

Russia Begins Sales of 'Putin Limousine', Eyes Chinese Market

The Russian-built limousine is intended to become the heir to the ZIL sedans that for decades transported Soviet leaders.

By [Reuters](#)

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Kremlin.ru

Russia opened a showroom Friday selling its first post-Soviet luxury limousine under the Aurus brand, a type of car used by President Vladimir Putin at his inauguration last year.

Russia has been trying to reduce its dependence on imported goods and technology, a drive that gathered speed after Moscow was hit by Western sanctions in 2014.

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transported Soviet leaders.

Priced at 18 million rubles (\$274,000) the Aurus, in its basic configuration, targets customers in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as European and Chinese buyers.

"We expect a similar showroom will appear in China in 2020-2021," Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov said during the opening ceremony in Moscow.

The Russian state has invested over 12.4 billion rubles (\$189 million) in the Aurus limousine project since 2013.

The vehicles are produced by a Russian research institute known by the acronym NAMI in partnership with Russian carmaker Sollers.

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Friday's ceremony featured the Aurus Senat sedan.

"The minivan and the SUV Komendant are at the testing stage. I hope to see the latter at the (Moscow International) Automobile Salon in 2020," Manturov said.

A hybrid or fully electric version of the Aurus is expected to be ready by 2024-2025. There will also be an extended sedan and a shortened limousine.

Aurus CEO Adil Shirinov said potential customers were not only government officials but also businessmen: "We believe the audience will be quite wide."

Aurus is taking orders, but no retail sales are planned this year, he added.

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