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2013 Honda Fit EV

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A month ago, we saw the debut of the production Honda Fit EV at the L.A. auto show. We've now had the chance to get behind the wheel during Honda's pre-Tokyo-show product event at the Twin Ring Motegi race facility, albeit in a very limited fashion.

To review the specs of the Fit, its electric motor is derived from the one installed in Honda's FCX Clarity fuel-cell EV and pumps out 123 hp and 189 lb-ft of torque. The motor is fed by a 20-kWh, air-cooled lithium-ion battery pack made by Toshiba. The Fit has an estimated 132-mile¹ city MPGe and an estimated 82 combined mile range rating (adjusted). That's based on a consumption figure of 29 kWh per 100 miles; the Nissan Leaf uses slightly more energy at 34 kWh per 100 miles.

The battery pack is mounted underneath the car. It's a decision that resulted in a floor that's three inches higher than the conventional model's, but the Fit's cathedral ceiling meant that we didn't notice the reduced headroom. The trick Magic Seat, whereby the seat bottom can flip forward, also is lost in the switch to elec-

trification, although the rear seatbacks will still be able to fold flat and allow for various other configurations for increased utility.

Other interior modifications are more noticeable, such as the revised instrument cluster.

In the EV, the rightmost pod houses a large battery-capacity gauge and two gauges that indicate accessory draw: one for the HVAC system and one marked "others" for everything else. In the middle is a digital speedometer with a smaller digital range indicator underneath; below that is a familiar Honda multifunction display. The left pod shows instantaneous energy flow, whether you're using power or recharging. The Fit EV has three drive modes: Econ, Normal, and Sport. In Sport mode, the car's electric motor unleashes more of its fury, and the availability of that anger is shown in the instrument cluster as an extended band on the power meter.

As mentioned, our preview drive was short—only a few miles around the grounds of Twin Ring Motegi. Based on our limited exposure, though, the Fit EV shows potential. After all, the basic car has won multiple 10Best awards. The EV version mostly feels like the standard Fit,

although the heavy battery pack—Honda won't tell us exactly how much it weighs—imparts a bit of wobble to the handling. As in the Leaf, the steering lacks feel, but the Fit's setup has much better weight to it, which helps accuracy. We didn't reach the 90-mph top speed, but the motor continues to pull strongly even at higher velocities, which is where EVs such as the Leaf tend to fall off. Normal and Econ driving modes are essentially the same; the latter simply dulls accelerator response. Sport mode offers the most aggressive pedal setting, and the extra power is definitely noticeable.

As already announced, Fit EV production will be limited to 1100 cars available only in select U.S. markets. All will be leased at \$389² per month starting next summer for well-qualified lessees. Total due at lease signing \$389 plus tax and title. That's a shame, because this Fit is good enough to satisfy a larger audience.



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1 - 132/105/118 city/highway/combined miles per gallon of gasoline-equivalent (MPGe) rating; 82 mile combined (city/highway) driving range rating (adjusted). Ratings determined by EPA. Your MPGe and range will vary depending on driving conditions, how you drive and maintain your vehicle, battery age/condition, and other factors. For additional information about EPA ratings, visit <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/label/learn-more-electric-label.shtml>.

2 - Pricing edited since initial publication to reflect current pricing. Subject to limited availability through October 2014 in designated market regions on approved credit through American Honda Finance Corp. Closed end lease for 2013 Honda Fit EV for well-qualified lessees meeting specific use and operation requirements. Not all applicants will qualify. No purchase option at lease end. MSRP \$37,415 (includes destination). Excludes tax, title, license, registration, options and insurance. Zero capitalized cost reduction due from Lessee; electric vehicle federal tax credit applied as capitalized cost reduction. Lessee responsible for tax on capitalized cost reduction where applicable. Total monthly payments \$14,004.00. Lessee responsible for non-routine maintenance, excessive wear/tear and up to \$0.20/mi. over 12,000 mi./yr. Lease includes collision coverage, routine maintenance, roadside assistance and navigation system updates. Please see your authorized Fit EV dealer for complete details.