

## Traveling First Class

Luxury car manufacturer Mercedes Benz wanted to create a meaningful impression for the world première of its Mercedes Benz M-class at the 17th North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit (January 9 - 23, 2005), so it enlisted the services of media concept planning agency, TLD Planungsgruppe GmbH.

Founded in the late 1980s as a rock and roll theater based lighting rental company, TLD is now a full service media planning agency with offices in Munich and Stuttgart.

Aside from launching the M-class, TLD was also responsible for showcasing all the other Mercedes Benz vehicles at the NAIAS. A total of 20 vehicles had to be accommodated in a space of only 2000 sq. m. So a huge architectural sculpture was created by the stand architects, Schindler Architekten. With the show running for two weeks and the launch of the Mercedes Benz M-class generating so much attention, the stand had to be robust, yet impressive and stylish, so lighting was a key factor in the presentation.

- Resembling outstretched wings, the sculpture separating back offices and catering was ground supported and some parts of it stabilized with steel cables connected to the

roof. The sculpture was covered with a special stretch metal surface and used as a medium for information and graphics. "Presenting so many different models on the stand provided a challenge as we had to define the separate identity of each vehicle," said chief lighting designer Richard Profe.

To create a distinction between the vehicles, Profe and his team animated the sculpture with atmospheric lighting schemes; LED screens were integrated into the sculpture walls and films of the different cars were shown. In addition, the sculpture changed color to match the model of the car being showcased. As a result, the mood of the stand was constantly, but subtly, changing. Preprogramming and controlling everything on a Wholehog 3, Profe used over 300 moving lights, including Mac 2000s and 600s, plus 130 ETC Source Four PARs.

TLD also designed the lighting for the DaimlerChrysler AG Corporate Boulevard. This was a corporate area which united the two stands and presented the technological advances made by the company. Here Profe and his team created an illuminated walkway which ran between the stands and required 31 m of trussing, and was rigged with 150 moving lights, which were again controlled by a Wholehog 3.

These vehicles had quite an impact (or maybe better said) impression in the automotive world in Motown.

—Roslyn Lowe



PHOTOS: ANDREAS KELLER ALTDORF