



AD PUNCTUM

Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 2nd December to 8th December 2019

News is arranged by company and topic. Stories that apply to more than one company or topic are duplicated.

News about the major automakers

BMW (history)

- Invested in the Series B round of existing portfolio company May Mobility. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- Spending €400 million to build the iNEXT in Dingolfing, Germany. ([BMW](#))
- Changed tack on Apple CarPlay and will now offer the smartphone add-on free with latest level infotainment systems. Customers who have purchased subscriptions will have the feature enabled forever without charge. Owners of older vehicles will however have to stump up some cash or go without -- even though BMW could enable the system remotely if it wanted to. ([Autocar](#))
- Suing Valeo and Denso for price fixing on air conditioning parts. ([Reuters](#))
- Reportedly the target of a hacking attack by a Vietnamese group. BMW says it knew of the intrusion and was keeping a close eye on the perpetrators to see what they would get up to. ([ZDNet](#))

Daimler (history)

- Started battery production in Thailand. ([Daimler](#))
- Daimler and Geely's Chinese ride hailing joint venture is called StarRides. ([Daimler](#))
- Two thirds of Daimler's planned headcount reductions will come in Germany, according to union leaders. ([Reuters](#))

FCA (history)

- Looks set for a fight with Italian tax authorities over the value of its US assets. FCA says that even if it loses the case, there won't be a cash impact. ([Detroit News](#))

Ford (history)

- Ford is dramatically scaling back its GoRide Health non-emergency ambulance service and shifting the brand to a smaller scheme testing autonomous vehicles. It was only in May that Ford [heralded the scheme's expansion to more US cities](#). ([TechCrunch](#))
- Ford says it has recruited 3,000 technology specialists in the last three years. ([Ford](#))
- Recalling over 250,000 F-Series trucks because the tailgate might open by mistake. Around 4,000 Explorers and Lincoln Navigators were also recalled because of fuel leaks. ([Ford](#))
- Developed a way to use waste produced by roasting coffee beans in non-visible plastic parts. Ford hopes that McDonalds will send lots of the stuff its way. ([Ford](#))
- A presentation to a group of investors showed neatly how Ford had evolved its intended all-electric vehicle design into the Mach E (actually not all that much). ([Ford - P12 to P14](#))

Geely (includes Volvo) (history)

- Daimler and Geely's Chinese ride hailing joint venture is called StarRides. ([Daimler](#))

General Motors (history)

- GM and LG Chem are investing \$2.3 billion in a new joint venture factory for batteries with an annual capacity of 30 GWh. The chosen site is in Lordstown, where GM has just sold off a vehicle plant and the output is destined for the forthcoming line of large electric vehicles GM says it will launch in 2021. ([GM](#))
- Intends to relocate around half of the employees at the Detroit-Hamtramck, USA, plant once production of conventional models ends in early 2020, indicating lower volume expectations for the all-electric vehicles that will follow. ([Fox](#))
- Agreed to sell its stake in a Russian JV to partner Avtovaz, allowing GM to exit the country. ([Reuters](#))

Hyundai / Kia (history)

- Hyundai announced a new set of product objectives called Strategy 2025. The headline was a beefed-up target for electric vehicles -- by 2025 the aim is now to sell 670,000 FCEVs and BEVs annually (previously it was over 560,000 BEVs and an unspecified number of FCEVs) and be in the top three EV manufacturers globally (given Tesla's current volumes, and VW's aspirations, Hyundai would have to be next best). The target operating margin for the automotive business in 2025 is 8% with a 5% global market share. Hyundai believes it needs to rest on two pillars -- hardware and services -- in an echo of Ford's strategy circa 2016. Perhaps the most adventurous target set by the strategy is that by 2035, electric vehicles will be mainstream in emerging markets. ([Hyundai](#))
- Reportedly the target of a hacking attack by a Vietnamese group. ([ZDNet](#))

Nissan (includes Mitsubishi) (history)

