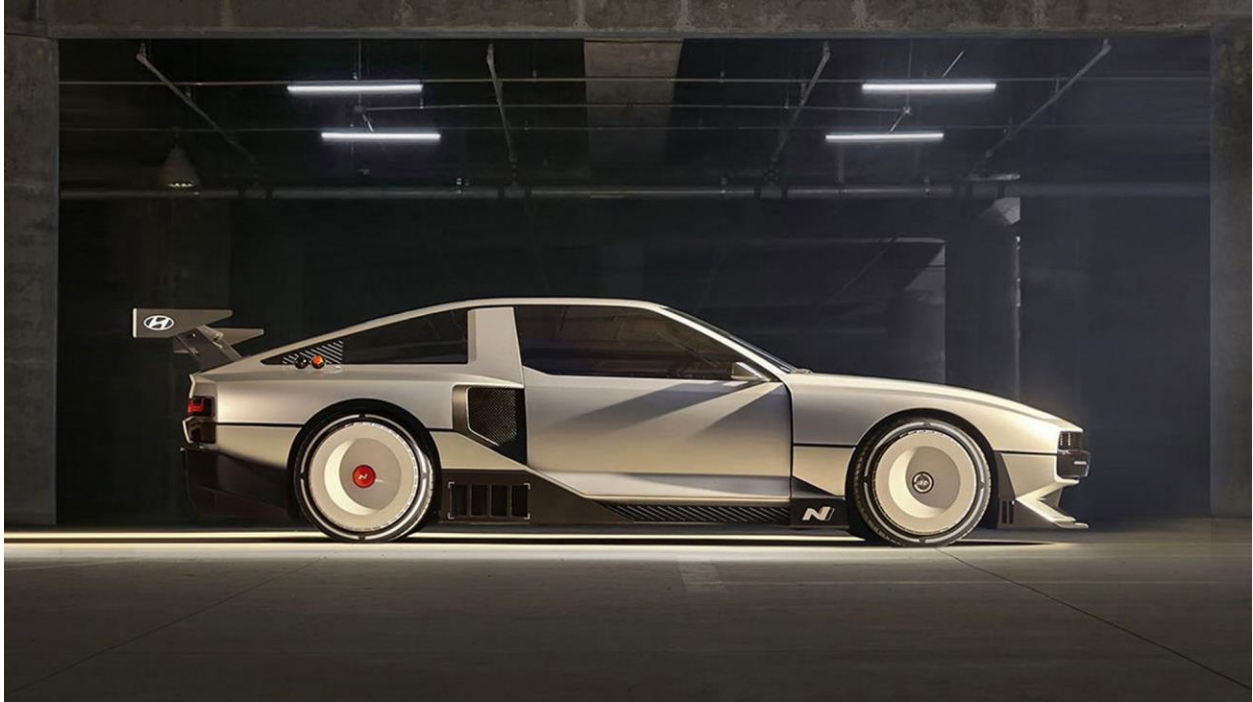


# HYUNDAI : FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

11 September 2023

In the competitive world of automotive design, staying ahead of the curve is no easy feat. Hyundai, the South Korean car company, has proven that it's not just about keeping up but setting trends in the industry. In recent years, Hyundai has made some brave steps, evolving from a basic and budget-friendly car manufacturer to a brand known for producing some of the most stylish cars in the sector.

Once considered a practical and rather uninspiring car brand, Hyundai has experienced a remarkable shift in reputation, earning award after award for their design prowess. In 2023 alone, they've accumulated an impressive number, including three Red Dot Awards, the prestigious IDEA Gold Award, and ten IF Awards. A significant contributor to this year's awards is the N Vision 74, hydrogen hybrid concept car. This truly stylish vehicle blends elements of retro design heritage with futuristic aesthetics, incorporating cutting-edge technology into an eco-friendly package. In this blog we will investigate Hyundai's transformative journey and the critical factors that have pushed them towards producing stylish and innovative cars.



*Pictured above: N Vision 74. ” The N Vision 74 is a tribute to our past efforts and a declaration of our future, carrying forward the bold spirit of the Pony Coupe Concept into a futuristic design that realizes the dream of our engineers to create Korea’s first sports car, ” explained SangYup Lee, Executive Vice President and Head of Hyundai Global Design Centre.*

### **Reimagining Their Design Language**

Hyundai’s journey towards becoming a style leader began with a complete rethink of their design language. In the past, their cars were known for practicality and affordability, but they lacked the wow factor in terms of aesthetics. They were missing a clear design identity for Hyundai cars, often attempting to take cues from other car companies, resulting in a bland look. Then, in roughly 2018 Hyundai realised that to compete in the modern market, they needed a bold and captivating design language.

Hyundai’s “Sensuous Sportiness” design philosophy was introduced, focusing on creating cars that not only looked good but also felt emotionally appealing. This design language emphasized sensuous curves, sleek lines, and a sense of excitement that had previously been missing from their lineup. With models like the Hyundai Sonata and the Hyundai Elantra adopting this

new design philosophy, the transformation was evident. The slim horizontal lightbar, large front grills and “pixel” style rear light bar is being introduced on many of their new models. It is these distinctive design choices that’s finally bringing that recognisable design identity to Hyundai that they so desperately needed.



*Pictured above: 2023 Hyundai Sonata, designed with Hyundai’s “Sensuous Sportiness” design philosophy.*

### **Investment in Cutting-Edge Technology**

Another crucial factor in Hyundai’s shift towards stylish cars has been their investment in cutting-edge technology. Modern car buyers are not just looking for good looks but also advanced features that enhance their driving experience. Hyundai understood this shift in consumer preferences and began incorporating innovative technology into their vehicles.

