

NEWS FLASH

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY...

Renault Zoe 'best EV yet'

WhatCar? believes the Renault Zoe "could be the best EV yet" and could "sell in significant numbers".

A number of headline figures will make the five-door supermini of much interest to the "average driver", writes John McIlroy, starting with a £13,650 entry price that makes it the most affordable way into an EV "that can carry several passengers".

Then there's its 130-mile range, "which is much better than figures published for other EVs".

To get an idea of what it's like to drive though, *WhatCar?* joined Renault engineers in the Arctic Circle, where a prototype version was undergoing some cold-weather training.

The Zoe's 90hp electric motor produces 162lb of instantly-available torque. "The initial pick-up is brisk as a result, and delivery thereafter is perfectly linear. It feels quicker than the performance figures suggest.

"The car is virtually silent under hard acceleration, too, and with impressive suppression of wind noise, refinement is excellent. The steering on the prototype was light at walking pace and got weightier with speed, which is a good sign."

Unable to comment on the final layout of the interior, McIlroy could vouch for the "good" driving position and visibility. He says the switches and instruments are "easy to understand" and describes the touch-screen system as "classy".



The car's practicality also wins praise, thanks to "lots of room" up front, "generous" leg room in the back and a "massive" 338-litre boot. The latter boon is down to the stowage of the lithium-ion battery pack beneath the floor of the passenger compartment, rather than in the luggage area.

So should you buy one? "The Zoe costs around half as much as a Nissan Leaf and earns you all the same financial benefits – zero fuel costs, zero congestion charge, zero road tax and zero company car tax."

McIlroy also prefers the battery leasing option: "Renault will simply give you a new battery when yours needs to be replaced or upgraded; Nissan buyers have to foot the bill themselves."

With a "compelling" financial case, EV buyers **WHATCAR?** will in no doubt be "excited" about the Zoe. June

Fleet will love new Mégane

The new Renault Mégane 1.5 dCi boasts an "unrivalled blend of high economy and low emissions", adding "fresh impetus" to Renault's charge to attract more fleet business, says *Fleet News*.

"The 1.5-litre dCi is likely to remain Renault's best-seller this year with an impressive transformation that has had a dramatic effect on fuel economy." A "theoretical" range of 1,000 miles (80mpg) is "sufficient for a drive from Manchester to Monaco".

Under the bonnet, Renault has a new motor boasting "15 per cent lower emissions than its predecessor, thanks to stop-start technology". The new model is "also quicker off the mark and pulls with added vigour". The new engine is an "impressive performer", and on top of that a 50 per cent cut in noise levels makes it "significantly quieter, as well as more refined".



Motorway cruising is "particularly relaxed", and the availability of maximum torque from just 1,750rpm "results in a wider power band that allows less gear changing.

"The Mégane features minor changes and appears little changed – but what lies under its bonnet should win considerable interest from fleets looking **FleetNews** to minimise operating costs". June

Student wins Twizy prize

A 19-year-old University of Huddersfield student has won Renault's 'Design a Twizy' competition with a "striking" rainbow livery, reports *TheGreenCarWebsite*.

Rachel Smith, who studies advertising and media relations, won the public vote ahead of nine other shortlisted entries to scoop the £9,000 grand prize.

Rachel was presented with her cheque by Renault ambassador and solo long-distance yachtswoman Dame Ellen MacArthur. More than 16,000

votes were cast during the 10-week competition. **TheGreenCarWebsite** 2 May

Renault Twizy first drive

WhatCar? says the "unique" Twizy is a "pretty impressive" vehicle, after it got behind the wheel for its first test drive with the Renault EV.

The mag highlights its "well-weighted controls, direct steering and supreme manoeuvrability".

And its "trump card" is its price tag. "It starts at just £6,690, plus the battery lease, which should come to around £49 per month for 6,000 miles per year and a 36-month contract. That means the Twizy could appeal to those considering a scooter for urban use, as a second or third vehicle."



WHATCAR? 8 May June

DRIVE THE CHANGE



Mégane summer

There are still a few optimists expecting a break in the clouds, so the *Independent* rounded up the best convertibles for summer, including the Renault Mégane Coupé-Cabriolet.

