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Miles Coda Battery Electric Car is Coming in 2010



by Bill Siuru

06/05/2009



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, which includes several billion dollars to fund the manufacture and sale of [electric](#) vehicles, is already bearing fruit with several EVs scheduled for sale within the next year. Besides major automakers like General Motors with its Volt extended range electric vehicle, Ford's Transit Connect, and the Dodge Circuit from Chrysler, several independent manufacturers are poised to begin delivery of electric vehicles in 2010.

One of these is the Coda from a new company led by entrepreneur Miles Rubin, whose [Miles Electric Vehicles](#) has already successfully marketed a line of low-speed commercial and neighborhood electric vehicles. The Coda is a four-door, five-passenger, fully-equipped mid-size sedan that will be built by Hafei Automotive in China. Indeed, the Coda is based on the Hafei Saibo sold in China. Porsche Engineering is involved in its conversion to battery power.



The Coda features a 33.8 kWh, 333 volt lithium iron phosphate battery pack supplied by joint venture partner Tianjin Lishen, one of the world's largest manufacturers of lithium-ion cells. It supplies batteries to Apple, Motorola, Samsung, and Vodafone, among others. Like the Tesla roadster, the Coda uses a large number of small cells, in this case 728 14.5 ampere-hour cells. While the car has a three-year/36,000 mile warranty, the battery system is guaranteed for eight years/100,000 miles.

A 100 kW (134 hp) UQM traction motor with up to 221 lbs-ft of torque drives the front wheels

via a single-speed Coda transaxle. The Coda has a range of between 90 to 120 miles, depending on driving conditions. The company says this is sufficient to satisfy 94 percent of daily driving requirements. The onboard Lear 3.3 kilowatt charger unit plugs into any 110 or 220 volt outlet. A full charge takes less than six hours at 220 volts. A complete charge would take significantly longer when plugged into a standard household 100 volt outlet. Charging the battery for a 40 mile commute can be completed in two hours, according to the company. Regenerative braking feeds electricity back to the batteries.



Top speed is limited to 80 mph to promote efficiency. Acceleration from 0-60 mph takes under 11 seconds. Based on existing crash test results, the company expects a four or five star NCAP crash rating. Safety equipment includes anti-lock brakes with electronic stability control and advanced airbags with an occupant detection system.

The Coda's standard equipment includes a telematics package with roadside assistance, turn-by-turn navigation, security system, aluminum wheels, and power windows, doors, and mirrors. Entertainment and convenience electronics are well looked after with a Bluetooth system and embedded microphone, AM/FM/XM radio with Sirius satellite capability, iPod dock, and MP3/USB connectivity.



Initially, the Coda will be sold only in California with 2,700 units planned for sale in 2010. The company says that production could reach 20,000 units in 2011 but is dependent on the production capacity of the battery plant. There are plans to establish production capacity in the U.S. in partnership with a U.S. battery company.

The Coda, billed as an ‘affordable’ highway capable [electric vehicle](#), shows just how hard it will be to market electric vehicles in sufficient numbers to justify the large federal investment of tax incentives. The Coda will list for \$45,000 with a possible a \$7,500 federal tax credit and additional state incentives, bringing the transaction cost to maybe \$35,000. For that kind of cash you can buy a 2009 BMW 328i.

Even more illustrative of potential marketing challenges ahead is that the Coda's specs are much like a Hyundai Elantra, which in comparison sells for a paltry \$14,500. Plus, keep in mind that the Coda is slower with a top speed of 80 mph and goes only 100 miles between fill-ups. Both vehicles offer similar specs for wheelbase, overall length, front legroom, and trunk capacity, although the Coda weighs in at a chunky 670 pounds more than the Elantra, no doubt because of the battery pack. Most enlightening, though, is that for the price of a Coda you can buy an Elantra and then drive it into the ground – free! – with the \$20,000 differential representing 125,000 miles at 25 mpg on \$4-per-gallon gasoline. That’s something potential buyers will have to consider in their purchase decision.

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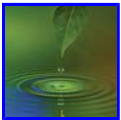
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