

Ferrari chairman on the Japanese market

Luca di Montezemolo, chairman of Ferrari S.p.A, recently spoke with Yomiuri Shimbun Rome Correspondent Kazuki Matsuura about his brand's image, developing new and existing markets, and his experiences with selling high end cars in Japan.

“Today we sell 6,000 cars in the world, not because we sell far more cars in the United States, but because we opened more new markets, including China. But I think that Ferrari has to maintain the exclusivity [of producing] few cars. Ninety-nine percent of our clients want to personalize their cars and not only the interior. Ferrari has to be like a good-looking woman, you have to desire it. If you want a Ferrari, you have to wait. If you can't wait, you can go to a showroom of another company and buy one of its cars right away.

Japanese market experiences?

“I have been to Japan several times on the occasions of Formula One races in Suzuka [in Mie Prefecture] and the Tokyo Motor Show. I like Japan. Japan is an important market for us after the United States and Europe. We have been there for the last 30 years, selling our cars in

Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and so on through an importer. *But now we are directly involved with Japan, operating our own network of dealers. Thus we are placing greater emphasis on the Japanese market.*”

In discussing his impression of Japanese cars.

“I have big respect for the engine capability of Honda. I haven't forgotten that Honda was a very important player in Formula One in the 1980s and 1990s. Toyota was not able to be competitive in Formula One in the last few years and this is a demonstration of how difficult Formula One is--even one of the largest worldwide companies couldn't be successful. But, on the other hand, Toyota does a very good job in terms of the reliability, quality, image and credibility [of its regular cars].”

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<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/features/culture/20080322TDY05001.htm>