

Aston Martin unveils first SUV, eyes luxury buyers in China

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The DBX is Aston Martin's first sports utility vehicle

British carmaker Aston Martin unveiled its first-ever sports utility vehicle (SUV) Wednesday at events in Beijing and Los Angeles, signalling it was banking on China's growing appetite for luxury to prop

up sales.

Dubbed the DBX, the new vehicle is the biggest expansion in Aston Martin's range in the brand's history, CEO Andy Palmer said at its launch.

The company—whose cars play a central role in the fictional British spy James Bond blockbuster films—has struggled financially in recent years, posting a loss of 13.5 million pounds last quarter.

But with its growing appetite for gas-guzzling SUVs, China presents an opportunity for the ailing carmaker, which has been hit by Brexit woes and slowing demand in Europe.

Founded in 1913, Aston Martin hopes to "more than double" its sales in China, which currently stand at around 500 units per year, Palmer told AFP.

Nearly half of all new car purchases registered in China last year were SUVs, according to industry sources.

But the [growing demand](#) for SUVs was causing environmental headaches.

Emissions from SUVs were the second-largest contributor to the increase in global carbon dioxide (Co2) emissions from 2010 to 2018 after [power generation](#), the International Energy Agency said last month.

In that period, SUVs more than doubled their global market share from 17 percent to 39 percent, with a contribution to annual emissions rising to more than 700 megatonnes of Co2, the agency said.

Palmer said that the DBX was "obviously geared for performance, that's

what an Aston Martin is all about" when asked about the environmental impact of the new car.

With a four-litre, V8 twin turbo-charged engine, the DBX is capable of a top speed of 181 miles (291 kilometres) per hour and doing 0-60 miles (97 kilometres) per hour in 4.5 seconds.

Aston Martin says it has splurged on the details and was betting on China's growing demand for luxury for success.

The five-seater is priced at \$189,900 in the US, with officials saying they expected a similar price in China.

Palmer said Aston Martin plans to follow in the footsteps of its German rival Porsche, which unveiled an electric model in September, and relaunch its Lagonda series "as a fully electric brand" by 2022 or 2023.

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