

Excerpt from San Diego Union Tribune, April 5, 2009

<http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/apr/05/1n5electric00291-electric-car-owners-plugged-futur/?zIndex=77832>

Electric car owners plugged in to future

Vehicles arriving after a long wait

The Tesla Roadster is as sleek as anything on the road. Fast, too.

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A few years ago, Wilder said he talked to Detroit executives, who told him Tesla would fail before he got his Roadster.

“They just didn't believe you could put a car together like this,” he said. “Now I drive one and I want to get back in touch with these people and say, 'Hey, it's here!' ”

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The drive is also different. Because electric engines are powerful at low speeds, there's no need for gear shifting.

“It's like a Disneyland ride,” Wilder said.

But perhaps the biggest difference is the power source.

Wilder uses solar panels to power his house – and his car – and isn't stopping with the Tesla. He is planning to buy a Fisker and an Aptera.

“Once you drive an electric, who wants a gasoline car?” he said. “They're slow, they require all the maintenance, they need gasoline. Who needs that?”

Tesla says the Roadster has a range of 240 miles on about \$4 worth of electricity. It charges in less than four hours from a 220-volt connection, and is designed to charge at night.

San Diego Gas & Electric will install separate meters for electric cars so customers can take advantage of lower rates.

Tesla last month announced a family car, the Model S, which it will retail in 2011 for \$57,400, though a \$7,500 federal rebate would lower the price to \$49,900.

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Carlsbad's Aptera is planning to begin production of a three-wheeled vehicle that looks like a wingless airplane and sells for \$25,000 to \$40,000.

Aptera says it is battling the battery problem by making a light, aerodynamic two-seater that won't require as much energy as traditional designs. Less energy used means lighter batteries, and a more affordable vehicle.

“That's our goal, to get these in people's garages,” company co-founder Steve Fambro said.

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