

Synthetic suede gives high-end cars that luxury feel

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Leather car seats were once synonymous with luxury, but these days, synthetic suede is becoming the material of choice for high-end automobiles. With increased affluence worldwide, and the growing popularity of car-sharing and luxury-driving services, business is booming for manufacturers of synthetic suede. Among these companies, Japanese firms sit snugly in the driver's seat, reports an article in *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Japanese textile companies have combined manufacturing excellence, a willingness to invest in research and development and the ability to form relationships with car makers to develop high-quality seat [materials](#), writes Senior Correspondent Jean-Fran?ois Tremblay. Toray Industries invented high-end artificial suede—which is two-thirds polyester and one-third polyurethane—back in the 1970s. The material was initially popular in the apparel sector, but as fashion trends changed, Toray and its Italian subsidiary, Alcantara, found a new market for the material in [luxury cars](#). Now, increased demand for synthetic suede has prompted the companies to expand their facilities and ramp up production.

Other Japanese manufacturers of synthetic suede and leather are also doing well. Asahi Kasei is increasing its capacity by 50 percent in Japan for its Lamous brand of synthetic suede, which is already used in about 100 models of luxury cars worldwide. Seiren offers a new type of synthetic leather branded Quole, made from polyurethane and polyester fabric. According to the manufacturers, the [synthetic materials](#) offer

advantages over natural leather and suede, such as lightness, weather- and stain-resistance and a wide range of colors and properties.

More information: "The unexpected source of that luxury feel in car interiors," [cen.acs.org/materials/unexpected ... xury-feel-car/96/i31](https://cen.acs.org/materials/unexpected-luxury-feel-car/96/i31)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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