

interstandox

Paint design: Not every trendy colour makes it onto a car



Colour designers like Elke Dirks of Axalta Coating Systems, Standox's parent company, therefore have to recognise the colour trends of the future – today. But there is still a long way to go from the development of a new colour to the completion of the matching repair paint.

One of the most popular car colours in Europe is grey. "It has a 22 per cent share of the market for new vehicles, and for the first time is the second most popular colour in Europe – behind white," says Dirks, Axalta Colour Designer for the automotive OEM sector. One reason for this rise is that, thanks to new pigments, effects and painting techniques, grey can now be displayed in a much more diverse and stylish manner than previously.

Upcoming colour trends and quality assurance

Colour specialists at the major paint manufacturers need a keen sense of which colours are currently on the rise. "Choosing and developing a new colour takes about two years," says Dirks. "This means that today, we have to recognise the trends of tomorrow. The indicators include the evaluation of colour statistics and the analysis of customer and model-related characteristics – but also the zeitgeist. Fashion trends, reviews in magazines or on the internet – everything can give hints."



Axalta colour designer Elke Dirks is constantly on the lookout for new colour trends.



Not all the colours introduced by Dirks and her colleague Christiane Lüdecke at the global presentation are immediately viable for every customer.

Not every colour that Dirks and her colleague Christiane Lüdecke come up with actually ends up on cars. Sometimes production-related issues explain why they do not. "The required pigments must also be available in sufficient quantity and quality," explains Marcus Brunner, Head of Colour Science & Styling at Axalta Coating Systems in Wuppertal. "That's why we also check the manufacturer's logistics chain."

Ease of repair is an important criterion

Production has to think one step ahead: "Garages must be able to carry out perfect repairs on paint damage resulting from accidents," says Harald Klöckner, Head of Standox Training EMEA. This means: Developing paints for a car manufacturer includes not only the production line paint – but also the refinish. "Not every paint manufacturer can offer both, but we do – thanks to Standox, our refinish brand."

The development of a refinish formula is expensive: These include microscopic analyses, the calculation of mixing formulas and the production of spray patterns. This resulting product is the one that finally ends up as a brand formula in the web-based Standowin iQ colour software – where it is available to any bodyshop.

Many colours in different paint qualities

"Every week we feed around 60 new formulas into Standowin iQ," says Klöckner. "Because we offer most colours in different paint qualities, for example in Standoblue, Standohyd Plus or Standox basecoat for the non-European market. It takes a lot of effort – but this is the only way to ensure that our partners in the paint industry always achieve the best possible results."



Silver is a loser among the four "achromatic" colours. For many years the most popular car colour in Europe, it now lags in fourth place. (Photo: AUDI AG)



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