

Renault Cars France

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Renault

	
Type	Société Anonyme (Euronext: RNO ^[1])
Industry	Automotive industry
Founded	25 February 1899
Founder(s)	Louis Renault, Marcel Renault, Fernand Renault
Headquarters	Boulogne-Billancourt, France
Area served	Worldwide (118 countries)
Key people	Carlos Ghosn (Chairman and CEO), Patrick Pelata (COO)
Products	Automobiles, commercial vehicles, financing
Revenue	€33.71 billion (2009) ^[2]
Operating income	▼ (€955 million) (2009) ^[2]
Profit	▼ (€3.125 billion) (2009) ^[2]
Employees	124,300 (2009) ^[2]
Subsidiaries	Automobile Dacia (99.43%) Renault Samsung Motors (80.1%)
Website	Renault.com ^[3]

Renault S.A. (Euronext: RNO ^[1]) is a French automaker producing cars, vans, buses, tractors, and trucks, and, in the past, autorail vehicles. Due to its alliance with Nissan, it is currently the world's fourth largest automaker.^[4] Headquartered in Boulogne-Billancourt, Renault owns the Romanian automaker Automobile Dacia and the Korean automaker Renault Samsung Motors. The Lebanese-Brazilian Carlos Ghosn is the current CEO. The company's most successful cars to date is the Renault Clio and the Renault Laguna, and its core market is Europe.^[4] The company is known for numerous revolutionary designs, security technologies, and motor racing.

History

Foundation and early years (1898–1918)



Louis Renault in 1903

Producing cars since late 1897, the Renault corporation was founded in 1899 as **Société Renault Frères** by Louis Renault and his brothers Marcel and Fernand. Louis was a bright, aspiring young engineer who had already designed and built several models before teaming up with his brothers, who had honed their business skills working for their father's textiles firm. While Louis handled design and production, Marcel and Fernand handled company management.

The first Renault car, the Renault Voiturette 1CV was sold to a friend of Louis' father after giving him a test ride on 24 December 1898. The client was so impressed with the way the tiny car ran and how it climbed the streets that he bought it.

The brothers immediately recognised the publicity that could be obtained for their vehicles by participation in motor racing and Renault made itself known through achieving instant success in the first city-to-city races held in Switzerland resulting in rapid expansion for the company. Both Louis and Marcel Renault raced company vehicles, but Marcel was killed in an accident during the 1903 Paris-Madrid race. Although Louis Renault never raced again, his company remained very involved, including Ferenc Szisz winning the first ever Grand Prix motor racing^[5] event in a Renault AK 90CV in 1906. Louis was to take full control of the company as the only remaining brother in 1906 when Fernand retired for health reasons.

The Renault reputation for innovation was fostered from very early on. In 1899, Renault launched the first production sedan car. At the time, cars were very much luxury items, and the price of the smallest Renaults available being 3000 francs reflected this; an amount it would take ten years for the average worker at the time to earn. As well as cars, Renault manufactured taxis, buses and commercial cargo vehicles in the pre-war years, and during World War I (1914–18) branched out into ammunition, military airplanes and vehicles such as the revolutionary Renault FT-17 tank. Company's military designs were so successful that Renault himself was honoured by the Allies for his company's contributions to their victory. By the end of the war, Renault was the number one private manufacturer in France. The company also exported their engines overseas to American auto manufacturers for use in such automobiles as the GJG which used a Renault 26 hp or 40 hp four-cylinder engine.

Between the world wars (1919–38)

Louis Renault enlarged the scope of his company after 1918, producing agricultural and industrial machinery. However, Renault struggled to compete with the increasingly popular small, affordable "people's cars", while problems with the stock market and the workforce also adversely affected the company's growth. Renault also had to find a way to distribute its vehicles more efficiently. In 1920, he signed one of its first distribution contracts with Gustave Gueudet, an entrepreneur from northern France.

The pre-First World War cars had a distinctive front shape caused by positioning the radiator behind the engine to give a so called "coalscuttle" bonnet. This continued through the 1920s and it was not until 1930 that all models had the radiator at the front. The bonnet badge changed from circular to the familiar and continuing diamond shape in 1925. Renault models were introduced at the Paris Motor Show which was held in September or October of the year. This has led to a slight confusion as to vehicle identification. For example a "1927" model was mostly produced in 1928.

Renault produced a range of cars from small to very large. For example in 1928 which was the year when Renault produced 45,809 cars the range of 7 models started with a 6cv, a 10cv, the Monasix, 15cv, the Vivasix, the 18/24cv and the 40cv. There was a range of factory bodies, of up to 8 styles, and the larger chassis were available to coachbuilders. The number of a model produced varied with size. The smaller were the most popular with the least produced being the 18/24cv. The most expensive factory body style in each range was the closed cars. Roadsters and tourers (torpedoes) were the cheapest.

The London operation was very important to Renault in 1928. The UK market was quite large and from there "colonial" modified vehicles were dispatched. Lifted suspensions, enhanced cooling and special bodies were common on vehicles sold to the colonies. Exports to the USA by 1928 had almost reduced to zero from their high point prior to WW1 when to ship back a Grand Renault or similar high class European manufactured car was common. A NM 40cv Tourer had a USA list price of over \$4,600 being about the same as a V12 Cadillac Tourer. Closed 7 seat limousines started at \$6,000 which was more expensive than a Cadillac V16 Limousine.

The whole range was conservatively engineered and built. The newly introduced 1927 Vivasix, model PG1, was sold as the "executive sports" model. Lighter weight factory steel bodies powered by a 3180 cc six cylinder motor provided a formula that went through to the Second World War.

The "de Grand Luxe Renaults", that is any with over 12-foot (3.7 m) wheelbase, were produced in very small numbers in two major types - six and eight cylinder. The 1927 six cylinder Grand Renault models NM, PI and PZ introduced the new three spring rear suspension that considerably aided road holding that was needed as with some body styles over 90 mph (140 km/h) was possible. The 8 cylinder Reinastella was introduced in 1929. This model led on to a range culminating in the 1939 Suprastella. All Grand Renaults from 1923 are classed as classics by CCCA. Coachbuilders included Kellner, Labourdette, J.Rothschild et Fils and Renault bodies. Closed car Renault bodies were often trimmed and interior wood work completed by Rothschild.

