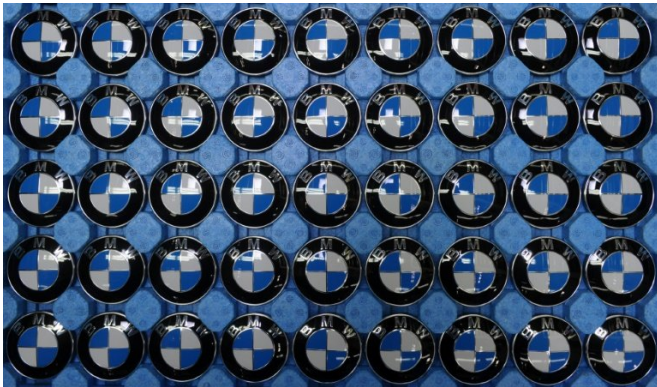


BMW drives to new sales record but still lags Mercedes

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BMW booked record sales for the seventh year in a row in 2017, but still trailed behind arch-rival Mercedes

German high-end carmaker BMW said Friday it booked record sales for the seventh year in a row in 2017, but continued to trail rival Mercedes-Benz.

The Munich-based [group](#) said in a statement that sales of its core BMW-brand cars rose by 4.2 percent to almost 2.1 million last year.

Growth was primarily driven by the strong performance of its X-series SUVs and updated 5-series limousines, the statement said.

While sales in China grew by 15 percent, European sales edged forward by one percent and business in the Americas declined by two percent.

Despite the record performance, BMW was still unable to catch up with Mercedes, which held on to the pole position in the luxury segment with sales of 2.3 million units last year.

Nevertheless, sales chief Ian Robertson insisted that the BMW group as a whole was "the world's leading premium automotive company".

Taking into account sales of BMW's Mini and luxury Rolls-Royce units, the group sold some 2.46 million vehicles worldwide last year.

By comparison, Mercedes-Benz and its Smart brand sold 2.42 million units.

BMW also said it hit a self-imposed target to sell more than 100,000 electric and hybrid vehicles in a year across its own-brand and Mini ranges.

Along with other German carmakers, BMW has promised a range of new electric and hybrid models in the coming years.

Germany's proudest industry faces tougher emissions requirements in future, and must deal with the fallout from repeated environmental scandals.

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