car manufacturers, like Ford, Volvo, FCA, Nissan or Volkswagen, declined their Parisian invitation this year, the Mondial de l'Automobile electrified its audience. Home player PSA finally gets aboard the e-train, while the German premium makes treated Paris with several showstoppers. So did two Asian newcomers.**

Paris is where the French OEMs are at home. Renault presented the revamped Kadjar plus an inspiring concept of a high-end autonomous lounge on wheels, called EZ-Ultimo. The centre stage, however, was for competitor PSA. The Peugeot booth hosted a double première in the shape of the Peugeot 508 SW Plug-in Hybrid. The brand-new estate version of the stylish 508 is the first 'Lion' to get an electrified powertrain that can be charged externally.

Many of the bright beams in Palais 1 shone on DS, too. PSA is finally revitalising its haute-couture premium brand and lets it lead the way to electric, starting with the plug-in hybrid version of the DS7 Crossback, called E-Tense. The same moniker is used to indicate the all-electric model of the brand-new DS3 Crossback. Indeed, PSA is catching up with the e-trailblazers.

### **The German classics**

o the French home players, the German visitors were less



focused on electrification – except for two models: the Mercedes EQC and the Audi e-tron. But these were not world premières – Stuttgart and Ingolstadt preferred to reveal them

a few weeks before the Paris motor show at a private event. The Star did however indulge the public with the unveiling of the GLE, the B Class and the A Class Sedan. The Four Rings introduced the second-generation of both the Q3 and the A1 Sportback.

BMW tried to steal the show with the new BMW 3 Series, the seventh generation already. Not a word on plug-in hybrid or even mild hybrid powertrains, but a discourse that highlighted the benchmark status of the *Dreier* on most every level. Advanced driving assistance systems, connectivity, human machine interface, driving fun, cabin space, refinement: BMW claims it has raised the bar yet again.

### **The Asian newbies**

The media gathered plentifully at the press conference of Vinfast, the all-new automotive branch of the mighty Vietnamese Vingroup. It asked Italdesign and Pininfarina to work out the design and BMW to deliver the platforms for its Lux SA2.0 SUV and its Lux A2.0 saloon. Vinfast believes it can start building them in about a year's time.



Still, Chinese OEM GAC seems closer to invade the Old Continent with its Volvo XC60-sized SUV called GS5. Apart from its ostentatious grille, this crossover is quite modest and down to earth. Power comes from a 1.5 petrol engine, but electrified options are likely to follow. Once that is the case, and the price is right, this GS5 might just find its spot on the densely populated European marketplace.

### **E-pioneer**

If there is any conclusion to be drawn from this year's Paris Motor Show, it's that all car manufacturers are finally on the same page as to electrification. It will come in different sizes and shapes that suit different profiles and scenarios.

As an e-pioneer, ALD helps fleets analyse their needs, matching these with the new products and services on the market. On 5 October **ALD issued a Positive Impact Bond (PIB) to finance the growth of its green fleet. "It's a first not just in the leasing industry, but in automotive as a whole", says Stéphane Renie, ALD's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility.**

This PIB – and future ones – will help speed up the 'greening' of ALD's low-emission fleet. ALD has the ambition to have an alternative powertrains fleet of at least 200,000 vehicles by 2020.