- Nissan told US office staff not to turn up for work at the start of 2020, hoping to cut costs. ([Detroit News](#))
- Nissan's recently departed CEO says the company discounted the Leaf too heavily to meet aggressive sales targets and this damaged the brand. ([FT](#))
- Nissan's limited edition GT-R50 is going into production soon - and you can still order one. ([ItalDesign](#))
- Although Nissan will be introducing some plug-in hybrids in Europe, executives say the firm views the technology as a stopgap until battery electric cars fall in price. ([Auto Express](#))
- Appointed Renault's Hadi Zabliti as the general secretary for the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance. ([Renault](#))
- Nissan and Renault both want to concentrate on improving their financial performance before returning to the subject of the correct capital structure for the alliance. ([FT](#))

PSA (includes Opel/Vauxhall) (history)

- Dongfeng reportedly plans to sell all or part of its stake in PSA. ([Reuters](#))
- Made some changes to Opel's supervisory board, with Group CEO Tavares stepping away and PSA's HR head becoming the new chairman. ([Opel](#))
- Opel says owners of the all-electric Corsa will have far lower running costs than for traditionally-powered models, but the Lion's share of the benefit comes from the government grant. ([Opel](#))

Renault (history)

- Investing in Nino Robites, a developer of motorised mobility devices. ([Renault](#))
- Appointed Renault's Hadi Zabliti as the general secretary for the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance. ([Renault](#))
- Nissan and Renault both want to concentrate on improving their financial performance before returning to the subject of the correct capital structure for the alliance. ([FT](#))

Tata (includes JLR) (history)

- Land Rover is reportedly working on two new vehicles to enter the portfolio sometime after 2021 -- a high end all-electric SUV that might be branded as a Defender, and a low-end Land Rover sharing many components with the Tata Harrier and (shock horror) possibly available as front wheel drive only. ([Autocar](#))
- Invested in self-driving vehicle developer Apex.ai. ([JLR](#))
- Unveiled a major facelift for the F-Type. ([JLR](#))

- Hot on the heels of Audi, Jaguar has told I-Pace customers that they will be treated to improvements that will boost the range. In Jaguar's case, only software changes (delivered over the air) are required. ([Electrek](#))

Tesla (history)

- Elon Musk won the defamation suit brought against him. ([Reuters](#))
- Tesla said the Chinese government had confirmed that locally-built models will qualify for grants. ([Reuters](#))

Toyota (history)

- Toyota's North American sales team say they could shift double the amount of RAV4 plug-in hybrids, but that scare battery supplies are holding them back. ([Bloomberg](#))
- Invested in the Series B round of existing portfolio company May Mobility. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- Announced a series of senior leadership changes. ([Toyota](#))

VW Group (history)

- Moving European customers to a 24-month servicing cycle. ([VW](#))
- VW's offices were raided again by German authorities, seeking evidence about manipulation of diesel emissions. Worryingly, the reported line of questioning was over the EA288 engine -- a product that VW have said is completely legal. ([Handelsblatt](#))
- VW executives said the pace of improvement at German plants was lagging other countries. ([Reuters](#))
- Reshuffled the design leadership, sort of demoting Porsche's design chief by taking away his Group-wide role. ([VW](#))
- Audi says that by 2025, CO₂ emissions from the manufacturing process will be reduced by 1.2 tons per car. ([Audi](#))

Other

- Critics of **SAIC's** MG brand beware: the company has taken a dim view of a customer who made a YouTube video of his car being pulled by a donkey after he says the company didn't fix it properly. MG ominously said it would be taking "appropriate action" because of the damage being done to the brand's reputation by the stunt. ([India Today](#))
- **Workhorse** completed a transaction with **Moog** that saw it sell the IP to an electric air taxi it was developing and create a JV to sell a drone designed to operate from delivery vehicles. ([Workhorse](#))
- Mysterious Chinese investment vehicle **Qingdao Wudaokou New Energy Industrial Fund** took a large stake in Chery's automotive operations and parent company. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- **Aston Martin** is reportedly the subject of interest from the owner of the **Racing Point** F1 team. ([Autocar](#)) The news came at the same time the company's new Welsh factory opened. ([AML](#))

News about other companies and trends ...

