

Me and My Leaf

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When did you first seriously think about buying an electric car?

As soon as the solar panels went on the roof I began obsessing about electric cars. What was available? How long should I wait? How much? How far can they go now? How do you get your hands on one? (*Not much, not long, too much, not as far as I'd like, and, with some difficulty*). What finally pushed me to a decision were increased petrol costs.

What was it that got you excited about the car you chose?

I found out you could buy a near-new Nissan LEAF second hand for a relatively affordable price AND a longer-range LEAF became available (mine is 62kWh which gives a notional range of 380km). Plus NSW State Government rebates became available. To top this, I found out that this model has the technical capability to power your home (not approved in Australia yet but being trialled in the ACT) which would save on home battery installation. Added to that, Nissan recycles and re-purposes its EV batteries.

What's the best thing about being an EV driver?

Knowing that I am mostly using my own home-generated solar power to charge the car. The upfront price of an EV hurts—you typically need \$50,000 and up. I really had to justify the expense—so I worked out the annual savings and incentives, including fuel savings (petrol was about \$3,000 p.a. in my little Yaris), maintenance, stamp duty, and the second house battery I didn't need ...and decided it was a good investment when coupled with a solar system. And I love the way the car silently drives away.

What's the best, or funniest, or most memorable comment you've received from someone else?

Some people get a kick out of the fact that I say you have to treat the battery like a pet and should give it a name.... It needs daily care to keep it happy and properly charged.

Is there one negative you would like to mention?

EVs are heavy and powerful—my car hugs the ground and is all acceleration, and it is like owning a Ferrari compared to my Yaris. I have had to be very careful not to accidentally speed. That took me by surprise.

What would be your advice to someone thinking about an EV right now?

Go for it. If you are country folk or range is a worry, consider the EV as a second vehicle and daily running about (if you are a two-car household), or go for a hybrid. And if you own your roof, get a solar system to charge it up during the day.



Susan's LEAF starring Susan's dog, Truffles

