

Ripper Reva, it's a buzz



Kevin Naughton

THE Reva, the world's cheapest all-electric car has finally made its way out of a Customs warehouse in Melbourne to Adelaide where tests will decide when it can be sold commercially.

The subject of a dispute between its national distributor and federal Transport Department officials, the Indian-made car made its debut at Victoria Park racetrack this week.

And I was the first Australian journalist to take the \$15,000 car for a spin.

Yes, it's small and it can't do much over 60km/h but the Reva was a pleasant driving experience.

It took a while to get used to the idea the car doesn't idle and makes very little noise.

Sit inside the car and turn on the ignition and put the lever into forward or reverse and off you go - that was the very simple set of instructions from Solar

Shop owner Adrian Ferraretto, who has the national distribution rights for the car.

I applied a hesitant level of pressure on the accelerator and nothing seemed to happen, but then the car inched forward and slowly we were away.

The sound of the Reva reminded me of a VCR tape player rewinding, although less whiney.

The car very quickly scooted along and lack of distance on the half-open car racetrack meant it was hard to reach top speed.

This is really a car for the urban commuter and it feels like it would be very comfortable to drive in traffic.

Leg room was ample (little old me had to pull the seat forward to get close enough to the pedals) and there was plenty of headroom.

The turning circle is tiny at about 3½ metres, parking would be a doddle and the side, rear and front vision is more than ample.

What I really wanted to do was just keep driving it and get into

traffic and see how it would feel on the road.

I felt a little uncomfortable with the smallness of the body and pictured the possible impact damage in a head-on collision.

Then I reminded myself that I once owned a Mini and it was about the same size.

The car's handling makes it feel a little dodgy on a tight turn, but careful driving is the answer.

The Reva has a single windscreen wiper, a radio and all the basic options of a small car.

It looks like, feels like, and runs like a car.

Mr Ferraretto said it has a range of around 100km.

Best of all - the petrol costs are zero. Simply plug it into a normal power point for six hours and it fully charges up for the next outing.

The Reva is a sensible and reasonable buy. It will be available as soon as federal officials give it the all-clear.

JUMP IN MY CAR:

Reporter Kevin Naughton takes the all-electric Reva for a drive at the Victoria Park car racetrack. Its top speed is a touch over 69km/h.

Picture: Dylan Coker

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