"It's hard to ignore this stylishly designed and well-equipped drop-top," says the paper. "The Mégane Coupé-Cabriolet is available with a wide range of petrol and diesel engines, and a clever glass roof that means you can make the most of the weather," whatever that may be. "Ride and handling lean towards comfort, rather than sportscar-like handling but it's still a lot of fun with the roof down. As with some other cabriolets,



rear-seat passengers are not exactly spoiled for space, although the boot is reasonably large and the seats up front are comfortable and supportive. Even entry-level models come with goodies such as sat-nav, automatic wipers and headlamps, and radios with MP3 compatibility and Bluetooth."

THE
INDEPENDENT
8 May

'Really brilliant' Twizy fun

The Renault Twizy is "really brilliant" according to Richard Hammond, who test drove the quadricycle for the *Daily Mirror*.

"It's as mad as a shopping bag full of frogs," says Hammond, but its combination of scooter layout and "conventional" car operation is something you won't believe until you see one "whirring down your local high street".

The Twizy's unique take on electric motoring solves a problem experienced by the likes of the Nissan Leaf. "The trouble with grown-up family electric cars is that people think they will be able to do things that their Focus or Astra can do, but the Twizy is obviously a bit of fun and no one will try driving one from Birmingham to London."

A vehicle you'll use "mainly in towns" the Twizy boasts "really skinny" tyres and weighs only 475kg including the batteries.

"Because the weight is carried very low to the ground the Twizy handles really well and feels very nippy,"



says Hammond. "You won't stop grinning when you drive one for the first time.

"The Twizy is not cheap, but if you live in London, where you won't have to pay the Congestion Charge and where its slim 1.4m body can slip between the traffic and where it will be easy to park, it makes a bit more sense." But Hammond reckons most people "will buy a Twizy because it's fun".

DAILY
MIRROR
11 May

Quirky Twizy challenges the norm

The Renault Twizy is the kind of car you could imagine being part of the home of the future, according to *Metro's* Richard Yarrow.

"A departure from core models, the wacky styling of the plug-in two-seater caused quite a sensation when unveiled in 2009. Almost three years later, the Twizy is in showrooms and driving it is as much fun as it looks." Despite being classed as a quadricycle rather than a car, the Twizy is still legal to drive on motorways. It's also exempt from the London Congestion Charge.

"At 2.34m long, it's smaller than a Smart ForTwo and offers similar acceleration to a 125cc scooter. Every Twizy has seat belts, two dashboard glove boxes and 31 litres of storage at the back."

The Twizy's "quirkiness" means no one knows just how popular it will be. Despite its unique looks, it still "handles well" on the road. "The ride is firm but it holds the line through fast corners – its a real hoot – while wind buffeting, even at top speed, is minimal."

Yarrow says the Twizy "puts a smile on your face and is also a real head turner". He adds: "Given you can fully charge it for £1 in less than four hours for a 50-mile range, what's not to like? You can even leave it out in the rain because it's completely waterproof and has a tiny drainage hole at the seat's lowest point."

Yarrow's verdict is to call the Twizy "a city car like no other", and one that sees Renault "living up to its reputation for challenging conventions".

METRO
9 May

Duster on its way

Renault's Romanian brand Dacia has brought its Duster to the UK for the first time, reports the *Sun*, ahead of its 28 June sale date. The paper says the SUV is "set to shine" and highlights its instant popularity, saying that "more than 5,500 UK buyers have signed up for its Duster e-newsletter".

It adds: "The base model two-wheel-drive Dusters should cost less than £10,000, with four-wheel-drive versions from less than £12,500 – considerably undercutting any other SUV apart from the Suzuki Jimny.

"Deliveries will start in January 2012."

SUN
9 May

Renault flaunts Kangoos

Richard Hammond ran his eye over Renault's stand at the Commercial Vehicle Show at Birmingham's NEC. "Renault's newest vehicle at the show is its Kangoo Maxi Crew Van Cab with its innovative multi-position bulkhead that allows the rear row seats and metal mesh screen to fold forward completely," he writes in the *Mirror*. "The Crew Cab Van is available in Sport trim with alloy wheels, air-con, body-coloured bumpers and TomTom satnav. "Another interesting vehicle on Renault's stand is a long wheelbase version of its Kangoo Z.E. electric van. As I've said loads of times, the one electric vehicle that makes sense is the small van."



DAILY
MIRROR
4 May

DRIVE THE CHANGE

