



BENEFITS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

by **lloyd levine**

What if there were something you could do that was at once environmentally friendly, saved you both time and money, and the effect lasted for years? There is actually something that can do all of that.

If you are contemplating getting a new car, it is time to **SERIOUSLY** consider an Electric Vehicle. Technically, these cars are Plug-In Electric Vehicles or EVs/PEVs for short. Today's generation of EVs will save you both time and money, and are completely different than those of a generation ago.

Today's electric vehicles are not "nice cars for an electric," or "nice cars, but." They are nice cars. Period.

Today's EVs are stylish, comfortable, drive well and have all of the features you've come to expect from their gas-fueled brethren. When you compare packages and features you won't find the EV lacking in any way. Today's EVs offer the same available options and amenities you find on comparable gas-powered cars. They perform like most other cars on the road, too, with comparable top speeds, acceleration, safety features and handling. And that's the point—driving an electric vehicle is no longer a sacrifice.

Even if you don't have the \$100,000 to buy a Tesla, there are still many excellent models to choose from. On the street at this very moment are plug-in electric cars from Fiat, Toyota, Chevy, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Ford, BMW and Honda. Collectively, these companies of-

fer more than 20 different models of cars that are either plug-in hybrid or plug-in electric. You can find everything from a Fiat 500 to a Toyota RAV 4. Many more will be available soon, including a plug-in Cadillac.

To be fair, you will give up a few things when you drive an EV... your weekly trip to the gas station, for starters. Oil changes will be a thing of the past; EVs don't use oil. You can also say goodbye to the nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, sulfur dioxide, benzene, ozone and particulate matter, all of which are known health hazards, that leave your tailpipe every time you start your gas-powered car.

In addition to the clear environmental benefits of driving an EV, there is a significant monetary benefit. A recent study found that an average EV driver drives 1,050 miles per month, or 12,600 miles each year. At 23 mpg and \$4.00/gallon, it will cost you \$2,191 per year in gas. If you live in SMUD territory, driving an EV that same distance will cost about \$390 in electricity.

Charging your EV is a snap, too. Simply pull into your driveway or garage and plug in. You can charge while you sleep and wake up every morning to a full "tank." It's like having your own private gas station, just a lot cleaner.

While many people express interest and excitement about saving money on gas, they also mention "range anxiety" or the fear of being stranded without any charge in the battery. Fortunately, this fear isn't born out of any real world experience. Today's EVs already

operate more efficiently, with more power, greater range and shorter charge times than just a few years ago. While the Tesla can go 275 miles between charges, the range of most EVs in real-world driving experience is between 75 and 100 miles. While that may not sound like much, think about how often you really drive 75 miles in one day. That is plenty of range to get you from El Dorado Hills to downtown Sacramento and back without recharging.

And if range is really a concern, Plug-In Hybrids, like the Chevy Volt, Ford Fusion, Toyota Prius and Honda Accord, are great options. The Chevy Volt, for example, goes up to 40 miles per charge on the electric motor, but has a 9.2 gallon gas tank and a 1.4 liter engine for longer trips. The Volt has very similar performance data to the popular gas-powered Honda Accord and Toyota Camry, with acceleration at zero to 60 mph in 8.7 seconds and top speed at more than 100 mph.

While they don't completely eliminate the gas engine, many Plug-In Hybrids achieve triple-digit miles per gallon. Chevy Volt owners report getting over 200 mpg in real driving conditions, and one Sacramento-area driver has driven more than 6,000 miles and purchased just 19 gallons of gas, achieving more than 315 mpg.

Still not convinced? Find out for yourself. September 29 is National Plug-In Day, and the Sacramento Electric Vehicle Association (SacEV) will be holding a "ride and drive" event at the Folsom Premium Outlet Mall. The Ride & Drive will provide a chance to ride, drive and ask questions about electric vehicles without the pressure to purchase. ■

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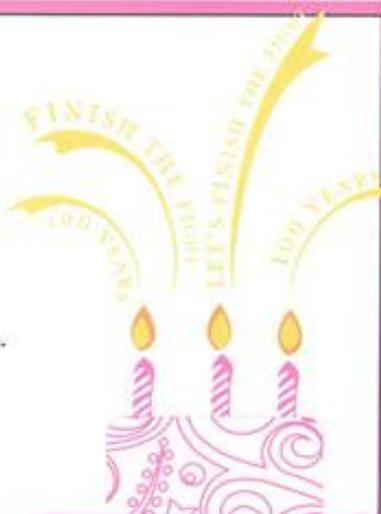
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