



ELECTRIC MOTORCYCLES NEWS

Guy Salens

Photo: Bob Van Mol

Electric Motorcycles News (EMN) has been bringing news about electric motorbikes and scooters for 3 years. Why did you set up EV - Mobility Consulting (EV/MC) in January 2020?

‘As an entrepreneur, you have to see opportunities. These last 3 years, I have been in contact with a great amount of electric motorcycle manufacturers and start ups. We are all pioneers: they have the product(s), I create a forum to present their products. I respect them and they appreciate what I am doing with EMN.

I have invested 3 years in my community, the platform is stable, it’s time for business!’

What is your main task?

‘Unknown is unloved. You’ll be surprised how many people don’t know that these light electric vehicles exist. So, that’s our task!’

Is this your most important mission to date?

‘We have to stop with fuel! This is our moment to change. I want to bring people together - designers, engineers and investors. EMN wants to be a platform for an electric revolution...’

Where do you currently feel EVs play a useful or fun part?

‘Electric motorcycles and scooters are the ideal means of transport for commuting. They are also suitable



for logistic solutions in warehouses or plants and for food deliveries and couriers. A lot of off road and adventure parks are popping up. No sound, no smell, no grease, no fuel. The children who ride these small electric bikes are the customers of tomorrow.’

What about the environment?

‘The introduction of Euro 5 emission standards represents a pivotal moment for the European fuel engine market. Some motorcycle brands still have excess stock, so the traditional market will go on for some time.

From 2030, only electric vehicles will be allowed in different European cities. London has its Ultra Low Emission Zone already. This only allows motorcycles that meet at least the Euro 3 standard. Madrid city centre has become an APR (Área de Prioridad Residencial). It is no longer accessible, unless for residents or for those with a vignette 0 (electric, plug-in hybrid or hydrogen) or ECO (hybrid, CNG or LPG). This is happening throughout Europe.’

Electricity is primarily derived from coal. What are the trends?

‘Although usage has remained almost the same, there are noticeable shifts in the raw materials used to generate power. The share of electricity from coal fell from more than 27 billion kWh in 2018 to more than 17 billion kWh

last year, a decrease of roughly a third. The generation of electricity from wind, hydropower, sun, heat and biomass rose to almost 22 billion kWh. I hope this trend continues.'

What are the main advantages and disadvantages of EVs?

'Advantages:

- no exhaust systems: reduce of emissions and no noise
- maintenance = less frequent and less expensive
- tax credits are available
- high performance
- driving experience = fun
- very responsive with good torque
- electricity = cheaper than fuel

Disadvantages:

- price
- short range (for travellers)
- recharging can take a while
- charging stations are inconsistent (systems/cables)
- charging stations - mass availability'

How safe are EVs?

'Spontaneous fires are very rare. Every manual of any respected brand has their safety rules. Common sense is a must.'

Insurance?

'Not all insurers understand that a motorcycle can also run on electricity. A frequently asked question by an insurer is: 'How much CC does the engine have?' We are not there yet, but I am hopeful.'

Charging points?

'Charging points and charging stations are popping up everywhere. Unfortunately, it's not plug and ride. I have contact with many riders and sometimes it's not easy to charge. Wrong cable, wrong plug, no Mastercard or Visa, you need to register or have a specific credit card etc. This must be simplified!



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Prices?

'I must admit that electric motorcycles aren't cheap. Your budget needs to start around €10,000-30,000. It is still a very niche market. There is a growing second hand market but technology is moving fast. If more people switch to electric, prices will fall. I foresee more light electric motorcycles, well designed solutions with a cost between €10,000 -15000.'

Why are prices so high?

'There is lot of research involved. We are still in an early phase of development and transition. Technology is changing, as we speak. Batteries are getting more sophisticated by the day. We only need to get more light electric vehicles on the road. Prices will then go down, in a period of time.'

Do apps play an essential part?

'Every brand has its own app with their

own specific features and gadgets. With the Zero SR/S app you can also share ride data with others. The system records location, speed, incline, power, torque, battery charge condition and energy used / regenerated. You can replay every ride and choose to upload additional content. You also have the option to keep data anonymous.'

How does the new Zero SR/S compare to the naked SR/F?

'The SR/S is a sport tourer, whilst the SR/F is more a naked bike. I did a 100 km tour with the SR/F and I was 'blown away' by its performance. And the silence! You become one with your environment, even more than with traditional motorcycling. Zero Motorcycles has put themselves in a good market position for the future.'

How do you see the EV market today?

'There is a lot going on. Almost every

day we see new initiatives in different countries. From offroad to superbikes. Some are traditionally designed, some teams are thinking out of the box. I think there is a wide variety, also in price.'

...But who are the front runners?

'Cake from Sweden with their design models KALK (an offroad motorbike) and Osa (an electric light utility vehicle). The 'oldest' players Zero Motorcycles and Energica have launched their sport-tourers, superbikes and naked bikes. Energica is very involved in the electric racing motorsport. Harley Davidson is on the road now with the LiveWire. Verge Motorcycles is going to be a game changer. Check EMN please!'

Test driving. Describe the thrills and spills!

'It's always exciting! Riding the

Johammer to Paris (Electric Night Ride 3) was one of my best rides. The first 15 minutes were terrible. First I needed to get used to the steering responses with these two separate handlebar halves. In the beginning, it's a bit wobbly driving but once you get used to it, it's real fun. And when your speed goes up, it feels natural. And secondly, everybody is staring at you. When you stop, people want to take photos and ask questions.'

How do you relax?

'At my home, we have a saying: 'You have to earn your food' ... My wife and I like to ride offroad bicycles (not electric ones) or take long walks in the woods. It's very relaxing to cook and enjoy dinner together with Spanish wine, of course, so you can 'taste' the sun...'

