Auto Inventories Monthly Insight

Inventory grows following soft January sales

Industry Overview

January auto inventory up 93k units MoM

Total auto inventory at the end of January 2024 increased 93k units from December 2023 to ~2.40mm. Inventories have consistently marched higher over the last two years as production has recovered and are now up ~145% off the September 2021 trough. The MoM increase in absolute inventory was driven primarily by the Japanese (+58k) and Korean OEMs (+26k). The D3 posted higher inventory (+12k), driven by a +26k increase in GM Light truck inventory and partially offset by a -17k decline at Ford (Stellantis was up 2k MoM). European OEM inventory was -4k MoM. On a days' supply (DS) basis, inventory stood at 47DS, which is a bit above the five-year average of 46DS, and up one day MoM. Recall that the January inventory bump came in light of soft January sales, which were down MoM on a SAAR basis to 15.0mm (see our Auto Sales Monthly report).

Supply approaching normalized levels (2.5-3mm)

Inventory remains lower than "normal" levels of 2.5mm-3.0mm+ units, but is approaching this range. In 2023, as production constraints faded, both sales and inventory started to recover after years in which low inventory impaired sales. Our latest forecast assumes inventories rise to 2.7-2.8mm units at the end of 2024. As we see autos as capital goods that periodically need to be replaced, we believe there is still substantial unfulfilled demand following the last few years of shortages. In the nearterm, affordability could represent an obstacle to stronger demand materializing. With climbing inventory and flat sales, pricing strength also looks more at risk. On a more positive note, OEMs continue to manage inventory to match demand. We consider this positive, as it helps to sustain prices.

Cycle timing now favorable, expect healthy recovery L-T

The depressed volume environment over the last few years has built pent-up demand, which should create a robust capital goods replacement cycle for a multi-year recovery.

Exhibit 1: January 2024 Inventory

January inventory was ~2.40mm units, with days' supply of 47 above the 5-year avg. of 46

	Inventory	Days	5-yr	% Above	
	Units	Supply	Avg DS	/Below	Note
Detroit 3 Cars	99,893	77	50	53%	Detroit 3 OEM's total inventory was up 12k MoM and increased
Detroit 3 Lt Trucks	1,195,011	66	59	12%	239k units YoY. Aggregate supply remains less constrained than
Detroit 3 Total	1,294,904	66	58	15%	the industry average, across both cars and light trucks.
Japanese Cars	188,696	37	39	-4%	Supply at Japanese OEMs was up 58k MoM and increased
Japanese Lt Trucks	493,957	38	38	-1%	316k units YoY. Aggregate supply is more constrained than the
Japanese Total	682,653	38	38	-2%	industry average across both cars and light trucks.
European Cars	56,148	43	46	-6%	European OEM's inventory was down 4k units MoM but increased
European Lt Trucks	165,340	52	48	7%	56k units YoY. Aggregate supply is less constrained than the
European Total	221,488	49	48	3%	industry average across both cars and light trucks.
Korean Cars	43,431	27	35	-22%	Inventory at Korean OEMs was up 26k units MoM and increased
Korean Lt Trucks	113,365	30	36	-16%	70k units YoY. Both car and truck inventories remain well below
Korean Total	156,796	29	35	-17%	the industry average.
Industry Cars	393,428	39	39	0%	Total inventory was up 93k units MoM and up 691k units YoY.
Industry Lt Trucks	2,006,443	50	48	3%	Car supply tighter than light truck, as OEMs continue to prioritize
Industry Total	2,399,871	47	46	3%	production and inventory build of high ASP/margin vehicles.

Source: WardsAuto InfoBank, BofA Global Research

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We track industry inventories by calculating the days' supply (DS) based on a trailing 12-month average daily selling rate. Using the 12-month average reduces volatility in the days' supply number following a very strong (weak) sales month.

Wards inventory measurement includes dealer inventory and vehicles in transit to dealers.

Abbreviations:

ASP: Average selling price D3: Detroit 3 automakers

DS: Days' supply L-T: Long-term

OEM: Original equipment

manufacturer

SAAR: Seasonally adjusted

annualized rate

SUV: Sport utility vehicle **UAW:** United Auto Workers

GM: General Motor

Industry Inventories

Exhibit 2: US absolute inventory level (mm)

Total automotive inventory at the end of January 2024 increased 93k units from December 2023, to ~2.40mm units. This translates into days' supply of 47DS, which is above the five-year average of 46DS.