Features such as high-resolution infotainment systems, advanced driver-assistance systems, and eco-friendly powertrains have become standard offerings in Hyundai cars. This not only improved the functionality of their

vehicles but also added a sense of modernity and sophistication, contributing to their stylish image.



*Pictured above: Interior of the Hyundai Ioniq 6*

### **Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Design**

Stylish cars are not just about aesthetics; they also need to reflect the values of the modern world. Hyundai recognized the growing importance of sustainability and eco-friendliness in the automotive sector. As a result, they introduced a range of eco-friendly models like the Hyundai Ioniq and the Hyundai Kona Electric.

These electric and hybrid vehicles not only contributed to a cleaner environment but also showcased Hyundai's commitment to innovation and staying ahead of industry trends. The sleek and futuristic designs of these eco-friendly cars further solidified Hyundai's reputation for style. However, Hyundai are already looking beyond the electric option. With examples like the previously mentioned N Vision 74 concept car powered by hydrogen, we can see Hyundai's drive for sustainable innovation.

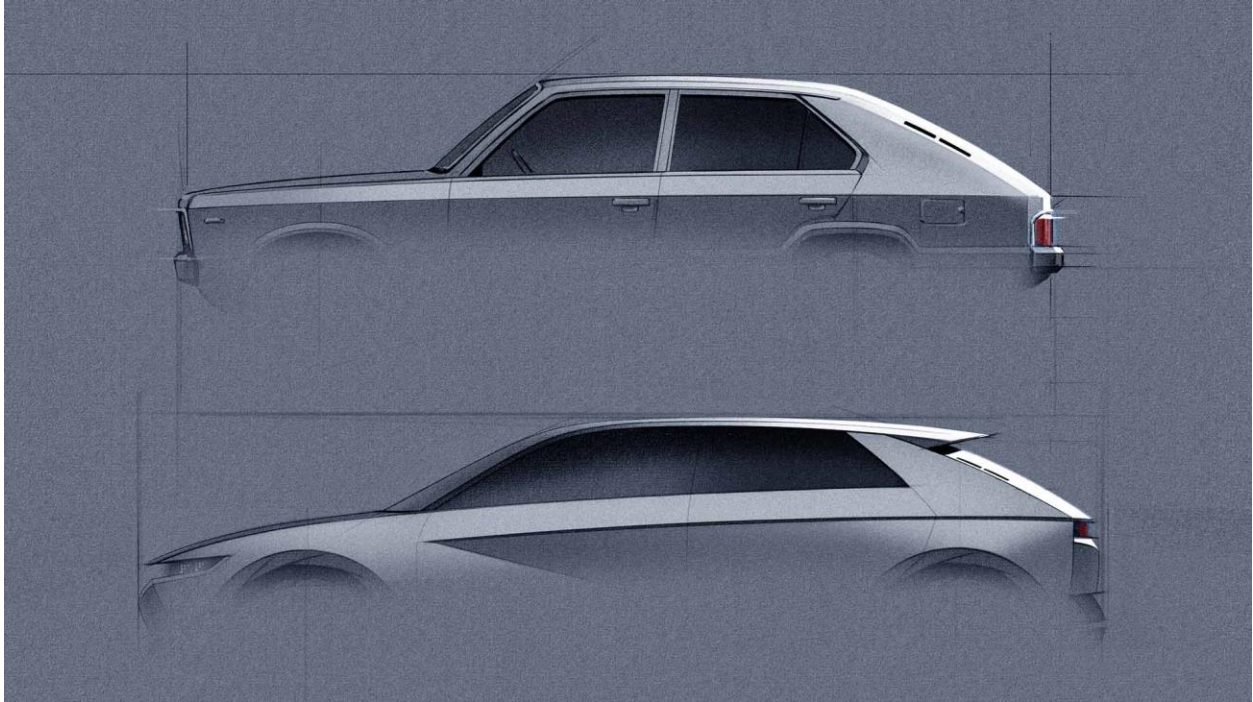


*Pictured above: Hyundai Ioniq 5*

### **Collaboration with Renowned Designers**

To truly pivot towards becoming a style leader, Hyundai decided to bring new designers to the team and collaborate with renowned design studios. They brought in fresh perspectives and artistic talents to infuse their cars with a new level of creativity. One of the first steps in this shift of design was the recruitment of SangYup Lee, the former Head of Exterior and Advanced Design at Bentley to play a leading role in their new design direction. SangYup Lee has a wealth of experience designing luxury and eye-catching cars, having previously worked at companies like Bentley, Porsche and even designing the Camaro concept car used for Bumblebee in the movie transformers.

Another recruitment who is often considered responsible for revolutionising Hyundai's design was their executive design advisor, Peter Schreyer, who was formerly with Audi and Kia. The introduction of these renowned designers to the company brought a European sensibility to Hyundai's designs. This fusion of Korean and European design elements resulted in cars that were not only stylish but also globally appealing.



Hyundai's journey from a budget-friendly car manufacturer to one of the most stylish players in the automotive sector is evidence of their commitment to innovation and understanding the evolving needs of consumers. Through a reimagined design language, investments in cutting-edge technology, a focus on sustainability, and collaborations with renowned designers, Hyundai has successfully pivoted towards producing cars that not only excel in performance but also turn heads on the road. As Hyundai continues to push the boundaries of automotive design, it's clear that they are here to stay as a style leader in the industry. As designers, we should take inspiration from Hyundai's design shift. They were brave in re-thinking their design language, deciding not to try follow the industry trends, but instead create a new and bold image to set them apart.

*Flynn Product Design offers **product design consultancy, industrial design, prototype design, and related services, to ambitious companies.***

**SET US A CHALLENGE BOOK YOUR FREE MEETING TODAY !**