Renault also introduced in 1928 an upgraded specification to the larger cars designated "Stella". Vivastella's and Grand Renaults had upgraded interior fittings and had a small star fitted above the front hood Renault diamond. This proved to be a winning marketing differentiator and in the 1930s all cars changed to the Stella suffix from the previous two alpha character model identifiers.

The Grand Renaults were built using a considerable amount of aluminium. Engines, brakes, transmissions, floor and running boards and all external body panels were aluminium. Of the few that were built, many went to scrap to aid the war effort.

World War II and after (1939–71)

After France surrendered in 1940, Louis Renault refused to produce tanks for Nazi Germany, which took control of his factories. He produced lorries for the German occupiers instead. The Provisional Government of the French Republic accused him of collaborating with Germans and arrested him just after the liberation of Vichy France in 1944. He was incarcerated at Fresnes prison where he died under unclear circumstances,^[6] awaiting trial.^[7]

On January 1, 1945, by decree of General de Gaulle based on the untried^[6] accusations of collaboration, the company was expropriated from Louis Renault posthumously and nationalised as *Régie Nationale des Usines Renault*. In retrospect, Renault's were the only factories permanently expropriated by the French government.^[8]



Renault Frégate

Under the leadership of Pierre Lefaucheu, Renault experienced both a commercial resurgence as well as labor unrest — that was ultimately to continue into the 1980s.

In secrecy during the war, Louis Renault had developed the rear engine 4CV^[9] which was subsequently launched under Lefaucheu in 1946. Renault debuted its flagship model, the largely conventional 2-litre 4-cylinder Renault Frégate (1951–1960), shortly thereafter. The 4CV proved itself a capable rival for cars such as the Morris Minor and Volkswagen Beetle; its sales of more than half a million ensured its production until 1961.



Renault 4CV

After the success of the 4CV, Lefaucheu continued to defy the postwar French *Ministry of Industrial Production*, which had wanted to convert Renault solely to truck manufacture,^[10] by directing the development of its successor. He oversaw the prototyping of the Dauphine (until his death) — enlisting the help of artist Paule Marrot in pioneering the company's textile and color division.

The Dauphine sold extremely well as the company expanded production and sales further abroad, including Africa and North America. The Dauphine sold well initially in the US, where it subsequently became outdated against increased competition, including from the country's nascent domestic compacts such as the Chevrolet Corvair.

Renault subsequently launched two cars which became very successful — the Renault 4 (1961–1992) and Renault 8. The larger rear-engined Renault 10 followed the success of the R8, and was the last of the rear-engined Renaults. The company achieved success with the more modern and more upmarket Renault 16, a pioneering hatchback launched in 1966, followed by the smaller Renault 6.

Modern era (1972–1980)

The company's compact and economical Renault 5 model, launched in 1972, was another success, particularly in the wake of the 1973 energy crisis. The R5 remained in production until 1984 when it was replaced by the Super5. The formula was much the same however, and the Super5 inherited its styling lines from its father (however with a transversal engine, as opposed to the longitudinal engine inherited by the first generation Renault 5 from the Renault 4). Soon after, the four-door Renault 12 model slotted into the Renault range between the R6 and the R16, and introduced a new styling theme. Throughout the '70s the R4, R5, R6, R12 and R16 maintained Renault's production. In the '80s the latter two were replaced by the R9 (and its R11 sedan variation) and the R15/R17 sport coupes. Both the R15/R17 were essentially identical two-door coupes, but while the R15 had a large glassy greenhouse, the R17 had thick pillars behind the doors, with slatted windows, to make it look the sportier of the two.

Endangered like all of the motor industry by the energy crisis, during the mid seventies the already expansive company diversified further into other industries and continued to expand globally, including into South East Asia. The energy crisis also provoked Renault's attempt to reconquer the North American market; despite the Dauphine's success in the United States in the late 1950s, and an unsuccessful car-assembly project in Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, Quebec, (1964–72), Renault as a stand-alone brand, began to disappear from North America at the end of the '70s.

Throughout the decades Renault developed a collaborative partnership with Nash Motors Rambler and its successor American Motors Corporation (AMC). From 1962 to 1967, Renault assembled complete knock down (CKD) kits of the Rambler Classic sedans in its factory in Belgium. Renault did not have large or luxury cars in its product line and the "Rambler Renault" would be aimed as an alternative to the Mercedes-Benz "Fintail" cars. Similar to the fate of some of these Mercedes cars at the time, many of these "American" Renaults finished their life working as taxis. Later, Renault would continue to make and sell a hybrid of AMC's Rambler American and Rambler Classic called the Renault Torino in Argentina (sold through IKA-Renault). Renault partnered with AMC on other projects, such as

development of a rotary concept engine in the late 60s, and would eventually own AMC in 1980.



Renault 5 Turbo

This was one of a series of collaborative ventures undertaken by Renault in the late 1960s and 1970s, as the company established subsidiaries in Eastern Europe, most notably Dacia in Romania, and South America (many of which remain active to the present day) and forged technological cooperation agreements with Volvo and Peugeot (for instance, for the development of the PRV V6 engine, which was used in Renault 30, Peugeot 604, and Volvo 260 in the late 1970s.).

In the mid 1960s an Australian arm, Renault Australia, was set up in Heidelberg, Melbourne, the company would produce and assemble models from the R8, R10, R12, R16, sporty R15, R17 coupe's to the R18 and R20, soon the company would close in 1981. Interestingly Renault Australia did not just concentrate on Renaults, they also built and marketed Peugeots as well. From 1977, they assembled Ford Cortina station wagons under contract- the loss of this contract led to the closure of the factory.

