

Human-electric hybrid car expected next year (w/ Video)

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A human-electric hybrid vehicle, the "Imagine PS," capable of 100 kph (60 mph) on the flat and 50 kph uphill, is expected to be commercially available next year.

The hand-cranked low mass vehicle (LMV) was developed by engineer Professor Charles Samuel Greenwood, who has been working on human-powered vehicles for over four decades, and has now developed a street legal sedan version carrying four people. If the four people are all cranking, the vehicle can run solely on human power, but it is also an electric plug-in. The chassis can be adapted to different styles and different types of batteries and future technologies without needing to replace the car.

The Imagine PS (PS standing for power station) is built by HumanCar Inc.. It can be started by a few backwards/forwards hand cranks, but the company says a senior citizen in reasonable shape would be able to manage the cranking easily, and it can be operated in electric power mode only or any combination of human and electric power.

Greenwood said he began working on human powered cars in 1968 as a way to tackle both unhealthy exhaust fumes and the unhealthy and overweight bodies of many of the drivers. Early test devices showed that bicycle style mechanisms would not provide a full-body workout, so the design shifted to rowing-like movements. A range of vehicles has been built and tested since then, culminating in the Imagine PS.

The test vehicle is open, but an all-weather roof will be available for the commercially available cars. Also available will be a touch-screen display with GPS and biometric data logging, and computing/communications and sound systems. Safety is provided by a sophisticated structural system and controlled energy absorption areas.

The Imagine PS is expected to be available next year with a price tag of \$15,500, and pre-orders can be made with a \$50 100% refundable deposit. Production will begin when the company has received 800 pre-orders, and it already has over 100. Greenwood said the company is independent and "essentially profitable right now," and they have a 200-year business plan that includes taking human-powered cars to the developing world, along with other products such as a two-person mobile power station that folds into a suitcase.

More information: humancar.com/

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