Wow Factor

Dear Reader,

So what was your favourite bit of the IAA? Where did you stay the longest and where did you see the most exciting exhibits? For most people, it was probably in Frankfurt's showpiece venue, the Festhalle, where Daimler traditionally unveils its latest innovations. Among the items on show this time were sensible projects like the GLC F-Cell as the world's first electric vehicle with a fuel cell and battery drive system, and a more exotic one like the Mercedes-AMG Project One, a hybrid hypercar with a power output of around 1000 HP and a top speed of 350 km/h. In Hall 11, the Bavarian competitor BMW showcased some IAA innovations that had already been presented previously, like the BMW Concept 8 Series as a forerunner of the BMW 8 Series Coupé and the BMW i Vision Dynamics, which is aimed at closing the electric mobility gap between the i3 and i8.

Two of my favourites were hidden away among the suppliers' stands in Halls 6.0 and 8.0. Röchling has been busy working on what might seem like a mundane problem of how keep the many sensors and cameras on an autonomous vehicle clean. Their cleaning concept supplies the right amount of cleaning fluid to each sensor whenever it is needed – particularly important when mud and slush play havoc with data collection in autumn and winter. Mann+Hummel, in keeping with the current debate concerning air quality in Stuttgart, presented a brake dust particle filter. Vehicles braking in city traffic create 5 to 8 times more particulate matter than is generated by exhaust emissions.

However, what I did miss at the show was an outstanding highlight, a real eye-catcher. This year, there was nothing like Audi's spectacular IAA pavilion on the Agora outdoor area, which caused a sensation in 2011 with its 400 m circuit

on two levels. There was nothing like Daimler's Bertha Benz Memorial Drive with its S 500 Intelligent Drive research vehicle in 2013, when the car drove the 100 km from Mannheim to Pforzheim completely autonomously. And there was no Jaguar F-Pace performing a sensational record-breaking 360° loop-the-loop, which put the British carmaker into the Guinness Book of Records in 2015.

There was no such "wow" effect from Hall 3.1 either, which housed IT companies like Facebook, IBM, Qualcomm and others. Although much-lauded, it was unfortunately somewhat off the beaten track and it closed too early. The same was true of the Start-up Lounge and the New Mobility World. It's a pity, because the effort was clearly there, but the implementation was half-hearted. There is plenty of room for improvement here if we still want to inspire young people, today's "digital natives", to have a fascination for cars – and to prise them away from their smartphones.

Best regards,

Dipl.-Ing. Michael Reichenbach
Deputy Editor in Chief