In North America, Renault formed a partnership with AMC, lending AMC operating capital and buying a small percentage of the company in late 1979. Jeep was keeping AMC afloat until new products, particularly the XJ Cherokee, could be launched. When the bottom fell out of the 4x4 truck market in early 1980 AMC was in danger of going bankrupt. To protect its investment, Renault bailed AMC out with a big cash influx — at the price of a controlling interest in the company of 47.5%. Renault quickly replaced some top AMC executives with their own people.



1974 Renault 15 coupe

The Renault–AMC partnership also resulted in the marketing of Jeep vehicles in Europe. Some consider the Jeep XJ Cherokee as a joint AMC/Renault project since some early sketches of the XJ series were made in collaboration by Renault and AMC engineers (AMC insisted that the XJ Cherokee was designed by AMC personnel; however, a former Renault engineer designed the Quadra-Link front suspension for the XJ series). The Jeep also used wheels and seats from Renault. Part of AMC's overall strategy when the partnership was first discussed was to save manufacturing cost by using Renault sourced parts when practical, and some engineering expertise. This led to the improvement of the venerable AMC in-line six — a Renault/Bendix based port electronic fuel injection system (usually called Renix) that transformed it into a modern, competitive powerplant with a jump from 110 hp (82 kW) to 177 hp (132 kW) with less displacement (from 4.2L to 4.0L).

The Renault-AMC marketing effort in passenger cars was not as successful compared to the popularity for Jeep vehicles. This was because by the time the Renault range was ready to become established in the American market, the second energy crisis was over, taking with it much of the trend for economical, compact cars.

One exception was the Renault Alliance (an Americanized version of the Renault 9), which debuted for the 1983 model year. Assembled at AMC's plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the Alliance received Motor Trend's domestic Car of The Year award in 1983. The Alliance's 72% U.S. content allowed it to qualify as a domestic vehicle, making it the first car with a foreign nameplate to win the award. (In 2000, *Motor Trend* did away with separate awards for domestic and imported vehicles.)

Renault sold some interesting models in the U.S. in the 1980s, especially the simple-looking but fun Renault Alliance GTA and GTA convertible — an automatic-top convertible with a 2.0 L engine — big for a car of its class; and the ahead-of-its-time Renault Fuego coupe. The Alliance was followed by the Encore (U.S. version of the Renault 11), an Alliance-based hatchback.

Renault's Wisconsin-built and imported models quickly became the target of customer complaints for poor quality, and sales plummeted.

Eventually, Renault sold AMC to Chrysler in 1987 after the assassination of Renault's chairman, Georges Besse. The Renault Medallion (Renault 21 in Europe) sedan and wagon was sold from 1987 to 1989 through Jeep-Eagle dealerships. Jeep-Eagle was the new division Chrysler created out of the former American Motors. However, Renault products were no longer imported into the United States after 1989. Rumors have since persisted about Renault's return to the U.S. market; all of them to date have been unfounded.

A completely new full-sized 4-door sedan, the Eagle Premier, was developed during the partnership between AMC and Renault. The Premier design, as well as its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Bramalea, Ontario, Canada, were the starting point for the sleek LH sedans such as the Eagle Vision and Chrysler 300M.

In the late seventies and early eighties Renault increased its involvement in motorsport, with novel inventions such as turbochargers in their Formula One cars. The company's road car designs were revolutionary also — the Renault Espace was one of the first minivans and was to remain the most well-known minivan in Europe for at least the next two decades. The second-generation Renault 5, the European Car of the Year-winning Renault 9, and the most luxurious Renault yet, the 25 were all released in the early 1980s, building Renault's reputation, but at the same time the company suffered from poor product quality which reflected badly in the image of the brand and the ill-fated Renault 14 is seen by many as the culmination of these problems in the early 1980s.

Restructuring (1981–95)

Although its cars were somewhat successful both on the road and on the track, Renault was losing a billion francs a month and reported a deficit of 12.5 billion in 1984. The government intervened and Georges Besse was installed as chairman; he set about cutting costs dramatically, selling off many of Renault's non-core assets, withdrawing almost entirely from motorsports, and laying off many employees. This succeeded in halving the deficit by 1986, but he was murdered by the communist terrorist group *Action Directe* in November 1986. He was replaced by Raymond Lévy, who continued along the same lines as Besse, slimming down the company considerably with the result that by the end of 1987 the company was more or less financially stable.



Renault 25

A revitalised Renault launched several successful new cars in the early 1990s, including the phenomenally successful 5 replacement, the Clio, the second-generation Espace, the innovative Twingo, the Laguna, the Safrane and the 19. In the mid-1990s the successor to the R19, the Renault Mégane, was the first car ever to achieve a 4-star rating, the highest at the time, in EuroNCAP crash test in passenger safety. In 1996 Renault introduced Mégane Scénic, a completely new class of cars, a compact monospace with a footprint of a regular Mégane. The return to success on the road was matched by a return to success on the racetrack — Renault-powered cars won the Formula One World Constructors' Championship from 1992 to 1997 with both the Williams and Benetton teams.

Throughout this period, Renault's European advertising famously made extensive use of Robert Palmer's song "Johnny And Mary". The earlier television advertisements used Palmer's original version, while a range of special recordings in different styles were produced during the 1990s; most famously Martin Taylor's acoustic interpretation which he released on his album *Spirit of Django*. Taylor recorded many alternate versions for Renault; the last being in 1998 for the launch of the all-new Renault Clio.

Privatisation (1996–99)

It was eventually decided that the company's state-owned status was detrimental to its growth, and Renault was privatized in 1996. This new freedom allowed the company to venture once again into Eastern Europe and South America, including a new factory in Brazil and upgrades for the infrastructure in Argentina and Turkey. It also meant the end of the aforementioned successful Formula 1 campaign.

