

BMW presents its self-balancing motorcycle of the future

October 12 2016, by Veronique Dupont



The self-balancing BMW Motorrad VISION NEXT 100 concept motorcycle is unveiled on the last of four international stops of the 'Iconic Impulses' event, celebrating 100 years of BMW, in Santa Monica, California, on October 11, 2016

The motorcycle of the future is so safe riders can cruise without helmet—all of the thrills with none of the danger—according to BMW.

The German automaker unveiled on Tuesday its Motorrad Vision Next 100, a sleek, self-balancing prototype the company released as part of its 100th anniversary celebrations.

The zero-emissions bike has self-balancing wheels designed to stand upright even at a complete stop, stability that the company says will allow riders to forgo riding a helmet.

"Its self-balancing system will help protect the rider at any time," said Edgar Heinrich, the design director of BMW's motorcycle division. "Any late reaction from the driver will trigger and the vehicle will balance out."

"In the future, motorcycle riders will be able to enjoy riding without protective gear."

The world's top maker of luxury vehicles has also premiered this year a futuristic BMW sports car with a flexible body, as well as a self-driving Rolls-Royce and an electric Mini model.

Company representatives said that riding without a helmet remains a fantasy for now, though.

Many countries mandate the [protective gear](#) and self-balancing technology is still in the developmental stage—if the latest concept vehicle becomes a reality, it likely won't be before 2030.



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Despite its contemporary features the bike will not be fully autonomous, the company said.

"We do not envision autonomy on motorcycles," said Heinrich, as the driverless autopilot system has faced global scrutiny following fatal crashes in northern China in January and in the US state of Florida in May.

In September, a Tesla electric car crashed into a tourist bus on a motorway in northern Germany, after the driver who was the only one slightly injured claimed he had activated the autopilot system.

BMW aims to commercialize fully autonomous vehicles by 2021, a company spokesman told AFP.

The Munich-based group has been collaborating with US computer chip giant Intel and the Israeli technology firm Mobileye to develop self-driving cars.

Last year, the Munich-based group also joined forces with its German rivals Daimler and Audi, the luxury subsidiary of Volkswagen, to buy the Here digital mapping service from Nokia to assist in the effort.



Head of BMW Motorrad Design, Edgar Heinrich, speaks at the unveiling of the BMW Motorrad VISION NEXT 100 concept motorcycle at the 'Iconic Impulses' event in Santa Monica, California, on October 11, 2016

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