

THE FIVE MOST CURIOUS PROFESSIONS IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY

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Making a new car is usually associated with professionals such as designers, engineers or assembly line workers. However, vehicle manufacturing also involves several curious professions that require a high degree of craftsmanship, creativity and precision. The following five are a few examples of these:

-The first driver: 2 million kilometres per year. This is the distance covered by the team of expert drivers to test all the cars that leave the SEAT factory in Martorell in a single year. These professionals closely study the performance of the vehicles as soon as they come off the assembly line, testing them at different speeds on six different types of pavement, including cobblestones and uneven surfaces to ensure they do not make any unpleasant noise. During the process they also test that horns, lights and brakes function correctly.

-The clay sculptor: These sculptors handcraft clay into life-sized cars that even weigh the same as a real vehicle. This requires 2,500 kilos of clay and up to 10,000 hours of patient scraping to elaborate a single clay model, which will fully display a car's silhouette before locking in its design.

-The car tailor: They hand sew the vehicle upholstery patterns, coming up with the best combination of colours and fabrics and hides to suit the personality of each car. These expert tailors need more than 30 metres of seams to fully upholster an entire car, and their creations are crafted two years in advance.

-The seat tester: This profession consists in shaping the ideal seat. Testers and their teams also have to perform up to 20,000 folding operations for each different type of seat. The study is exhaustive: they have to find the right foams, fabrics, structure or stitching that will adapt to different body types and external conditions. They also ensure the correct design of headrests to prevent possible neck injuries.

-Car sommeliers: Their most important work instrument is their nose to achieve the ultimate goal: the famous "new car smell". This team of chemists performs more than 400 smell tests every year, exposing cars to temperatures of 60 °C. This profession also places some curious demands on them: they cannot smoke or wear perfume so as not to alter the outcome of test results.

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