In the twenty-first century, Renault was to foster a reputation for distinctive, outlandish design. The second generation of the Laguna and Mégane featured ambitious, angular designs which turned out to be highly successful. Less successful were the company's more upmarket models. The Avantime, a bizarre coupé / multi-purpose vehicle, sold very poorly and was quickly discontinued while the luxury Vel Satis model did not sell as well as hoped. However, the design inspired the lines of the second generation Mégane, the most successful car of the maker. As well as its distinctive styling, Renault was to become known for its car safety; currently, it's the car manufacturer with the largest number of models achieving the maximum 5 star rating in EuroNCAP crash tests. The Laguna was the first Renault to achieve a 5 star rating; in 2004 the Modus was the first to achieve this rating in its category.

The government of France owns 15.7 per cent of the company. Louis Schweitzer has been the Chairman of Renault since 1992 and was CEO from 1992 to 2005. In 2005, Carlos Ghosn (also CEO of Nissan) became Renault's CEO, with Louis Schweitzer staying on as Chairman.

Renault owns Samsung Motors (Renault Samsung Motors) and Dacia, as well as retaining a minority (but controlling) stake (20%) in the Volvo Group. (Volvo passenger cars are now a subsidiary of the Zhejiang Geely Holding Group). Renault bought 99% of the Romanian company Dacia, thus returning after 30 years, in which time the Romanians built over 2 million cars, which primarily consisted of the Renault 8, 12 and 20. Renault also owns 44.5% of Nissan, while Nissan owns 15% of Renault. This is the basis for the Renault-Nissan Alliance, which is now in its 10th year.

Renault Nissan alliance (1999–)

Signed on 27 March 1999, the Renault–Nissan Alliance is the first of its kind involving a Japanese and a French company, each with its own distinct corporate culture and brand identity, linked through cross-shareholding. Renault has a stake of 44.4 percent in the Japanese automaker Nissan, while Nissan in turn has a 15 percent stake (non-voting) in Renault.

For 2004 Renault reported a 43% rise in net income to €3.5 billion and 5.9% operating margin, of which Nissan contributed €1,767 million. The Group (Renault, Dacia, Renault Samsung Motors) posted a 4.2% increase in worldwide sales to a record 2,489,401 vehicles,

representing a global market share of 4.1%. Renault retained its position as the leading brand in Europe with 1.8 million passenger cars and light commercial vehicles sold and market share of 10.8%.

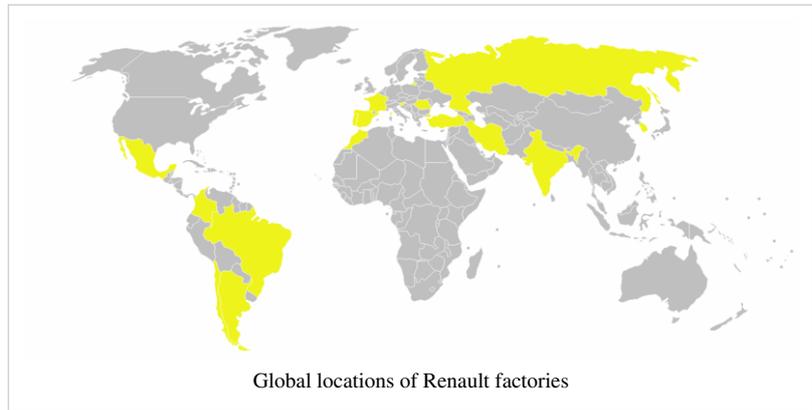
In 2005, the Renault–Nissan Alliance held 9.8% of the worldwide market (5.74% for Nissan and 4.04% for the Renault group) with sales of 3,597,748 (Nissan) and 2,531,500 (Renault Group), placing the alliance fourth after GM, Toyota, and Ford. For the calendar year of 2008, its total global sales were 6,090,304, a decrease of 1.1% against a global industry market decline of 5%, resulting in a 9.4% share, up from 9.1% in 2007.^[11]

The marketing success was also matched by success of their return to the Formula 1 circuit as a manufacturer again after buying the Benetton team. The team went on to win both World Drivers and Constructors championships in 2005 and 2006 ahead of the vastly more experienced Ferrari and McLaren teams.



Renault Mégane II F1 team Edition

Renault is exhibiting a Hi-Flex Clio 1.6 16v at the 2006 Paris International Agricultural Show. This vehicle, which addresses the Brazilian market, features Renault-developed flexible-fuel engine technology, with a highly versatile engine that can run on fuel containing petrol and ethanol in any proportion (0% to 100% of either).



On 30 June 2006, the media reported that General Motors convened an

emergency board meeting to discuss a proposal by shareholder Kirk Kerkorian to form an alliance between GM and Renault-Nissan. The hastily arranged meeting suggests that GM's board was treating Kerkorian's proposal with urgency. There has been speculation that a GM–Renault–Nissan alliance could pave the way for Renault's return to the U.S. market, since GM could eliminate some of its less profitable brands, and offer Renault franchises to dealerships that would otherwise close.

However, GM CEO Richard Wagoner felt that an alliance would benefit Renault's shareholders more than those of GM, and that GM should receive some compensation for it. This did not sit well with Renault; subsequently, talks between GM and Renault ended on 4 October 2006.

Renault-Nissan and Daimler Alliance

On April 7, 2010 Renault-Nissan executive, Carlos Ghosn and Daimler AG executive, Dr. Dieter Zetsche announced a partnership between the three companies in a joint press conference.^[12]

Investment in VAZ

On 29 February 2008, Renault acquired a blocking stake in the largest Russian automaker VAZ. For a long time needing to modernize its technology, VAZ was seeking a strategic partnership since the late nineties. Its owners tried to form an alliance with various foreign auto manufacturers, such as General Motors. Most of these attempts weren't all that successful, however, and generally fell through.

Renault was in talks with VAZ on and off since 2005, initially insisting on CKD assembly of Logan cars on its facilities, while VAZ intended to keep its own Lada brand and only wished to acquire a new platform and engine. After several rounds of talks, between which VAZ also sought alliance with Fiat and Magna, Renault agreed to the partnership under terms not unlike the earlier Nissan deal.

