



An Open Discussion on Electric Vehicles



Mission e Concept

My 2 cents

As a keen observer of the motor industry, and all-round Porsche enthusiast, I thought I would share my thoughts, observations and questions regarding the imminent arrival of electric vehicles from my (our) favourite brand.

As a "Driver", Electric vehicles do seem such a juxtaposition. Everything that we read, or watch about them, portrays them as lifeless, tools to get from A to B. Yet, in the next breath, we are bombarded with the performance figures, which are nearly always mind numbingly impressive, from the very same sources. Historically, the motor car (if we will still be calling it that, in the future), has had a direct correlation between performance, and driving experience. Sure, there have been exceptions, but generally, the more horsepower, the more exciting to drive, more exciting to look at, and inevitably more aspirational, to one day own.

What do we associate with an exciting car? Performance, looks and driving experience. It is the last that is so hard to measure. Sure, when you drive a great car, it is the sum of the small things. Steering feedback, turn in, when the torque pours on, how the wheel feels in your hands, your view

from the seat, how that seat holds you, how the pedals are placed, and how it sounds. Yes, how it sounds. Show me a car enthusiast that does not get excited by their dream car's sound. Whether it is a flat six at redline, or an accelerating big block V8. Maybe even the whoosh of a turbo wastegate, when the clutch is engaged. Regardless of your vehicle of preference, it is hard not to be excited by the sound.

This is probably singularly the biggest concern I have with the performance Electric Vehicle. I have watched a couple of Formula-E races, which right now is the pinnacle of development for performance of EV's. Yes, the racing is close, exciting and engaging. But in all honesty, if I could get the commentary in subtitles, I would probably enjoy it more with the TV on Mute.

I know that a certain Bavarian manufacturer has decided to address this problem, by effectively synthesizing, what they think would be a nicer sound, through the speakers of the car's interior. I believe this is actually a worse outcome than the car's existing sound, as it is admitting that the problem exists, and rather than fixing it at the source, trying to hide, or mask it with something better. Real gold vs gold paint, sort of situation.

With all the above factors taken into consideration, how will Porsche manage the sports car experience, with the Mission E cars? I have no doubt they will be full of the technical efficiency we come to expect from the brand, but what about the experience? I am not convinced of the impending outcome.

When the Mission E concept was released, it looked amazing. It looked futuristic; it promised a lot. Whilst there was a lot of talk about the technical platform, there was an equal amount of talk about the car still driving like a Porsche. The brand historically has done a pretty good job of delivering a production version of a concept, that remains very true to the concept, in design, aesthetics, and technical prowess. This has clearly not been the case with the Mission E.

The Taycan, when it was unleashed on the world, had very little resemblance to the Mission E concept. Sure, it was white, and electric, but lacks the all wheels, bulging high waistline of the concept. It no longer has the front defining aero slots, and the taillights, are almost an afterthought. What happened to the missing B Pillar, and suicide doors, that every concept seems to have, that never gets to production?

All round, the car is a bit "Beige". That is just the aesthetics. I am baffled that a car that is still not slated for release for another 6 months, made by a sports car manufacturer, will have less performance than the Tesla Model 3. The "Corolla" of EVs. In all fairness, the model 3 does out accelerate a GT2RS up to 160kmh, but knowing this as a minimum benchmark, surely they would try and make it competitive, at least in performance?

One of the spiels I have read from Porsche themselves, has stated that they have strived for complete silence from the drivetrain. Silence? Sports car? If I wanted a float tank on wheels, I'd be stumping up for a Rolls Royce Phantom 8! Porsche is actually believing that the sound, or aural experience, when driving the car will be about as popular as Hi-Octane unleaded with Taycan owners.

Did they actually ask anyone what they like in their sports cars? Even McLaren have had to do a U-turn on exhaust efficiency, and compromised performance, to give owners a bit of that sweet V8 sound, they are paying so much for.

Can you imagine how exciting these new Taycans must be to drive, if Porsche believe you will not want to hear it, but still get that feeling of a great sports car driving experience?

Maybe the car will be aimed more at the GT market? Competing against the Panamera, and not really the canyon carver, we are being led to believe. The 2-tonne weight would suggest this. Maybe they are saving all the good stuff for the inevitable electric 911, in the next 5 years or so?

I don't know where this is all heading, but it is hard to imagine, in 60 years, that owners of vintage Taycans, will be walking out into their garage, with the same emotions I do today, when I go out and just sit in my 356.