

## Mercedes-Benz sales in passenger cars and luxury light trucks up by 13.9% this September compared to last year



■ BY SHAZIA MALIK

**BRAMPTON** - Tim A. Reuss, President and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Canada, and several company executives, recently joined Sam Eltes and Jonathan Eltes, Dealer Principals, as well as Gary Williams, General Manager, to turn over the first shovelful of soil of the future Brampton-based facility. The group was also joined by Rob Girouard, General Manager of Silver Star Mercedes-Benz located in Montréal,

Québec. As the second Mercedes-Benz banner for this organization, Mercedes-Benz Brampton will benefit from a wealth of experience that comes from managing one of the largest existing retail operations in Canada.

The construction of the new retail facility began in August on a 6-acre site located on the south east corner of Mayfield Road at Highway 410. Scheduled to be fully operational by May 2015, the 60,000 sq ft state-of-the-art dealership will be the new home for the Mercedes-

Benz, AMG and smart brands in Brampton. With 30,000 sq ft earmarked for the service area that will feature 29 work bays, the new dealership will also be perfectly poised to serve the growing after-sales, parts and accessories needs of valued Mercedes-Benz customers in the area. The Brampton dealership's area of representation will be Brampton proper, Caledon, Orangeville and immediate surrounding areas (Acton, Bolton, Georgetown).

Midweek sat with the President and CEO to get a better insight in the prestigious brand's expansion plans in Canada.

Q1. How many years of operation Mercedes-Benz has completed in Canada and how has the journey been so far?

Mercedes-Benz Canada was founded in 1955. At the beginning, it was difficult to find dealers to represent the brand because the product offering was very limited. Perseverance paid off and as we began to grow, we brought in some dealers who have been extremely loyal to us and the brand. In 2013, we sold more than 38,000 vehicles and are well on our way to exceed this milestone by the end of 2014.

Q2. The brand has shown amazing sales results in August. What could be the reason?

Our product portfolio is extremely impressive at the moment. We currently have a strong inventory of numerous highly desirable cars and trucks. In addition, we have very competitive and compelling offers in the market. It is a very good time for existing and new customers to the brand to buy, lease or finance a Mercedes-Benz product.

Q3. What is the brand's strategy for North America in general and Canada in particular?

Well you can see that we have recently been introducing new vehicles into new segments, namely the CLA Class (4-door coupe) and the new GLA, a smaller urban SUV. These vehicles complement a huge cross-section of other models in our large portfolio. We essentially have an extremely comprehensive selection of sedans, 2 and 4-door coupes, convertibles, roadsters, all-wheel drive, gas or diesel cars or light trucks that will meet the demands of the most discerning consumer.

Q. As one of the top luxury brands Mercedes-Benz has always highlighted a unique identity? Will it continue or is the brand moving in the New Year with brand new branding? What policy lines are being followed in this regard?

The branding is being tweaked a bit this year to further emphasize the three-pointed star and word mark. The most noticeable change is that the tri-dimensional printed logo will now be seen on a black background and some of the retail facility features that were blue for many years are now being changed to black. These are subtle changes which for all intents and purposes do not really change the brand in any way.

Q. Which is the biggest market for Mercedes-Benz and why?

In Canada, our largest market is Toronto where we have a large network of dealerships due to the size of the Greater Toronto Area. However, we are extremely pleased with the work our dealers are doing in all of the other markets in the rest of Canada. Our dealerships are strategically and conveniently located in major, secondary and tertiary markets; their respective sales and after sales teams work very hard which explains our high penetration in all markets.

Q. An innovator Mercedes-Benz is introducing a number of new models in the coming year. What are your expectations from them?

Unfortunately, we cannot share any forecasts with you but I can tell you that I am personally very excited with the new products we are introducing this year. The dealers are just starting to receive, in good numbers, the new generation C-Class, our most important model which is now built in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The newest product is the GLA SUV which is arriving in dealerships as we speak; this is a brand new model and from the initial reaction, it promises to be another home run.

We also have the new S-Class Coupe which is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful cars we have ever produced. We will be bringing in a facelifted version of the popular B-Class later this year and it will now be available with our all-wheel drive 4MATIC system. And, last but certainly not least, we showed for the first time in September our newest super sports car, the Mercedes AMG GT. It is a tremendously exciting time for Mercedes-Benz but I have to say that similar wonderful products are launched every year so the future continues to augur well for Mercedes-Benz and its customers.

Q. Do you think this is the right time for expansion as several luxury and other brands have shut down their operations in Canada?

We can only speak to our brand. As we are also dealers ourselves (with our factory-owned and operated facilities), we and our dealer partners across the country have made sizeable investments in bricks and mortar as well as in the hiring many additional employees. These overheads are significant and there must be a viable business case for a reasonable ROI. Since our overall business has grown exponentially over the last few years, facilities have become landlocked and the infrastructure can, in some cases, no longer sustain the demand, we have had to expand our network somewhat. In the last few years, we added a total of 8 new dealerships, mostly in larger markets (Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec, Toronto, Vancouver). This expansion has been a win-win situation but ultimately, it has given us the opportunity to be able to better serve our customers.

## Village Gate - New neighbourhood of executive homes launches in Markham





**Markham** - Kylemore Communities introduces an exclusive new collection of executive homes on 50-foot lots in the master-planned Angus Glen Community. Village Gate will be a private neighbourhood of 56 residences, bordered by mature trees and the south course of prestigious Angus Glen Golf Club in Markham.

"We opened Stollery Estates earlier this year and quickly sold all the 50-foot lots. Village Gate was designed in response to buyer demand. The neighbourhood is set on a prime piece of land in the Angus Glen community and will become a special place within our master-plan," says Patrick O'Hanlon president Kylemore Communities.

City of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, members of Council and VIP's joined Patrick O'Hanlon for the Official Ribbon-cutting to launch Village Gate. Kylemore also celebrated the opening of a sumptuous new Custom Home Model plus their newly renovated Dublin Model Home, both beautifully appointed by Jane Lockhart Interior Design in Toronto. "The continued desire for our Angus Glen homes is a combination of great architecture, superior materials and craftsmanship, and beautiful streetscapes. Our collaboration with Jane Lockhart to showcase

the interiors, completes the picture of a home families will appreciate living in," says O'Hanlon.

Village Gate residences will have a selection of luxurious features such as 10-foot smooth ceilings on the main level with upgraded 8-foot doors; 9-foot ceiling height on the second floor and in the basement. In the kitchen, Kylemore offers a choice of deluxe Downsview Kitchens cabinetry, a fabulous Sub-Zero and Wolf stainless steel appliance package and double edge granite countertops. Additional finishes include Vintage engineered oak hardwood flooring on the main and second level, oak stairs, gas fireplaces; natural stone flooring in foyer; and upgraded Grohe plumbing fixture package in bathrooms. Village Gate homes will benefit from an upgraded light fixture package, 20 interior LED pot lights, LED exterior soffit lights and upgraded Baldwin door lever hardware and steeple hinges. During the Grand Opening, Kylemore includes these extras valued at \$260,000 in the purchase price plus \$50,000 towards upgrades at Décor. The company offers numerous options to add one's personal style to this generous interior finishes package.

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