Renault and VAZ major stockholder, state corporation Rosoboronexport, are to form a holding, jointly owning 50% share in VAZ, with the French side receiving several key positions in the new management structure, such as Chief Operational Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Engineer. In return, Renault is to supply a new platform for the Lada brand and assist in plant modernization.

Possible industry realignment (2008)

On 7 October 2008, the Wall Street Journal reported that a Renault executive said the company was interested in acquiring or partnering with Chrysler, which at the time was owned by the private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management.^[13] On 11 October 2008, the New York Times reported that General Motors, Nissan and Renault had all been in discussions over the past month with Cerberus about acquiring Chrysler.^[14]

Corporate governance

As of April 2008, members of the board of directors of Renault include:

- Louis Schweitzer,
- Carlos Ghosn,
- Yves Audvard,
- Patrick Biau,
- Catherine Br  chignac,
- Alain Champigneux.

Timeline

- 1898 - Louis Renault founded Renault
 - 1903 - Marcel Renault dies in a car accident
 - 1943 - The Renault factory in Billancourt at   le Seguin is attacked by the Allies.
 - 1944 - Louis Renault dies in prison after being arrested on charges of collaborating with the Nazis during WWII.
 - 1944 - Renault nationalized by the French Government in response to the Nazi collaboration charges against its founder.
 - 1961 - The Renault 4 goes on sale to give Renault a practical competitor for the likes of the Citro  n 2CV and Volkswagen Beetle.
 - 1965 - Renault launches the world's first production hatchback - the Renault 16.
 - 1971 - Renault launches the Renault 15 and Renault 17 two-door coup  s, aimed directly at the Ford Capri and Opel Manta.
 - 1972 - Renault enters the new "supermini" market with its R5 hatchback, one of the first such cars in this sector. On its launch, the R5 only has three similar competitors - the Fiat 127, Autobianchi A112 and Peugeot 104.
 - 1976 - The Renault 5 Alpine is launched, giving the marque its first entrant into the Hot hatch market. Possibly one of the very first hot hatches, going into production in the same year as the Volkswagen Golf GTI.
 - 1977 - Renault enters the small family hatchback market with the 14, which is one of Europe's first hatchbacks of this size.
 - 1978 - Renault launches the Renault 18, the first world car.
 - 1979 - Renault buys a stake in American Motors, with a view to establishing itself on the American market.
 - 1980 - Renault launches the 5 Turbo, which is designed as a rally car but does include roadgoing versions. It ditches the front-drive, front-engined layout for a mid-mounted engine (in place of the rear seats) and rear-wheel drive.
 - 1980 - Renault launches its Fuego, a two-door coupe aimed directly at the likes of the Ford Capri, Volkswagen Scirocco and Opel Manta.
 - 1981 - Renault launches the 9 a four-door saloon, a modern three-box design which is designed to keep the market interest in saloons at a time when hatchbacks are becoming the norm in this sector. It is voted European Car of the Year.
 - 1982 - Renault becomes the second European automaker to build cars in the United States, after Volkswagen. The Alliance, the North American version of the 9, is manufactured in Wisconsin by American Motors and d  buts as a 1983 model. It is voted Car of the Year by *Motor Trend*.
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- 1983 - Renault launches the 11 - a hatchback version of the R9. It gives Renault its first serious rival to the Volkswagen Golf. It goes on sale in the fall in the United States as the Encore.
 - 1984 - Renault enters the executive car market with the large 25 hatchback, aimed directly at the likes of the Ford Granada, Rover SD1 and Opel Rekord/Vauxhall Carlton.
 - 1984 - Renault launches the Espace - Europe's first multi-purpose vehicle. It gains praise from all over Europe thanks to its unique practicality and innovation.
 - 1986 - On 9 April the Government of France rules against the privatization of Renault.
 - 1986 - Renault replaces the 18 with the all-new R21 saloon and **Savanna** seven-seater estate.
 - 1987 - Renault sells its stake in **American Motors** to Chrysler.
 - 1988 - The **9** and **11** ranges are replaced by a single model, the 19, which is praised for its excellent ride and handling, as well as the frugality and refinement of its diesel engines.
 - 1990 - Renault launches the Clio supermini, designed as an eventual replacement for the **Renault 5**. The Clio is the first new model of a generation which will see the numeric models replaced by new cars with traditional nameplates. It sets supermini benchmarks for build quality, comfort and space, and is voted European Car of the Year.
 - 1992 - The **Renault 19** becomes available as a cabriolet, and a mild facelift sees the standard range's exterior styling refreshed.
 - 1992 - Louis Schweitzer becomes president of Renault group.
 - 1992 - Renault moves into the city car market with its Twingo, a small hatchback with a "cube" design that maximises interior space, though it is only built with left-hand drive. It re-enters the executive market with the Safrane, an ultramodern large hatchback which replaces the R25.
 - 1993 - Renault launches the Laguna hatchback, replacement for the **Renault 21**. Hatchback and Estate versions were made available to purchase.
 - 1995 - Renault replaces the **Renault 19** with the Megane, a range of hatchbacks, saloons, estates, coupes and cabriolets.
 - 1996 - **Renault 5** production finishes after nearly a quarter of a century. It had been produced in Slovenia since the launch of the **Clio** in 1990.
 - 1996 - Renault enters the new "compact MPV" market with its Megane-based Scenic. It is voted European Car of the Year, fighting off competition from the Ford Ka and Volkswagen Passat
 - 1996 - The company was privatised to create **Renault S.A.**
 - 1997 - The all-new Espace goes on sale with a more upmarket image than its predecessor, that served the company for over 10 years.
 - 1998 - The second generation **Clio** is launched, using an all-new body and being one of the most competitively-priced European superminis, though its styling is not to all tastes. The Grand Espace is also launched.
 - 1999 - Renault purchased a 36.8 percent equity stake in Nissan, the almost bankrupt Japanese car maker, by injecting US\$3.5 billion to obtain effective control of the company under Japanese law. Renault vice-president, Carlos Ghosn was parachuted in to turn round the ailing firm. Nissan also owns 15% of Renault in turn.
 - 1999 - Renault purchased a 99 percent stake in Romanian car maker Dacia for US\$50 mln ; so, Renault is back in Pitești after 30 years. Renault has invested more than US\$1.7 billion between 2000 and 2007.
 - 1999 - The Megane range gets facelifted alongside the Scenic.
 - 2000 - Renault launches the Laguna II - the first European family car to feature "keyless" entry and ignition.
 - 2001 - Renault sold its industrial vehicle subdivision (*Renault Véhicules Industriels*) to Volvo, which renamed it Renault Trucks in 2002. The Clio undergoes a major facelift and the launch of a 1.5 direct-injection diesel engine to keep it competitive in the supermini sector.
 - 2002 - Benetton Formula One team formally becomes Renault F1, Renault increases its stake in Nissan to 44.4 percent.
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- 2002 - Renault gains another European Car of the Year success with its second generation Megane, a quirky-looking car which is set to form the basis of Nissan's Almera replacement later in the decade.
- 2003 - Renault expands in Megane range with coupe-cabriolet, estate (**SportsTourer**) and sedan (**SportsSaloon**) variants. The second generation Scenic is introduced.
- 2004 - The Renault factory in Billancourt at Île Seguin is demolished. The 7-seat Grand Scenic and Modus is introduced.
- 2005 - Carlos Ghosn becomes president.
- 2005 - The Clio III is elected European Car of the Year 2006 and gains plaudits from all over Europe for its class-leading qualities. The previous generation Clio is set to continue for a while until the Twingo II goes on sale. Renault F1 win the constructors world championship as well as the drivers championship.
- 2006 - In February, Carlos Ghosn announced the "Renault Commitment 2009" plan focusing on three main goals :
 - sell 800 000 more cars than in 2006
 - Reach an operating margin of 6%
 - Place the new Laguna in terms of quality and service rate.