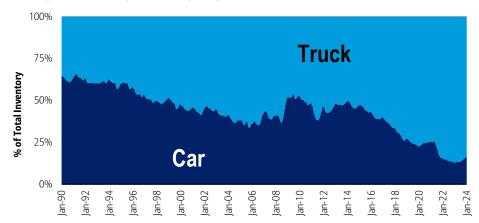


Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

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Exhibit 3: US inventory mix – % of total inventory

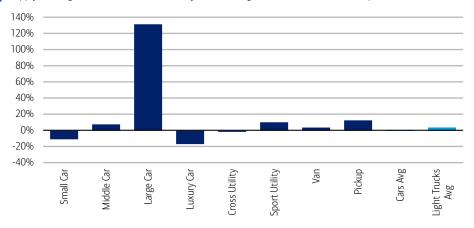
OEMs have prioritized higher-mix/margin vehicles for production, and as such, inventory mix has moved heavily towards light trucks. Passenger cars are beginning to take back share as production for those vehicles recovers.



Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

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Exhibit 4: US automotive inventory % above/below average, by vehicle segment – Jan. 2024 Supply shortages have eased and inventory for Mid/Large Cars, SUVs, Vans & Pickups have recovered



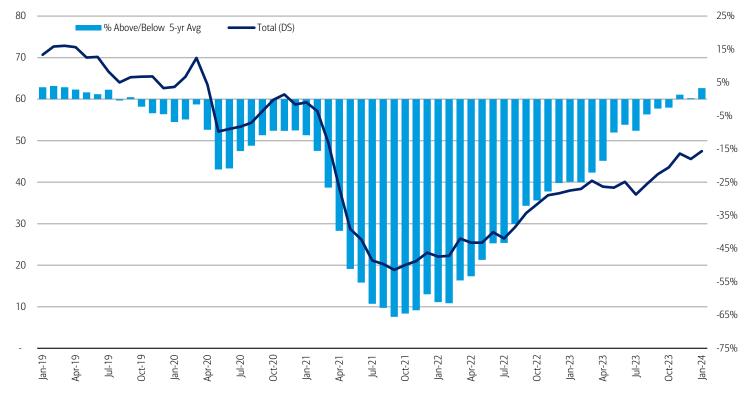
Source: WardsAuto InfoBank



Total Inventories

Exhibit 5: Industry Inventories - Total (DS)

January industry total days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was up 1 day MoM to 47 days from 46 in December 2023

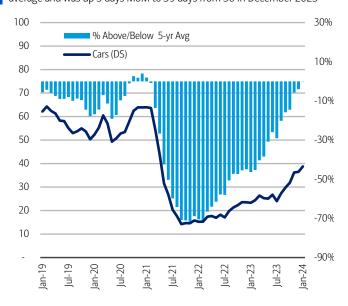


Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

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Exhibit 6: Industry Inventories - Cars (DS)

January industry car days' supply is in-line with the 5-year historical average and was up 3 days MoM to 39 days from 36 in December 2023

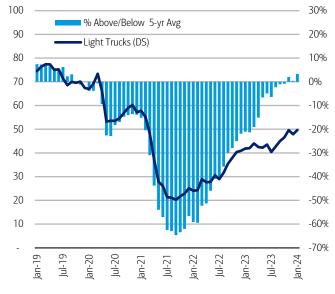


Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

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Exhibit 7: Industry Inventories – Light Trucks (DS)

January industry light truck days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was up 2 days MoM to 50 days from 48 days in Dec. 2023.

