

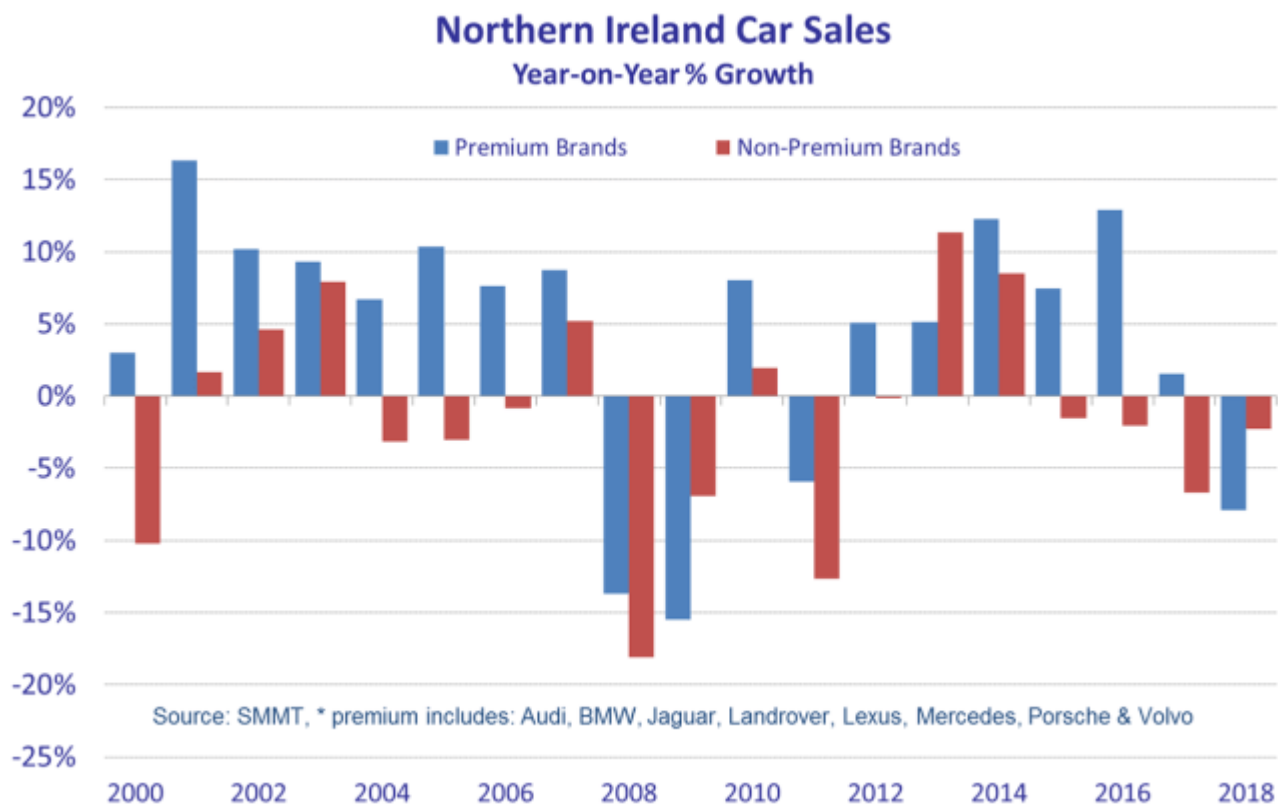
New car sales hit a 5-year low in 2018 signalling a bad year for the motor industry, or was it? Once again this headline conceals contrasting fortunes for different brands and models. Whatever the economic weather there are always winners and losers.



Some brands such as Vauxhall and Fiat posted their lowest sales figures in the last twenty years. Fiat saw sales slump by 45% in 2018. Peugeot sold one-hundred cars more than in 2017, though the latter marked a series low. Conversely, 2018 proved to be the best year ever for other mid-market brands, notably Seat and Skoda. Meanwhile Citroen notched up its best figures in a decade with sales up by one-third in 2018. Nissan on the other hand saw sales decline by 12% y/y and recorded its weakest sales figures since 2008. Fellow

Japanese brands Toyota and Mitsubishi bucked the overall market trend and reported their strongest sales figures in eight years.