Economic / Political News

- November **US** light vehicle SAAR of 17.09 million units fell (1.8)% versus prior year. ([Wards](#))
- **UK** passenger car registrations of 156,621 units in November fell (1.3)% year-over-year. ([SMMT](#))
- November passenger car registrations in **Germany** of 299,127 units rose 9.7% versus prior year. ([KBA](#))
- **French** November passenger car sales of 172,735 units rose 0.7% year-over-year, despite fewer selling days. ([CCFA](#))
- Passenger car sales in **Italy** during November reached 150,587 units, a 2.2% increase over prior year. ([UNRAE](#))
- **Spanish** passenger car registration of 93,158 units in November rose 2.3% on a year-over-year basis. ([ANFAC](#))
- **Kansas City**, USA, will make public transport free at the point of use. ([Curbed](#))

Suppliers

- **Nidec** completed the acquisition of motor manufacturer **Roboteq**. ([Nidec](#))
- **Garrett** is suing former parent **Honeywell** over an asbestos indemnity Garrett says was imposed on the company just before spin-off. ([Garrett](#))

Dealers

- US online used car marketplace **Vroom** raised \$254 million. ([TechCrunch](#))
- Car selling website **CarDekho** raised \$70 million. ([Economic Times of India](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental (history)

- **Uber** released a safety report detailing the number of incidents such as sexual assaults and deaths of passengers and drivers. The company believes that it compares favourable to US national averages, or figures from similar services, but admits that more can be done to keep stakeholders safe. ([Uber](#)) There was some criticism that the data only covers Uber's definition of active service. ([TechCrunch](#))
- Ride hailing firm **Arcade City** is relaunching services. ([ABS-CBN](#))
- MVL's blockchain-based ride-hailing service **Tada** raised \$5 million. ([MVL](#))
- **Ford** is dramatically scaling back its GoRide Health non-emergency ambulance service and shifting the brand to a smaller scheme testing autonomous vehicles. It was only in May that Ford [heralded the scheme's expansion to more US cities](#). ([TechCrunch](#))
- **May Mobility** raised \$50 million from investors including **Toyota** and **BMW**. ([Deal Street Asia](#))
- **Daimler** and **Geely's** Chinese ride hailing joint venture is called StarRides. ([Daimler](#))

Driverless / Autonomy (history)

- **Waymo** says it has completed 100,000 autonomous taxi journeys. ([Bloomberg](#))
- European car making trade body **ACEA** published a wish list of things it hopes governments will do to encourage automated driving. The car companies seem unclear as to how the timeline will develop, even if they get everything they want; ACEA's plan moves year-by-year up until 2028, at which point it leaps to 2050. ([ACEA](#))
- **Volvo Group** (the one that makes trucks) is investing in self-driving vehicle developer **Apex.ai**, alongside **JLR**. ([Volvo](#)) It also put money into VC fund **Autotech Ventures**. ([Volvo](#))
- **Uber** has applied for a patent for a robotic car cleaner that would be stored in the boot (trunk). ([Business Insider](#))

Electrification (history)

- **ABT** and **Schaeffler** formed a joint venture to modify VW-brand vehicles to become all-electric. ([Schaeffler](#))
- **Ahamani Group** and **Renon** formed a JV to build a 200 MWh battery pack factory in India. ([Autocar](#))
- **Toyota's** North American sales team say they could shift double the amount of RAV4 plug-in hybrids, but that scarce battery supplies are holding them back. ([Bloomberg](#))
- **Hyundai** announced a new set of product objectives called Strategy 2025. The headline was a beefed-up target for electric vehicles -- by 2025 the aim is now to sell 670,000 FCEVs and BEVs annually (previously it was over 560,000 BEVs and an unspecified number of FCEVs) and be in the top three EV manufacturers globally (given Tesla's current volumes, and VW's aspirations, Hyundai would have to be next best). By 2035, Hyundai believes, electric vehicles will be mainstream in emerging markets. ([Hyundai](#))

Connectivity

- **BMW** changed tack on **Apple** CarPlay and will now offer the smartphone add-on free with latest level infotainment systems. Customers who have purchased subscriptions will have the feature enabled forever without charge. Owners of older vehicles will however have to stump up some cash or go without -- even though BMW could enable the system remotely if it wanted to. ([Autocar](#))

Other

- **Nikola** and **Iveco** unveiled the fuel cell powered truck the pair are set to sell in Europe. ([Italdesign](#))