The same year, Renault and Nissan engaged talks with General Motors to study a potential alliance. This approach was finally abandoned due to the fact that GM asked for money as "entry ticket" from Renault. Renault F1 win the constructors world championship as well as the drivers championship for the second year in succession.

- 2007 - The third generation Laguna is introduced, with the objective to strengthen Renault's position in the large family car sector.
- 2008 - Job-cut plan (4800) partly due to Laguna whose sales have fallen short of expectations ^[15]

Renault in the UK

The first popular Renault motor vehicles to achieve sustained sales success in the United Kingdom were the R5 mini-car and R18, both of which attained six-digit sales figures during the late 1970s and early 1980s, although they failed to achieve anything like the volumes of established carmakers Ford, Vauxhall and Austin Rover.

Renault enjoyed a huge rise in popularity among British buyers on the arrival of the Clio supermini in early 1991. It was regularly among Britain's most popular cars each year during the 1990s and its successor (launched in 1998 alongside the final installment of the successful 'Nicole and Papa' advertising campaign),^[16] where the original model left off. The sedan/saloon version, called Thalia, was not launched in the UK.

Renault went from strength to strength in the UK during the 2000s following the introduction of its distinctively-styled Mégane hatchback in November 2002. Any suggestions that its quirky styling would not fit in with the tastes of British buyers were quickly confounded in 2005 when it was the fourth best selling car in Britain. Renault also helps produce cars known now as Nissan.

In 2006, it was the third most popular brand of car in the United Kingdom. Only Ford and Vauxhall sold more units.

In 2007 Renault UK lost a US\$2 million law suit against an independent distributor who had placed orders for 217 cars under a discount scheme intended for members of the British Airline Pilots Association- 3 were legitimate- because they had "made a profit of some sort on every vehicle". Two Renault employees were criticized for having "turned a blind eye" to the very large number of orders.^[17]

By 2008, Renault sales had started declining in the UK and the marque was down to eighth most popular brand with 89,570 sales (down 29% compared to 2007) and considerably less than the 194,685 sales made in 2002.

Renault suffered more than most main brands in the UK during 2009 and ended the year with 63,174 sales and a reduced 3.17% market share.

In August 2010, the slow-selling Koleos SUV was withdrawn from sale in the UK due to units under 3000 being sold.

List of vehicles

Current model line up:^[18]

- Logan (2004)
- Sandero (2008)
- Twingo II (2007)
- Modus (2004)
- Clio II (1998; HB, saloon as Symbol)
- Clio III (2005/2009; HB, 3 and 5-doors, Grand Tourer, saloon as Symbol II, GT, RS)
- Mégane II (2002/2006; CC, saloon, RS, R26.R, HB still available in some countries, few GTs left in Mexico)
- Renault Mégane (2009; HB 3 and 5-doors, Grand Tourer)
- Scénic III (2009; also available as Grand Scénic)
- Koleos (2008)
- Espace IV (2002; also available as Grand Espace)
- Kangoo II (2009)
- Trafic (2003)
- Laguna III (2007/2009; HB, Grand Tourer)
- Safrane II (2008)
- Symbol (2008; A 4 door sedan based on the Cleo III platform)
- Fluence (2010; Saloon based on the Mégane III platform)
- Duster (2009; A multi terrain vehicle available in 2 and 4 wheel drive versions built by Dacia)
- Latitude (2011)

Electric vehicles

Plans and partnerships

Rumors began in 2007 of Renault plans to produce environmentally-friendly electric cars.^[19] In 2008 Renault-Nissan signed a deal to mass-produce electric cars for an initiative in Israel with Project Better Place. The car would cost the same or less than comparable gasoline engine autos and would have a lifetime warranty. Renault aimed to mass market 10,000 to 20,000 cars a year in Israel.^[20] Renault would also develop exchangeable batteries for the project.^[21] Renault also collaborated with Project Better Place to produce a network of all-electric vehicles and thousands of charging stations in Denmark as well as Israel, planned to be operational by 2011.^[22]

