



# Driving the Design

Automotive retailer Rockar blends digital and physical worlds to transform the luxury car-buying experience.

*By Taylor Jach, Contributing Writer*

Contrary to what you might think, it's becoming quite popular to purchase a vehicle with a simple swipe of your index finger. London-based car dealership Rockar continues to disrupt the traditional automotive retail experience through a recently unveiled project, with luxury car brand Jaguar Land Rover Ltd. (Coventry, U.K.), in a digitally integrated car showroom. Customers can browse product features and pricing via interactive screens that help guide them through the buying process.

To spearhead the transformation, Rockar sought out creative agency Dalziel and Pow (London), which designed its first store in Kent, U.K., in 2014. "[Here], we took very different brands and worked to bridge their existing identities into a single space with a unique customer journey attached," says Ed Nelson, design lead, Dalziel and Pow.

The store is located in London's Westfield Stratford City, an affluent shopping center that's aligned with Jaguar Land Rover's ethos of providing a superior product. The buying process here is a departure from the sometimes painful, hours-long process involved at many traditional car dealerships.

High pricing usually associated with luxury brands can create the perception that the products are not affordable. However, the space's digital platform helps overcome this barrier by simplifying the process. Purchasing is self-guided through the digital features, and customers can design a vehicle in minutes. Price is transparent throughout the entire process, and test-drives are available without reservations at a neighboring parking lot.

Featuring the cars in a sleek, modern environment helps attract Rockar's desired customer base who appreciates buying with ease and tangibility. The store's window entices potential buyers with a theatrical rotating vehicle display, while the front of the space opens to a scene of Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles parked neatly on the showroom floor. Behind the main attractions are digital screens that invite customers to begin their shopping journey by exploring the products' features and benefits.

"What we needed to do here was communicate quickly to customers that this is an open space where the customer



#### PROJECT SUPPLIERS

RETAILER  
Rockar, North Newbald, U.K.  
Jaguar Land Rover Ltd.,  
Coventry, U.K.

DESIGN  
Dalziel and Pow, London

AUDIO/VISUAL AND IN-STORE  
TECHNOLOGY  
MediaZest, London

WALLCOVERINGS, CEILINGS,  
FIXTURES, FLOORING AND  
FURNITURE  
Principal Global,  
Des Moines, Iowa

SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS  
Sign Specialists Corp.,  
Santa Ana, Calif.

LIGHTING  
iGuzzini, Recanati, Italy

is empowered,” explains Michelle Bower, strategy lead, Dalziel and Pow.

Wall-mounted screens guide the shopper through the space at his or her preferred pace. A defining factor at Rockar: The sales staff aren’t driven by commission, which lessens the pressure placed on customers to purchase, as in most other dealerships.

Wooden archways welcome customers into the “create zone,” where they can customize their dream vehicle. Samples of materials, trims and leathers allow patrons to touch and feel the cars’ finishes before making their final choices via the digital interface. Their personalized configuration is saved by a dynamic online platform, which the shopper can later access to continue editing or complete the purchase at home or from their mobile device.

The rear of the store serves as a relaxing area for customers to learn more about the products and finalize purchase decisions. To solve the biggest design challenge – selling from a very small area – designers utilized high ceilings to give the feeling of more space and task lighting to highlight important features. Befitting of the overall strategy, this area is designed to simplify and streamline the buying experience.

“It’s convenience underpinned by technology,” says Bower. “We tell a simple story that gives the customer a lot of reasons to return.” ▾