



2026 WORLD CAR FINALS POWERED BY BREMBO

BMW's OLIVER ZIPSE IS 2026 WORLD CAR PERSON OF THE YEAR

TORONTO, Canada – Thursday, February 26, 2026 – For Immediate Release

The **WORLD CAR FINALS POWERED BY BREMBO** is delighted to announce that **OLIVER ZIPSE**, Chairman of the Board of Management, BMW AG, has been named **2026 WORLD CAR PERSON OF THE YEAR**.

Oliver Zipse has led BMW AG as Chairman of the Board of Management since August 2019, guiding one of the world's most respected premium automotive groups through a period of profound technological and strategic transformation. Zipse joined BMW in 1991 and has spent his entire professional career within the company, gaining deep operational experience across development, production and corporate strategy. His tenure at the top will shortly be drawing to a close, but he will leave having overseen the launch of the BMW Neue Klasse range of vehicles, marking the biggest technical transformation of the brand in its history.

With an academic background spanning computer science, mathematics and mechanical engineering, Zipse is known for combining engineering rigour with long-term strategic thinking. Prior to becoming Chairman, he held senior leadership roles including Head of Production and Managing Director of BMW's Oxford plant in the UK. Under his leadership, BMW has pursued a technology-open approach to electrification, digitalisation and sustainability, while maintaining a strong focus on brand identity and profitability. Zipse's steady, engineering-led leadership has helped shape BMW's direction in a rapidly evolving global automotive landscape.

Commenting on being named 2026 World Car Person of the Year, Oliver Zipse said, "I am honored to be named World Car Person of the Year 2026. To me, this is much more than just an award for my tenure as BMW's CEO: it is a recognition of our strategic course and the courage we have shown to pursue the company's biggest project ever, the Neue Klasse. And, most importantly, it is an award for all BMW employees. Therefore, I would like to thank all our associates: for their dedication, their passion, and their pioneering spirit. The Neue Klasse is a prime example of the remarkable achievements that can be made possible by this collective effort."

Jens Meiners, World Car Awards Chair Emeritus, said, “Oliver Zipse has had a remarkable career at BMW, steering the business through the most turbulent of times to become the strong, forward thinking, financially secure company we see today. His strategy of ‘technology openness’ and of pursuing excellence with all kinds of powertrains has been fully validated by the market. The current BMW Group product line-up is just about the best it has ever been, and BMW continues to be the brand that other carmakers look up to. Much of that is down to Oliver Zipse’s leadership, and therefore we are delighted to announce him as the 2026 World Car Person of the Year.”

Daniele Schillaci, Chief Executive Officer of Brembo which is powering the 2026 World Car Awards, said, “The 2026 World Car Person of the Year award celebrates exceptional leadership at the highest level of the automotive industry, and we congratulate this year’s winner, Oliver Zipse. We are proud to support an initiative that promotes vision, innovation and a long-term commitment to shaping the future of mobility.”

Three World Car Person of the Year contenders were announced on February 10, with Zipse featuring alongside David Craig, Staff Product Manager, General Motors and Tisha Johnson, Head of Design, Slate.

Videos introducing our candidates are on [World Car TV](#), while photos of the winner and finalists can be found on the [Person of the Year page](#) on the World Car Awards website.

A jury of [98 distinguished international automotive journalists](#) from 33 countries voted on the contenders based on who had made the most significant contribution to the global automotive industry during the previous calendar year.

Previous World Car Person of the Year recipients were: **Stella Li**, Executive Vice-President of BYD (2025); **Adrian Newey**, then CTO of Red Bull Racing and soon to join Aston Martin’s Formula One team (2024); **SangYup Lee**, Executive Vice President, Head of Hyundai and Genesis Global Design Center, Hyundai Motor Company (2023); **Luc Donckerwolke**, Executive Vice President for Design and Chief Creative Officer, Hyundai Motor Group (2022); **Akio Toyoda**, President and CEO, Toyota Motor Corporation (2021); **Carlos Tavares**, CEO of PSA Group (2020); the late **Sergio Marchionne**, CEO, FCA; Chairman, CNH Industrial; and Chairman and CEO, Ferrari (2019); and **Håkan Samuelsson**, President and CEO, Volvo Car Group (2018).

The World Car Person of the Year award is just one out of seven awards handed out as part of ***The Road to the World Car Awards*** – an annual journey that follows our international jurors as they test-drive, and vote on, the eligible vehicles for the awards’ season. The jurors’ road-test journey is captured virtually on [World Car TV](#). The jurors provide viewers with reviews and commentary on the awards’ eligible vehicles in the six categories listed above.

The World Car Awards program would not be possible without the support of our official partners: [AITASTIC Research & Consult](#), [BREMBO](#), the [NEW YORK International Auto Show](#), [KPMG](#) and [Newspress](#)

THE ROAD TO WORLD CAR 2026

Began: September 8, 2025

Ends at the New York International Auto Show: Wednesday, April 1, 2026

FOLLOW OUR 98 INTERNATIONAL JURORS:

World Car TV: [YouTube.com/worldcartv](https://www.youtube.com/worldcartv)

Instagram: @theworldcarawards #wcoty #wca2026 #WorldCarAwards

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WorldCarAwards #worldcarawards #wca2026

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF TODAY.

EMBRACING THE BEST OF TOMORROW.

For additional information please visit worldcarawards.com or contact us at:
info@worldcarawards.com

ABOUT

World Car Awards

It is the mission of the World Car Awards and its 98 global journalists on the jury panel to recognize, reward and inspire automotive excellence, leadership and innovation in a rapidly changing automotive industry on a global scale.

To that end we test drive and evaluate new or fully redesigned vehicles that are for sale in multiple markets on more than one continent each year, voting to determine the World Car Design, World Luxury Car, World Performance Car, World Urban Car, World Electric Vehicle and World Car of the Year. Full vehicle eligibility requirements and our annual timeline can be found on our website.

Now in their 22nd year, the annual World Car Awards are the number one awards program in the world for the 13th consecutive year in terms of media reach and analysis of the top global markets.

The awards were inaugurated in 2003, and officially launched in January 2004, to reflect the reality of the global marketplace. The awards are intended to complement, not compete, with existing national and regional Car of the Year programs.

New York International Auto Show

The New York International Automobile Show, North America's first and largest-attended auto show, is an amazing combination of new ideas, technological innovation, and nearly 1,000 of the latest new cars and trucks on display. The Show is owned and produced by the Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association each spring in Manhattan.

2026 Auto Show Dates

Press Preview: April 1 and 2, 2026 (credentials required)

Public Show Date: April 3–12, 2026

Social Media: Twitter: @NYAutoShow Facebook: nyautoshow Instagram: nyautoshow #nyauto #nyias #RoadtoNYC