

51. Cybertruck

In the design phases of the Tesla Cybertruck between 2018 and 2019, Elon Musk and chief designer Franz von Holzhausen embarked on a creative journey to revolutionize the concept of the pickup truck. Initially drawing inspiration from traditional models such as the Chevrolet Silverado and the Chevrolet El Camino from the 1960s, their discussions frequently occurred in Tesla's design studio in Los Angeles, reflecting on aspects that blended historical allure with futuristic prospects. However, Musk sought a design that broke away from the norm, a vehicle that both surprised and captivated.

Delving into a mix of nostalgic and avant-garde sources, including the wedge-shaped Lotus Esprit featured in a James Bond film—which Musk owned—the duo sought a design that embodied both strength and innovation. Their quest for a groundbreaking approach took a pivotal turn upon realizing that pickup trucks had not significantly evolved in form or manufacturing for eighty years. This insight led to questioning the fundamental materials used in truck design, steering away from conventional aluminum and titanium towards stainless steel, inspired by Musk's interest in space exploration technology.

This material choice was not merely aesthetic but functional, allowing for a structural reimagining of the truck into an exoskeleton design that would forgo traditional chassis dependencies. The decision to employ cold-rolled, ultra-hard stainless steel, a material shared with SpaceX endeavors, was instrumental in shaping the Cybertruck's distinctive appearance. Its design was compelled to adopt straight planes and sharp angles, a stark departure from the soft curvatures of typical vehicles.

Musk's drive to innovate was further fueled by personal challenges and controversies he faced in 2018, pushing him to focus on developing a truck that departed from conventional designs and expectations. Inviting boldness and a willingness to surprise, Musk and his team were inspired by futuristic and cybernetic aesthetics found in video games, sci-fi movies, and his son's poignant inquiry: “Why doesn't the future look like the future?” This sentiment shaped their design ethos, striving to materialize a vehicle that truly looked as if it belonged to the future, signaling a deliberate departure from traditionalism towards embracing a radical and futuristic vision for the Tesla Cybertruck.