

Popular Mechanics

Top 10 Brand-New Electric Cars and Gadgets for Driving Green

December 3, 2008

Sory by Ben Stewart and Brittany Marquis

URL: http://www.popularmechanics.com/automotive/new_cars/4234814.html

Now in its 23rd year, the Electric Vehicle Symposium is the world's largest gathering for the electric drive industry, with over 100 exhibitors in Anaheim, Calif., this week. But it's not just about the big boys: We scoured the show floor and burnt out the test track for the innovations beyond OEM and Tesla-the green wheels that might not make history today, but probably can tomorrow.

1. Envision Solar LifePort

Electric vehicles need a place to recharge at home. Sure, you could plug into the grid, but why not make your own clean power from the sun? The LifePort does just that, while offering owners a DIY-assembled carport to boot. Manufactured with recycled steel and weighing no more than 100 pounds per main piece, this 22 x 22-ft. solar structure's setup is eminently doable-and customizable, since it still works when covered by stucco and other materials to match your roof, vinyl siding and the like.

At 200-watts each, the 24 solar panels generate a robust 4.8 kW of juice-enough to power most homes. (An optional system can produce 6.4 kW.) "This is a constantly growing market," Envision CEO Robert

Noble told PM this weekend. So, yeah: LifePort runs at \$45,199, but there's a \$2000 federal tax cred for generating your own solar power, plus \$10,000 if you



live in California. And when you consider that a solar garage can recharge your car, power much of your home's electrical needs and add future resale value (who won't want a panel-top carport come 2015?), it starts to make a lot of sense. The photo above was taken at this year's Burning Man festival with a prototype Tesla Roadster parked underneath.