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Fisker Karma: 100mpg Hybrid Production Car



The production version of the four-door, four-seat 2010 Fisker Karma, which claims to be the world's first luxury plug-in hybrid car, has been unveiled at the NAIAS in Detroit by Fisker Automotive, Inc., the new American manufacturer of premium green automobiles.

The Karma uses Quantum Technologies' Q-DRIVE plug-in hybrid powertrain to travel emission free for up to 50 miles on a full charge from any 110-, 220- or 240-volt electric outlet. Fisker calls this electric-only travel the Karma's Stealth mode, while Sport mode gives a total estimated range of around 300 miles. This is managed with the help of an efficient 260PS turbocharged 2.0-litre Ecotec petrol engine, which turns a generator, which itself powers two electric motors on the rear differential.





Despite an annual average fuel consumption of more than 100mpg, the manufacturer still claims impressive performance figures: 125mph top speed and 0-60mph in 5.8 seconds. Meanwhile, the Karma's low centre of gravity and A-arm suspension aim to give a performance-oriented driving experience. Tall, wide tyres deliver good lateral grip, while electrohydraulic disc brakes provide the stopping power. Instantly recognisable by its exterior styling, the Karma also benefits from having the world's largest continuously formed glass solar panel roof on a car – a standard feature on all Karma saloons.





Inside the car, the design focuses on 'sustainable' features, with inspiration from nature. For example, wood trim is sourced from non-living trees: 'Fallen Trees' that have died of natural causes; 'Rescued Trees' burned in forest fires; and 'Sunken Trees' lying at the bottom of American lakes. The Karma's instrumentation focuses on ease of use, with a 10.2-inch touch-sensitive screen, embedded in the layered EcoGlass centre console, controlling the heating, air-con and audio systems. LCD gauges behind the steering wheel display such critical information as battery charge and vehicle speed.



"Our hope is that the Fisker Karma will create a new segment of eco-friendly transportation and will become the most desirable plug-in hybrid sports sedan available," said Fisker Automotive, Inc. CEO Henrik Fisker. With a starting price of US\$87,900, a thousand orders have reportedly been received following the debut of the prototype at the 2008 Detroit show. Karma deliveries are scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter of 2009 through the Fisker Automotive Retail network. More information can be found at www.fiskerautomotive.com.

*Text: Charis Whitcombe
Photos: Fisker Automotive*

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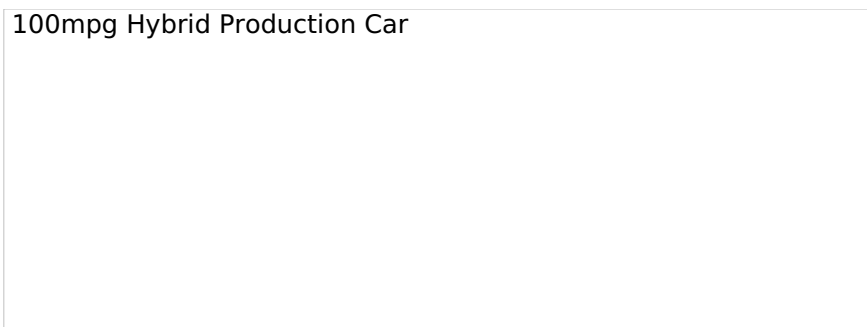
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