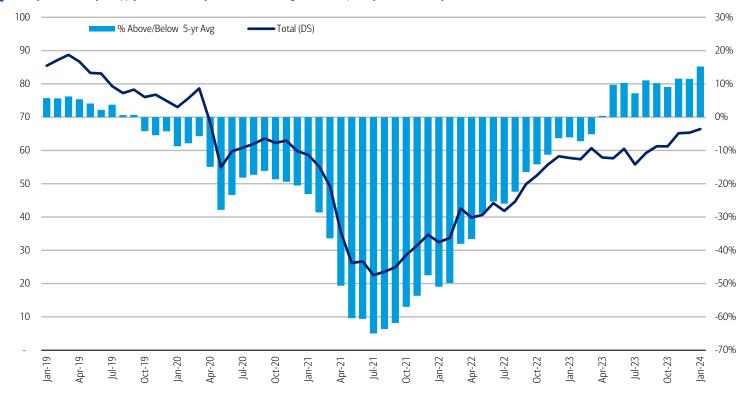


Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

Detroit 3 Inventories

Exhibit 8: Detroit 3 (D3) Inventories - Total (DS)

January Detroit 3 days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was up 1 day MoM to 66 days from 65 in December 2023

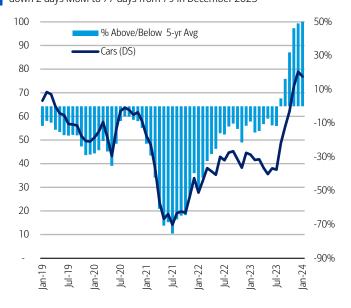


Source: WardsAuto InfoBank

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Exhibit 9: Detroit 3 Inventories - Cars (DS)

January D3 car days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was down 2 days MoM to 77 days from 79 in December 2023

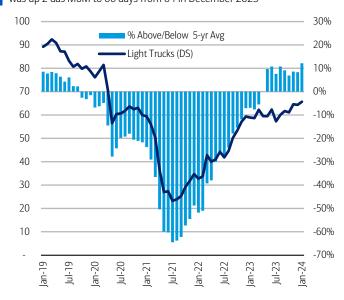


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 10: Detroit 3 Inventories - Light Trucks (DS)

January D3 light truck days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was up 2 das MoM to 66 days from 64 in December 2023

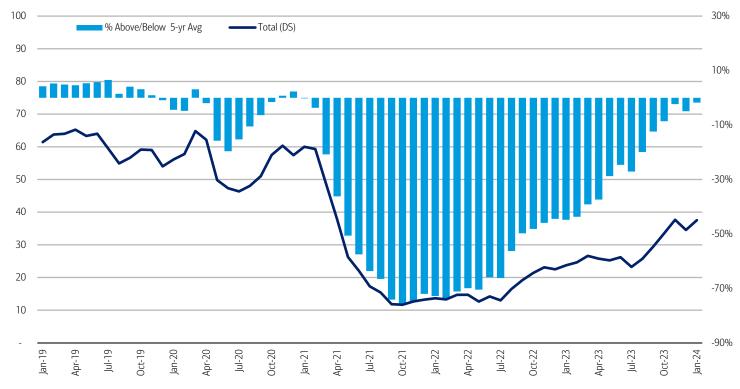


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

Japanese Inventories

Exhibit 11: Japanese Inventories - Total (DS)

January Japanese days' supply came in below the 5-year historical average and increased 3 days on a MoM basis to 38 days from 35 in December 2023

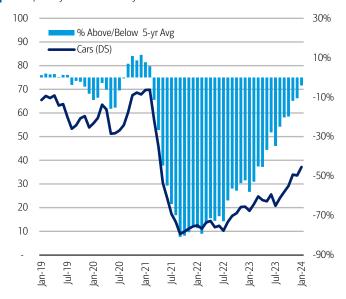


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 12: Japanese Inventories - Cars (DS)

January Japanese car days' supply is below the 5-year historical average and was up 3 days MoM to 37 days from 34 in December 2023 $\,$

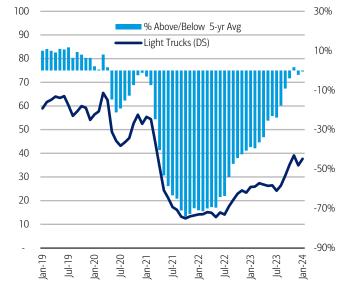


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Exhibit 13: Japanese Inventories – Light Trucks (DS)

January Japanese light truck days' supply is below 5-year average and was up 3 days MoM to 38 days from 35 in December 2023



