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Michelle Krebs, veteran automotive-industry authority, joins Edmunds editors, analysts and data experts to provide news and commentary.

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Inside Line



Sparking Controversy, and Confusion, at EVER Monaco

April 02, 2008

By Nick Kurczewski

The REVA 2.0 electric car proves even tree-hugging technology is not immune to the dirtier world of design infringement, and the confusing cross-pollination between Chinese companies and the electric vehicle marketplace.

Displayed for the first time at the EVER Monaco ecological car show, held March 27-30, the REVA 2.0 is a direct copy of a Smart Fortwo city-car. But the bright-yellow 2.0 on display in Monaco is actually built in China, while REVA GmbH is based outside of Stuttgart, Germany.

REVA is normally a manufacturer of battery technology and distributor of Sanyo electronics. It's not to be confused with the Reva (lower case) electric car company, based in Bangalore, India. EVER Monaco is REVA GmbH's first step into the automotive world, and the 2.0 is its current flagship prototype.

No speed demon

Unfortunately, a vehicle like the REVA INT.U.G.A 2.0 (it's full and incredibly ungainly name) plays into the notion that electric vehicles must be slow and unrefined. The 2.0 is powered by six 12-volt lead-acid batteries, which weigh in at a whopping 846 lbs. This is nearly half of the car's entire 2,085-lb. curb weight.

The 2.0 is rear-wheel drive, and has an automatic transmission. European regulations dictate it be restricted to a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour. The 2.0 has a range of approximately 80 miles, which isn't too bad. However, a full recharge requires a leisurely 10-hour wait.

REVA's stand at the show displayed, in addition to the 2.0 two-seater, an electric-powered trike and a South Korean-built single-passenger vehicle, specially designed for the elderly or disabled, in addition to the 2.0 two-seater. At only 28.7 inches wide, it's frightening to think how it would fare in a collision. Luckily, its 8.5-mph top-speed limits its use to gated communities or sidewalks.

Copying a copycat

The most fun to be had with the REVA 2.0 is trying to figure exactly what it is, and who makes it. Originally we thought this was a conversion of the ShuangHuan Noble, another Chinese-built ripoff of the Smart Fortwo.

The Noble inspired a flurry of controversy and threats of legal action at last year's Frankfurt auto show. Its European importer, China Automobiles Deutschland, eventually decided not to display the car.

But it turns out we were wrong about the ShuangHuan connection. The REVA 2.0 is based on the Jinan Flybo Motor Company's XFD-6000ZK electric vehicle. Aside from that horribly complex name, the Flybo is not exactly a handsome car in standard form — and even less so with REVA's tacked-on grill and modified head and tail lights.

Things get even stranger when it comes to the U.S. market. Despite numerous news articles linking the Flybo XFD-6000ZK to Wuzheng North America, a Michigan-based importer of Chinese-built trucks and EVs, a little digging finds this isn't exactly correct.



Wuzheng North America is selling an electric version of the controversial ShuangHuan Noble. Meanwhile, Great Lakes Autos — a car dealership in Saginaw, Mich. — is the sole distributor of the Flybo electric car. Confused yet?

Meanwhile, at EVER Monaco, REVA Gmbh representatives confirmed that, for now, the 2.0 remains only a design and engineering study.

Nick Kurczewski is a Paris-based correspondent working for AutoObserver.

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Comments

For the original electric car...

<http://www.beyondthekm.com/2007/11/29/porsche-hybrid-video/>

Posted by: [Sean](#) | April 02, 2008 at 7:08 AM

I couldn't help imagining myself , upon seeing someone in one of those REVA Singles, going up to them at a red light and pushing them over. Hey! Hey! come back here!!

Posted by: [fulcrumb](#) | April 02, 2008 at 6:36 PM

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