

Electric Cars: Promise or Fantasy?

James Limbaugh:

It's the kind of technology consumers have been hearing about for years: hybrids, electric-powered cars, mini cars, and it's all on display at the New York International Auto Show. The headline grabber this year is the electric car. And leading the pack, at least in terms of style and sensibility, was the Chevy Volt.

Mark Jannot:

Again, it really delivers on this sort of, uh, holy grail of a car that is, you know, all electric, no emissions but, you know, has uh, power and performance that we come to expect.

James Limbaugh:

Bringing an all-electric vehicle to market is no easy task. The biggest hurdle, according to Jannot, is batteries.

Mark Jannot:

A lot of it has to do with, uh, you know, advancements in battery power not coming fast enough. Uh, we've got, on-in our May issue of Popular Science, which is devoted to the future of the car, we cover at length the, uh, Tesla Roadster, which is an all-electric car that finally is being i-is going to be able to deliver on the promise or the fantasy of an electric car that really delivers power and performance. And until we get that, I don't think, uh, Americans are gonna really buy in, because those are the pillars of our sort of passion for automobiles.

James Limbaugh:

General Motors was also on hand, showing off their version of low-cost, environmentally friendly vehicles, the Global Mini Cars.

Mark Jannot:

It's three cars they're introducing. It's called the Beat, the Groove, and the Trax, and each of them sort of has a different take on it. Uh, the Trax actually has-is, uh, it's a quasi-hybrid drive. It's a-it's a very, uh, low-cost, a very smart, uh, all-wheel drive where the front wheels are being driven by a standard, uh, gasoline engine, and the back wheels are being driven by a-a battery-powered electric motor. Um, you know, all of them are-are economical, and GM is actually inviting people to go on their website and vote for which of these three cars are going to, is to going to actually make it to market, uh, in the next couple of years.

James Limbaugh:

And while environmentally friendly cars certainly were a big hit at the show, that doesn't mean horsepower is a thing of the past. There was plenty of that on hand, from the new Shelby GT500 to the new Chevy Camaro.

James Limbaugh:

James Limbaugh, The Associated Press.

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