

# THE FUTURE CAR

BMW invited local youths to design their dream car as the prestigious carmaker celebrates its centenary.

**A**utomotive design must be quite a romantic vocation in the minds of youngsters, as it fulfils their penchant for all things tech and gadgetry, while allowing them to pursue their dream lifestyle. BMW, in celebration of its 100th anniversary, has recently held "The Next BMW Designer 2016" motor vehicle design competition in Hong Kong, asking students to imagine their own signature car that incorporates BMW's core values and Hong Kong's unique characteristics.

It was not an easy task but the response was overwhelmingly positive with many entrants expressing unique ideas on aesthetics, functions, ergonomics and what constitutes their own signature BMW.

A champion was selected in each of the three age groups by a panel of professional judges comprising Mr. Calvin Luk, Exterior Designer of BMW Group, Professor Fred Han, car designer and Associate Professor at the School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Mr. Carl Yuen, Vice Chairman of The Classic Car Club of Hong Kong, Mr. Chacky Ip, Chief Executive Officer of Hong Kong Automobile Association, Mr. Joseph Lau, Managing Director, BMW Concessionaires (Hong Kong) Limited and Mr. Roman Kalusa, Marketing Manager of BMW Group Import Office Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Lau said: "The competition was inspired by the story of Calvin [Luk], who is now a designer with BMW in Munich and whose parents were from Hong Kong. It made me realise that while Hong Kong may be too small a market to have our own car brand, we can still develop talents to serve the global automobile industry. Therefore we organised this competition so our youngsters can make good use of their creativity, and some of them can have the chance to visit our factory in Germany and be inspired."

The champions will be rewarded with some truly precious experiences. They will travel to Munich next Easter with their families to visit the BMW Welt, Museum and Plant, and their winning entries will be featured in the BMW Calendar 2017, along with nine other finalists.

Luk is of Chinese heritage from Hong Kong and studied the US. He joined BMW at the age of 22 and became one of their youngest car designers in history, with BMW X1 being one of his masterpieces. During the finalists' presentations, he explained that while BMW celebrates its 100th birthday, it also thinks about the future.

"Design helps to carry BMW's core values: innovation, precision engineering, great design and social responsibility. All these things combine to influence what design is. I was happy to see all these things addressed in today's presentations so that they are aligned with BMW's commitments to the future."

He felt inspired by all the different ideas, including those that did not make the final cut. "I want to let people know that even if the design does not continue in the studio, it always inspires many people and leads to many ideas. So if you have great ideas, it's important to continue to speak out, study, and talk to people like Prof. Han or me. You can't give up after the first setback. Eventually something will come along."

HKCCCU Logos Academy won the award for the highest number of participants, including one of the finalists. "As an IB school, we try to develop students in every way we can and this is one of those opportunities. We guided them through the process and offered them advice. They're all self-starters and I was very touched by the presentation of our finalist," said Ms. Winnie Chau, the school's Gifted Education Teacher-in-Charge.



From left: Tsoi Ho-yin (10-12 age group winner), Ms. Winnie Chau of HKCCCU Logos Academy, Lau Pak-hei (13-15 age group winner), Mr. Kevin Coon, Vice President, BMW Group Importer Centre, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, Tsoi Ka-ming (16-18 age group winner) and Mr. Joseph Lau, Managing Director, BMW Concessionaires (Hong Kong) Limited.

## Robotic wheels

Tsoi Ho-yin, winner of the 10-12 age group, has designed a futuristic vehicle that emphasises safety and comfort. Its wheels, inspired by Star War's BB8 robot, are supported by magnetic levitation, enabling the car to move in all directions so parking in cramped city spaces is never easier. It also has extra safety features for pedestrians and fellow motorists.

"I've always been interested in cars but this competition got me to seriously design a car from scratch, taking into account not just looks

but also performance. I really look forward to visiting the BMW production line and see how cars are manufactured," said Tsoi.

## Fluid like a shark

Inspired by the speed and grace of a mako shark, 13-15 age group winner Lau Pak-hei believes his design encapsulates his philosophy that life can be joyful. Apart from its distinctive appearance, his car features ergonomic seats that memorise body shapes for maximum comfort, and in case of emergency, they re-align to absorb the impact of collision.

Lau, design lover and lego builder, said he did not know much about cars before but started out by researching a form of polyethylene which he felt could be used to make very safe cars for its exceptional strength. "In the BMW museum, I will try to find the R32, the first BMW motorcycle made after WWI, and also learn more about the history of Germany during the trip."

## Cool and hi-tech

Tsoi Ka-ming, winner of age group 16-18, has created a vehicle very much in line with BMW aesthetics. Its unique sliding door system can save space and reduce accidents caused by opened doors. There is ample space inside the car with highly adjustable seats, as well as a ramp so that an entire wheelchair can be pushed in without having to be folded.

"I've gained a deeper understanding of cars because of this competition, and learned how to make a proper design sketch. I've always been interested in design so hopefully I can follow in this direction when I go to university. Regardless of the discipline, design is meant to improve life so it's challenging and meaningful." He hopes to have the chance to visit the BMW studio to see how cars are designed.



The designs of the champions - Tsoi Ho-yin, Lau Pak-hei and Tsoi Ka-ming - are currently displayed at the BMW Matauwei Showroom (1/F BMW House, 163 Matauwei Road, Tokwawan) and will be featured in the company's 2017 calendar.