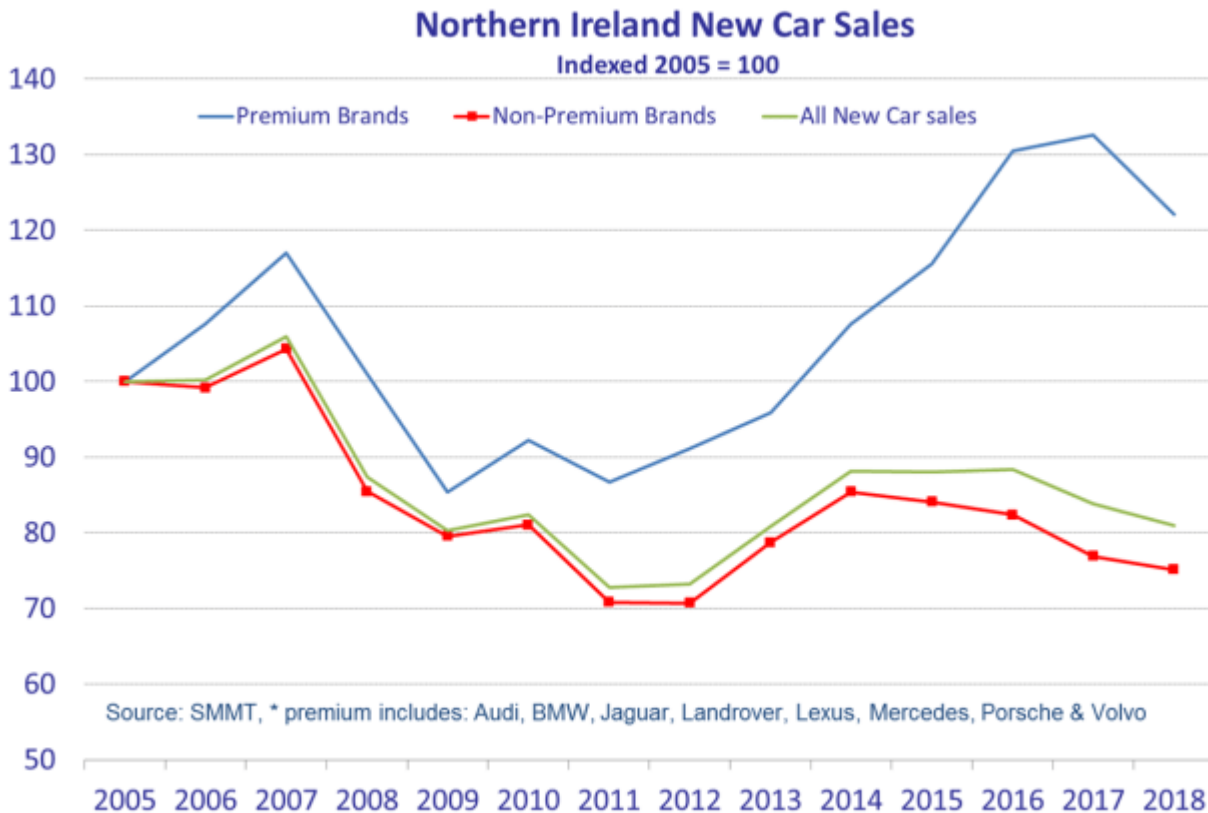
Overall new car sales in 2018 (52,533) were on a par with five years ago. But a key trend in recent years has been the outperformance of the premium-brand market which includes: Audi, BMW, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lexus, Mercedes, Porsche and Volvo. This segment and has grown by 27% over the last five years and now accounts for around 1 in 5 of all new cars purchased compared to 1 in 10 in 2002. Meanwhile the rest of the car market (non-premium) saw sales fall by almost 5% over the same five-year period.



Looking at last year’s figures reveals that both the premium and non-premium markets fell for the first time since 2011. Furthermore the 8% y/y decline in the premium market marked the biggest annual fall in sales since 2009. However, it should be noted that 2017 was a

record high for the premium brands.

Again within the premium brands, some marques fared better than others. Audi saw sales slip from a record high in 2017 to a 6-yr low whereas BMW sales hit an 11-yr high. Volvo, Land Rover and Mercedes saw sales slip from 2017’s record highs. Sales of new Porsches fell from 2017’s 10-year high to 224 vehicles - but this still marked Porsche’s fourth highest sales figures in the last twenty years.



It was a similar story in the luxury sports car market too. A record number of Ferrari’s were sold last year. Sales jumped by almost 60% from 19 in 2017 to 30. Aston Martin sales fell from 2017’s 10-year-high of 27 to 25. Maserati had a record year in 2017(81) but sales fell by 43% last year. Nevertheless, this still represents the second best sales figures on record in NI. One Lamborghini and two McLaren sports cars also rolled out of local showrooms last

year. Record highs were also evident in other luxury brands with seven Rolls Royce cars sold in 2018 (up from 0 in 2017). Bentley also had its best year in twelve years with 33 cars sold.

So whilst the headlines will perhaps be that Northern Ireland's new car sales fell in 2018, the reality when you look beneath the bonnet is that there are a wide range of trends going on. Whether you think it was a bad year for motor industry or not perhaps depends on which brands or car types you sell.

Sales in 2018

- Ferrari 30 cars
- Aston Martin 25 cars
- Lamborghini 1 car
- Rolls Royce 7 cars
- Maserati 46 cars
- Bentley 33 cars

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