In 2009 Renault planned to have electric cars on sale in 2011 and sell 20,000-40,000 that year. Renault's electric vehicle program director Thierry Koskas said two of its four electric vehicles will be produced in France. The vehicles will use batteries developed by alliance partner Nissan Motor Co Ltd in collaboration with NEC Tokin Corp.^[23]

Carlos Ghosn says the electric version of the Mégane saloon that Renault is building for Israel will come with a lifetime warranty, and payment will follow the model established by the mobile-phone industry. After buying the car, owners will subscribe to a battery-replacement and charging plan based on their anticipated mileage. Recharging will be done at one of 500,000 spots that Project Better Place will build and maintain. The car for the Better Place project in Israel is to be the Renault Fluence Z.E., the first zero-emission vehicle with a switchable battery^[24]

The Renault-Nissan alliance and the largest French electric utility, Electricite de France (EDF) have signed an agreement to promote emission-free mobility in France. The move aims at offering all-electric volume vehicles from 2011 — including a countrywide network of battery charging stations. The French-Japanese car manufacturer has already signed similar agreements in a number of geographies outside of France including Israel, Portugal, Denmark, the U.S. state of Tennessee.^[25] and the City of Yokohama in Japan. The Renault-Nissan Alliance has added two more partners for the development and promotion of a charging infrastructure to support electric vehicles: the US

state of Oregon, and the Principality of Monaco.^[26]

Serge Yoccoz is the electric vehicle project director.^[27]

“We have decided to introduce zero-emission vehicles as quickly as possible in order to ensure individual mobility against the background of high oil prices and better environmental protection”

—Carlos Ghosn, CEO of Renault and Nissan^[25]

According to Ghosn, the Renault-Nissan alliance was a fundamental step in electric car development, and that although the two companies alone could produce an electric car, they both need each other for other issues like battery manufacturing, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and business strategy.^[28]

“I don't think either Renault or Nissan would have been able to launch an EV alone successfully. You can have an electric car alone. But what you cannot have is an EV business system, from batteries to recycling to cars to infrastructure to negotiation, by being alone.”

—Carlos Ghosn, CEO of Renault and Nissan^[28]

He also stated that the duo is looking for a third company to join the partnership, most likely Daimler AG, which also has partnerships with three other electric car makers: ZyteK, BYD Auto and Tesla Motors.^[28] The Daimler AG partnership was completed in 2010.

PHEV Research Center

The Renault-Nissan group is in the PHEV Research Center. Nissan is also hedging its bets by developing both a "parallel hybrid" system (akin to that found in the Toyota Prius) and a plug-in "series hybrid" similar to the Chevy Volt. But it favours the all-electric approach, even though it will be a tough sell, says Mr Lane. As for Mr Ghosn, he has no doubts. "We must have zero-emission vehicles," he says. "Nothing else will prevent the world from exploding."^[29]

Renault Ondelios

Renault described the 2008 Ondelios Concept as an "environmentally friendly high-end crossover". The Ondelios gets a hybrid electric powerplant combining a more powerful 205 HP version of Renault's 2.0-liter dCi engine with two 20 kW electric motors at the front and rear.^{[30] [31]}

Renault Z.E. models

Renault has displayed various all-electric car concepts under the name "Z.E.", starting with the Renault Z.E. Concept based on the Renault Kangoo Be Bop in 2008, and followed in 2009 by four models: the Fluence Z.E. five-seat saloon, Kangoo Z.E. van, Twizy Z.E. ultra-compact city car, and Zoe Z.E. supermini^[32]

In 2010 Renault announced details of the first vehicles intended for production in 2011, the Fluence Z.E. and Kangoo Express Z.E. models.^[33]

Environmental record

Renault introduced a new line of eco-friendly vehicles in 2007 marked eco². A minimum of 5% recycled plastic is used in all models and at the end of the vehicles life the remains are 95% reusable. Also, eco² line's CO₂ emissions do not exceed 140g/km or are biofuel compatible.^[34]

At the 2008 Fleet World Honours, Renault was rewarded with the prestigious Environment Award. The judges in the event were experts in the industry including members of the leasing industry, fleet managers, representatives from residual value guides, and Fleet World's editorial team. The chairman of Judges, George Emmerson, commented, "This was the most hotly contested category in the history of the Fleet World Honours, such is the clamour for organizations' green credentials to be recognized. There were some very impressive entries, but the panel felt that Renault's impressive range of low-emission vehicles was the most tangible, and the most quantifiable."^[35]

Motorsport

Motorsport has long been recognised as an effective marketing tool for automobile manufacturers. In the late seventies and early eighties, Renault began to involve itself more heavily in motorsport, setting up a dedicated motorsport division called Renault Sport, and winning the Le Mans 24 Hours (with the Renault Alpine A442, built in collaboration with newly-acquired Alpine) while achieving success in both rallying (with the Renault 5 Turbo) and Formula One. Initially, Renault's entry into Formula One in 1977 was ridiculed when the team's first design included such curiosities as a turbocharger (built by Garrett). However, the team was to win their first race on home soil in Dijon a mere two years later and by the early eighties, every front-running Formula One team used turbochargers.

Renault also took over the Benetton F1 team in 2001, and quickly became very competitive, Fernando Alonso winning Renault's first race in its second incarnation at the 2003 Hungarian Grand Prix. 2004 saw the Renault team finish a close third in the Constructors' Championship and in 2005 the team won both Constructors' and Drivers' titles (with Fernando Alonso). In 2006 Renault repeated its success of the previous year, again claiming both the Constructors' and Drivers' titles (again with Fernando Alonso before his departure to McLaren in 2007).

Questions have been raised regarding Renault's commitment to its Formula One team, particularly with the appointment of Carlos Ghosn as CEO. However at the 2005 French Grand Prix Ghosn set out his policy regarding the company's involvement in motorsport:

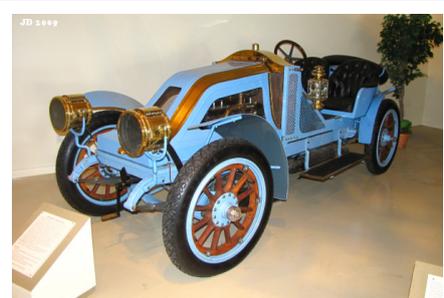
"We are not in Formula One out of habit or tradition. We're here to show our talent and that we can do it properly... Formula One is a cost if you don't get the results. Formula One is an investment if you do have them and know how to exploit them."

