

News Release

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DRIVING THE PROXY – BASF Coatings unveils 2025-2026 Automotive Color Trends® collection

- **New collection explores the translation of ideas and inspiration into action – bridging ideas and emotions to realities**
- **Sustainability and innovation continue to enhance visual sophistication**
- **Three regional colors reflect distinctly different global shifts and evolving emotional needs**

Designers from BASF Coatings have unveiled the 2025-2026 edition of the Automotive Color Trends collection. Titled DRIVING THE PROXY, the new collection explores how creative inspiration and influences can come from various sources, and serve as “proxies” or representatives to dynamically shape design decisions in the automotive industry.

Sustainability and innovation remain central to the collection, with some colors incorporating renewable or recycled raw materials, while innovations such as multi-color pigments and liquid metal-like surfaces add visual sophistication. Overall, DRIVING THE PROXY presents refined faux solids with smooth surfaces and subtle sparkle effects, alongside a transition toward warmer, emotionally resonant hues like reddish shades, mauves, and nuanced browns.

Automotive OEMs worldwide rely on these color insights from BASF Coatings to guide future model development, with some colors expected to appear on vehicles in as soon as two years. Among the 45 colors in the collection, BASF Coatings’ color designers have spotlighted three regional key colors for EMEA, Asia Pacific, and the Americas that reflect cultural and technological shifts unique to each region:

TESSERACT BLUE in EMEA – extended blue with a dimensional shift

TESSERACT BLUE is a vivid blue with green and violet highlights, created through advanced interference pigments. Inspired by geometric abstraction, TESSERACT BLUE delivers a multidimensional surface experience that challenges perception and creates visual depth.

“We see that overlapping dynamics, such as climate changes and social fragmentation, are creating visible and symbolic voids and reshaping social norms,” said Mark Gutjahr, Global Head of Automotive Color Design at BASF Coatings. “In this context, TESSERACT BLUE represents a change in perspective – what we call ‘filling the voids’. It offers a harmonious vision for automotive surfaces with inclusive, forward-looking solutions.”

PHYGITAL MAGNETAR in Asia Pacific – the still surface of accelerated progress

PHYGITAL MAGNETAR is a warm, fluid metallic shade with bright white highlights. It captures the region’s duality: relentless innovation on the one hand, and a strong desire for calm and clarity on the other. Using advanced two-coat technology, PHYGITAL MAGNETAR bridges the physical and digital worlds with a smooth, liquid-metal effect.

“We were inspired by ongoing conversations around ‘innovation fatigue’ in the Asia Pacific region,” said Chiharu Matsuhara, Head of Automotive Color Design for Asia Pacific at BASF Coatings. “With its calm, expressive surface, PHYGITAL MAGNETAR creates a space where innovation becomes invisible, and design quietly redefines the future.”

AUXETIC NEUTRAL in Americas – where neutrality becomes identity

AUXETIC NEUTRAL is a rich, culturally inspired brown that redefines neutrality as a bold design statement. Its clean sparkle adds vibrancy and depth, creating a tactile, multidimensional surface. The color draws influence from both fashion and industrial design.

“Design today is less about individual authorship and more about collective expression,” said Gutjahr. “Neutrality — and even ‘anonymous authorship’ — have become tools for inclusivity, allowing diverse voices to coexist and shape identity. AUXETIC NEUTRAL reflects the desired qualities to navigate through this period,

being a color that embraces complexity, openness, while remaining distinct and memorable.”

Color expertise of BASF Coatings

Each year, color designers from BASF Coatings analyze global trends in fashion, consumer behavior, technology, and nature. These insights shape the Automotive Color Trends collection and guide the creation of new concepts in color, surface, and texture.

Automotive OEMs worldwide use these insights to design and plan future models, supported by BASF Coatings’ expertise in digital and virtual color tools. A notable example is BURSTING BLUE, introduced by BASF Coatings in a previous collection, which has since become a widely adopted color on the road.

About BASF Coatings

BASF Coatings is a global expert in the development, production and marketing of innovative and sustainable automotive OEM and refinish coatings as well as applied surface treatments for metal, plastic and glass substrates in a wide range of industries. We create advanced performance solutions and drive performance, design and new applications to meet our partners’ needs all over the world. We share skills, knowledge and resources of interdisciplinary and global teams for the benefit of customers by operating a collaborative network of sites in Europe, North America, South America and Asia Pacific. In 2024, our businesses achieved global sales of about €3.8 billion.

BASF Coatings – Driven by passion and science, we always go beyond the surface. For more information, visit www.basf-coatings.com and [follow us on LinkedIn](#).

About BASF

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. Our ambition: We want to be the preferred chemical company to enable our customers’ green transformation. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Around 112,000 employees in the BASF Group contribute to the success of our customers in nearly all sectors and almost every country in the world. Our portfolio comprises, as core businesses, the segments Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, and Nutrition & Care; our standalone businesses are bundled in the segments Surface Technologies and Agricultural Solutions. BASF generated sales of €65.3 billion in 2024. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchange in Frankfurt (BAS) and as American Depositary Receipts (BASFY) in the United States. Further information at www.basf.com.