

Motoring

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Thinking of owning an eco car and reducing pollution? EcoVelocity festival is the event to develop a green conscience. By **David Williams**

It's as good a measure of how our national preoccupation with car pollution has changed over recent years, as any. Only five or six years ago most motor industry press releases were obsessed with proclaiming the latest technological breakthroughs – all seemingly aimed at producing faster, yet more powerful cars. MPG and the environment were still afterthoughts.

Today, however, the balance has changed utterly, with most manufacturers' releases carefully stressing their eco credentials instead, with news of weight-reduction or streamlining programmes, ever more ingenious exhaust filters, low rolling resistance tyres, auto stop-start systems, new plans for hybrids and so on.

Even those manufacturers who do occasionally rush out releases blatantly proclaiming their "fastest yet" tend to repent by ensuring they balance this out with news of a new environmental breakthrough, days later.

So it was reassuring to hear from the organisers of EcoVelocity, a "dynamic festival of green motoring packed with the very latest no-compromise, hi-tech and ultra-low carbon vehicles" that will take place at Battersea Power Station in September.

Instead of a dreary, earnest litany of MPG and 'peak oil' figures however, they lined up one of the best-known emissions-villains of them all, the red, 1983 Audi Quattro that starred in BBC TV's Ashes to Ashes, and posed it in front of the power station to highlight the cultural shift.

In the shadow of Gene Hunt's testosterone-charged car were a host of



ECO EVOLUTION IS AT FULL THROTTLE

Back to the future: the 1983 Quattro that starred in BBC's Ashes to Ashes was a real fuel guzzler – unlike modern Audis

ALL CHANGE – 1983 VS 2010 COMPARISONS

	1983	2010
Average car price	£4,983	£17,576
Cost of petrol per litre	£0.36.7	£1.33.7
Cost of diesel per litre	£0.38.9	£1.37.8
No of models under 110g/km CO2	0 (not recorded)	68 (36,649 cars)

shrinking violets that he would surely look down his nose at, including the Nissan Leaf, the Citroën C3 Airdream, the Volkswagen Polo Bluemotion, and the Toyota Prius Plug-In. Their combined emissions? Some 249 g/km – 11 short of the estimated 260 g/km produced by that mighty (admittedly mighty fun to drive) Audi.

The organisers had worked out that DCI Hunt would have to carry eight people on board on every journey just

to put it on a par, economically and environmentally, with all four modern cars, assuming they were transporting the UK average of two people.

As you guessed, EcoVelocity, which is co-owned by the Metro newspaper, will feature the very latest no-compromise, hi-tech and ultra-low carbon vehicles, including electric, hybrid and low CO₂-emitting cars, as well as providing test drives on a specially-constructed circuit in the shadow of

that wonderful but rather haunting power station.

Market leading brands attending the event include Kia, Fiat, Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Citroën, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Peugeot, Renault, SEAT, Toyota, Vauxhall, Volkswagen and Mia Electric.

The organisers remind us that it's not just CO₂ emissions that point up motoring differences between now and 1983. Petrol prices have increased by 143 per cent and, although the average engine size has increased from 1,552cc to 1,722cc, the introduction of cleaner technology such as the catalytic converter in 1993 has vastly increased the number of cars with low emissions.

"Today's event was a great way of launching the EcoVelocity show while remembering the importance of what we are about – educating people about

eco cars and reducing the carbon footprint," says Event founder and organiser Giles Brown.

Events scheduled for the show, from September 8 to 11, include the SEAT Young Drivers programme for eight- to 12-year-olds, the Honda My First Licence introduction to motorcycling for young children, the What Car? catwalk parade which will present the best eco cars in each category and the Green Supercar Paddock. Get On, promoting motorcycling, with free test rides, will also be there. Europe's fastest electric vehicle, BlueBird Electric, will also be present, for a dash of glamour.

Event partners include What Car?, TfL, The Mayor of London, Source London, Get On and Green Fleet. It runs from September 8-11. More at ecoveLOCITY.co.uk

HATCH SHOWS STYLE

CITROËN has been enjoying the success of its MINI-rivalling, three-door DS3, so adding a five-door version was a logical step. Enter the DS4, which went on sale this week.

According to the manufacturer, the fastback DS4 mixes coupe looks, mini-4x4 seating and compact hatchback practicality. The car is a bit short and upright to be a true coupé, although the rear doors and their windows are rakishly styled, with concealed door handles at their rear that stick out so much the unwary can clout their heads as they're opened.

The shape of the glass means their windows don't open – Citroën reckons the DS4's dual zone climate control fills the ventilation gap. The car gives Citroën a rival to models like the Alfa Romeo Giulietta and MINI Countryman.

Inside, the seating is a little higher than the average



ROAD TEST

CITROËN DS4

Top speed: 118-146mph 0-62 mph 12.4-7.9 secs; **Emissions:** 114-149g/km; **Price:** £18,150 - £23,950

hatchback and the DS4 is decently spacious, with room for five adults.

There's a boutique feel to the interiors, with one leather-lined version taking some of its inspiration from past Citroëns like the 1970s SM coupé.

We tried a pleasingly responsive THP200 petrol performance version (7.9 sec 0-62, 146mph) and a 2.0 litre, 163bhp diesel. Both cars rode, gripped and handled well, getting round corners with accuracy. Neither felt as distinctive or interesting to drive as they

looked, but for most DS4 buyers, that's unlikely to matter.

Martin Gurdon

Practical: the Citroën DS4

NEW HARLEY BIKE IS ON THE BUTTON

LUCKY Jenson Button. Harley-Davidson dealer Warrs threw a summer party at its Kings Road store this week and the F1 driver's new customised bike, the Kamome Sprinter, was soaking up the limelight.

So was his girlfriend, model Jessica Michibata, who turned up to admire the machine as Button was away with the McLaren F1 team.

Warr's customiser Charlie Stockwell, who designed and built the bike, was happy to pose alongside his creation – and Jessica. Her verdict on the machine? "So beautiful I could put it on my wall."

And if you ever wondered what Harley-Davidson stands for in the UK, in 2011, Button's new mount gives a clue. According to the great grandson of HD founder William A Davidson (who built his first bike in 1903) the marque is currently enjoying a resurgence among young buyers thanks to its hallmarks of "adventure", "lifestyle" and, this is key, "individuality".

Fifty-year-old American Bill Davidson, who was at the party, is



proud of the firm's tradition and history which he says customers worldwide like to tap into.

But he also says HD has been wooing younger riders with more affordable machines such as the Iron, the Forty Eight, and cool, stylish mid-priced bruisers such as the Fat Bob. "The wonderful thing about Harley-Davidson is customer loyalty; once people buy one they stay with Harley Davidson," says Bill, adding

that the retention rate is around 98 per cent.

The firm has also recognised that even if you're passionate about your Harley you might not want to dress like a mobile billboard, so it's venturing further into a more subtle extra range of clothing called Black Label, largely dispensing with the Wild West look. "I love the 'less is more' look too," confides Bill, who is sight-seeing in London this week. **DW**

Wheels of fortune: bike designer Charlie Stockwell with Jenson Button's girlfriend Jessica Michibata and custom-built Harley