In short he will continue Renault's investment in F1 as long as the team is successful and can use the resulting publicity for wider commercial gain. Conversely if the team is unsuccessful in future it can be expected that Ghosn will withdraw resources from the sport.

In 2006 Carlos Ghosn finally announced that the team would stay in F1 in the long term (at least until 2012) putting an end to the rumors.



Fernando Alonso driving for **Renault F1** at Indianapolis in 2005, the year in which the team won their first Formula One championship.



1907 Renault-built Replica of their French Grand Prix winner, one of 4 known to exist

From 1983-84, Renault sponsored an Unlimited Hydroplane in the United States. Owned by Jerry Schoenith and driven by E. Milner Irvin, the Miss Renault was powered by a turbocharged Allison V-1710 piston engine. Miss Renault won the 1983 World Championship race in Houston, Texas.

L'Atelier Renault Paris

Renault's flagship showroom is located on the Champs Elysees in Paris, where other car manufacturers such as Peugeot, Citroen and Toyota also have showrooms. It was opened in November 2000, located on the site of Pub Renault, which ran from 1963 to 1999. L'Atelier currently features a Renault Boutique as well as regular exhibitions featuring Renault and Dacia cars, whilst an upmarket restaurant is located on the second floor, looking out onto the Champs Elysees. The ground floor can hold up to five different exhibitions at any one time. As of March 2009, 20 million visitors have visited L'Atelier Renault.

Head office

Renault's head office is in Boulogne-Billancourt.^[36] The head office is located near the old Renault factories; Renault has maintained a historical presence in Boulogne-Billancourt,^[37] as the historic Boulogne-Billancourt plant had Renault's activity since 1898.^[36]

Accolades

Renault cars have performed well in the *European Car of the Year* awards. The Clio is the only car since the prize's conception in 1964 to win the award twice.

- 1966: Renault 16
- 1982: Renault 9
- 1991: Renault Clio
- 1997: Renault Scénic
- 2003: Renault Mégane II
- 2006: Renault Clio III

The Renault 12 (1970), Renault 5 (1973), Renault 20 (1976), Renault 25 (1985), Renault Safrane (1993), and Renault Laguna (2002) have all achieved runners-up in spot in the competition. Renaults most recent models are well known for their safety, all but 4 of the current models have achieved the maximum 5-star rating by the EuroNCAP crash-test assessment programme. Renault has regularly topped the French car sales charts, fighting off fierce competition from Citroën and Peugeot.

Overseas accolades

Wheels magazine has announced its **Car of the Year** every year since 1963, with the exception of 1972, 1979 and 1986 when no cars were considered worthy of the honour. It is considered Australia's most prestigious automotive award. *Wheels Magazine* itself contends that its Car of the Year award remains the oldest continuous award of its kind in the world.

The inaugural Australian *Wheels* Car of the Year award was won by the R8 in 1963 (particularly in consideration to its four wheel disc brake system), and Renault won again in 1970 when the Renault 12 won the prestigious award.

Typeface

Both the Renault logo and its documentation (technical as well as commercial) historically used a specially designed typeface called *Renault MN*, developed by British firm Wolff Olins. This type family is said to have been designed not for prestige reasons, but mainly to save costs at a time where the use of typefaces was more costly than it is now.

In 2004, French typeface designer Jean-François Porchez was commissioned to design a replacement. This was shown in October of that year and is called *Renault Identité*.

Miscellanea

- The Renault factory in Billancourt is the visual inspiration for the factory seen on *Code Lyoko* and featured some of its vehicles in the series.
- Renault sponsored and was heavily featured in *Le Visionarium* a time-travel film at Disneyland Paris.

Pronunciation

The original French pronunciation of *Renault* is [ʁəˈno]. In the United Kingdom it is commonly pronounced English pronunciation: /ˈrɛnoʊ/. When its cars were exported to the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, the name was commonly pronounced English pronunciation: /rɪˈnoʊlt/ to and by the American public, and the Americanized pronunciation continues in common usage, though the original French-influenced English pronunciation: /rɪˈnoʊ/ has gained over recent years. In the 1980s Renault launched a television advertising campaign in the United States. The ads featured the words, "The one to watch" followed by a deep-voiced announcer intoning the name.

See also

- List of Renault vehicles
- AB Volvo
- Alpine (car)
- AvtoVAZ
- Bajaj Auto
- Dacia
- Automobile Dacia
- NEC
- Renault F1
- Renault Sport
- Renault Spider

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- renault&f=false). 1974. . "The activities of Louis Renault led to the spectacular expropriation of his company by the State; what is less well known is that he died in prison awaiting trial, and therefore was never convicted. The car manufacturer Marius Berliet suffered the same fate of expropriation. At his trial in September 1945, Berliet claimed in his defence that his company had produced few cars for the German occupants than any other car producer: 2239 cars for the Germans vs. 6548 for French customers. This compared to Renault which had delivered 32,887 vehicles to the Germans and only 1697 to French clients, a pattern followed by Citroen (32,248 produced for Germans and only 2052 for French clients)(Aron, 1974). Managers at Renault claimed for their part, that they had deliberately slowed down production, producing 7677 fewer vehicles than the target of 41,909 vehicles imposed by the German occupants. The argument, however, cut no ice with the Confederation Generale du Travail (CVT), who maintained that the go-slow had been organized by the workers, not the management. Louis Renault may have been punished more for his attitudes than his actions, which were mirrored by those of many other employers. Robert Aron reports that when a Gaullist seeking his support for the Free French, Renault is alleged to have replied "De Gaulle connais pas!" (Aron, 1974, 234)."
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External links

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