

VOICE AUTOMOBILE



2018 Karma Revero – An Exotic Plug-In Hybrid

By Nauman Farooq

The word “Karma” refers to cause and effect – essentially, what goes around, comes around! That is very fitting for the vehicle we’re featuring this week, because, it is its second coming – question is, was it worthy of a second life?

Before we tackle that, let’s look at its history! At the 2008 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan (USA), Henrik Fisker unveiled a concept of a plug-in hybrid vehicle, that would be the first exotic automobile to enter this segment of the market. I had personally known Mr. Fisker for a few years by this point, so he took me behind the curtains, to show me his latest creation, a day before the rest of the world got to see it – that car was called the Fisker Karma.

My first reaction upon seeing it, was “Wow.” The world was just getting into the whole four-door coupe segment, and no one had done a vehicle that pulled off that design language well – until the Karma appeared. Its low, wide, with a very long wheelbase – all design features that were never seen on a four-door car. Couple that with new tech, such as solar panel roof that helps charge the car, and a tablet style infotainment system - the Karma was well ahead of the mainstream competition.



Many at that auto show, thought that the Fisker Karma promised too much, and that it would never go into production. They were wrong! In 2011, the Karma went into production, looking exactly like the concept version, and it even offered the tech that was promised. Upon launch, the vehicle received plenty of rave reviews, and those who could afford, bought into the world’s first plug-in hybrid luxury car.

But things, sadly, didn’t last. First, the battery supplier for Fisker Automotive (A123 Systems) filed for bankruptcy, and then Hurricane Sandy destroyed a large batch of brand new Karma’s that were sitting at a port in New

Jersey – the car’s were not covered for flood damage.

The loss of inventory, and a loss of their battery supplier, led to the inevitable, and Fisker Automotive closed its doors in November, 2013, after producing just over 2,000 vehicles.

It seemed like the Fisker Karma story was over, but like its name suggests, it made a comeback! Wanxiang Group, a Chinese automotive parts supplier, bought the design and intellectual rights to the vehicle, and set about to put it back in production. They turned Karma into the brand name -rather than the model name- and decided upon Revero to be the new model name.

Since Fisker Automotive was established using a lot of loans from the U.S. government, the new deal was to also set up a manufacturing facility in America – the original Fisker Karma was built in Norway.

Karma Automotive was born in October, 2015, and they went to work to bring the Karma back to life from their new manufacturing plant in Moreno Valley, California – the company headquarters are in Irvine, California.

Customer cars started rolling out in late 2016, with units arriving in Canada in late 2017. This year -2018- marks a decade since the first Fisker Karma concept was shown, so what has changed

in all this time?

From the looks of things, not much at all! The car still looks the same –which is no bad thing- and most of the features and technology remains the same, too. But, there have been updates! The infotainment system has been revised, and the car’s battery pack has slightly more capacity now, growing from 20.1 kWh of the Fisker Karma, to 20.8 kWh for the Karma Revero – this results in an increased all-electric driving range. The old, Fisker Karma was rated at 51 km of pure electric driving, the Karma Revero is rated at a much more usable 80 km of electric driving.

The other end of the powertrain remains the same as it always was, a turbocharged 2.0L, four-cylinder, Ecotec motor bought from General Motors. This engine works as a generator to propel the vehicle, when you’ve depleted the battery. Thanks to its various drive modes (Stealth, Sustain, and Sport), you can also save your battery power – after all, you can drain your battery much faster on the highway, so best to save EV propulsion for when you’re in the city, or in a traffic jam. In total, between its fuel tank (36 litres) and battery pack, the Revero has a driving range of about 480 km, which is not bad at all.

Your range will get affected, if you play with ‘Sport’ mode a lot, because this mode combines

Continued on page 11

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