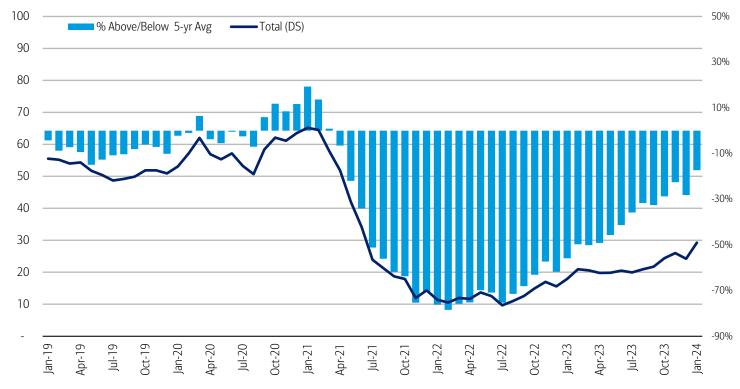
Source: WardsAuto Infobank



Korean Inventories

Exhibit 14: Korean Inventories - Total (DS)

January Korean days' supply is below the 5-year historical average and was up 5 days MoM to 29 days from 24 days in December 2023

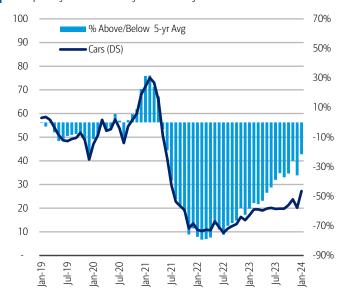


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 15: Korean Inventories - Cars (DS)

January Korean car days' supply is below the 5-year historical average and was up 7 days MoM to 27 days from 20 days in December 2023

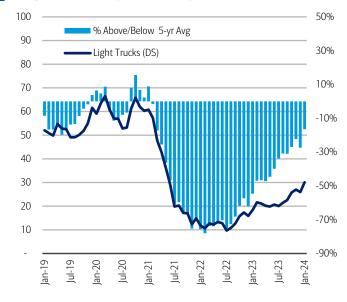


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 16: Korean Inventories - Light Trucks (DS)

January Korean light truck days' supply is below the 5-year historical average and was up 4 days MoM to 30 days from 26 in December 2023

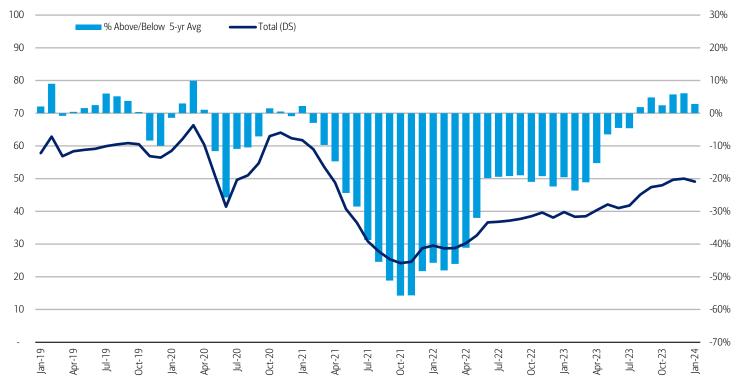


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

European Inventories

Exhibit 17: European Inventories - Total (DS)

January European days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was down 1 day MoM to 49 from 50 in December 2023

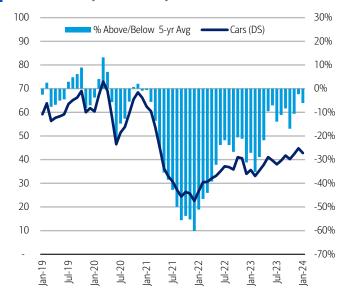


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 18: European Inventories – Cars (DS)

January European car days' supply is below the 5-year historical average and was down 2 days MoM to 43 days from 45 in December 2023

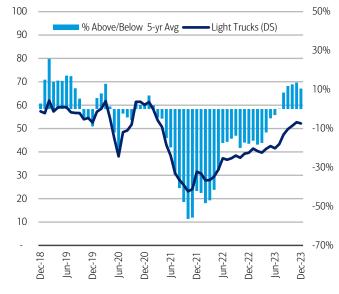


Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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Exhibit 19: European Inventories - Light Trucks (DS)

January European light truck days' supply is above the 5-year historical average and was flat MoM at 52 days from 52 in December 2023



Source: WardsAuto Infobank

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