

How a Tesla and Elon Musk sceptic came to see the light on electric vehicles

I
n 2015 [Mercedes Benz](#) sold its stake in [Tesla](#), claiming the company had “achieved everything it was going to”.


I’m with them. Here’s my position: Tesla is an absurdly overvalued business whose stock is kept artificially high by [gangs](#) of fanboys who are in love with [Elon Musk](#).

The electric vehicle revolution is never going to work – or if it does, not for decades yet.

A while back I wrote that Elon Musk wouldn’t be the second richest man in the world for long, prompting howls of anger from the fanboys, some of whom have as many as five followers on Twitter.

And I was right in a way – he went past Jeff Bezos shortly thereafter.

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Noting my stance, Octopus Electric Vehicles got in touch and

suggested I at least give the car and the chargers a chance.

So I did, over one long weekend. The short review goes like this: the cars are pretty amazing once you get used to them, and the charging experience is better than I expected while still clunky, but presumably they'll get there.

The longer review is this:

The most striking thing about the cars is how fast they are. The acceleration is exhilarating or perhaps alarming, even dangerous. But I guess it isn't Tesla's fault that, given the chance, some of us will choose to drive like teenage boys.

The flip side of that is that when you take your foot off the accelerator the car slows down remarkably quickly.

Over four days, I reckon I used the brakes twice. That's safer than a [petrol](#) car, I suppose, though possibly not for the person behind you.

My main journey is 130 miles north to Nottingham. My guide says the car will make this easily on one charge.

In the end it was a bit nerve racking. Going down to 20% on your iphone is a bit worrisome, on your car it is anxiety-making. How far away is Nottingham, anyway?

When I arrived at my destination there was 8% left on the battery – way too close for comfort.

Is that because I put my foot down, I ask. Octopus reckons consistency of speed is the key to longer battery power; so the trick is not to speed up and slow down the whole time, something you can't always avoid, especially not when test driving a new toy.

Octopus says the nearest charging point to me is at a Morrisons. This turns out to be fenced off, not open yet.

After that, most of the convenient charging points seem to be situated in pub car parks.

That doesn't strike me as ideal, since there are some people who might find it difficult not to go into the pub and drink.

And charging is a drag, going at a rate of about 1% a minute, so a full charge takes 90 minutes. I never had that long to hang around, so found myself topping up incrementally.

You can have a charger installed at your house, but as electricity prices go up, so will the cost of fuelling your car. Octopus reckons the cost at the public charging points should stay low, since the power has been bought forward.

The electricity is definitely cheaper than petrol of course – about £30 for a full tank, as it were. Drivers who go electric are likely to save hundreds of pounds a year.