

# **Review: the Tesla Model 3 Long Range Spaceship has Landed!**

It's a long time ago that I have been looking forward to a new car: the Tesla Model 3 as a replacement of a Mitsubishi Outlander Plugin Hybrid Electrical Vehicle (PHEV). When I got the PHEV, some three years ago, I was quite impressed about the ease of use of the electrical aspects. Although a hybrid, a half-way EV, it helped to get used to charging cables and poles, and the automatic gear. And I found out that even with only a battery range of around 50KM on a full charge, I could effectively drive around 50% of my kilometers electrically.

## **Picking up a Tesla at the factory**

Setting it apart from other brands, Tesla controls the communication with its future drivers. It sends out a series of messages about when to expect delivery, like a logistic or ecommerce company would do. Last Thursday afternoon, I was expected at the Tesla factory in Tilburg, The Netherlands. Although slightly inconvenient – it's a 1.5 hours drive whereas normally I can pickup a lease car at a dealer in my hometown or it is delivered to the doorstep – I was not unhappy to make this small sacrifice. It's definitely the Apple factor, the coolness of the Tesla brand, at play here. For me it's two things: ideologically, I think FEVs are the future and a necessary element in a sustainable economy, and as a tech freak, I love the innovative pc-ishness of the Teslas.

The pickup at the factory was rather fast, with quite some other new Tesla adepts queueing as well. Without instruction, I could figure the car out quickly. 80% is controlled via the

screen, which is quite convenient. It's like the settings of an iPhone or PC. I had to search a bit for the gear, which was a lever at the steering wheel. And, I had to look up in YouTube where I can find the USB ports, and in YouTube I also accidentally learned that the alarm buttons are above the windshield.

## First Drive!

I didn't do a test drive, so it was my first drive with the Tesla Model 3. I loved it instantly. It felt like my old MG regarding the grip on the road, the machismo, the acceleration. It was a bit like my PHEV regarding the electrical qualities: the computer controlled driving. And, it's a bit like my iPhone, as I was during an hour busy with the settings: setting a +3KM/hr limit for a speed alarm, changing the position of the steering wheel, adjusting the mirrors, playing with the seat heater and airco, using the Google Maps-like navigation, pairing my phone, calling, etc. etc. It was fun. It felt very cool.

Finding the lever for the gear was the one thing that took me the longest. I was first pushing the D icon on the screen, which was not responsive. Only then I started to look for other places and found finally the handle at the wheel.

## Charging

As I was used to charging my PHEV before, not much has changed. Except that Tesla has its own charging key, which is quite natural. I don't have to get the lease card from my wallet anymore, but just take the keyholder out of my pocket. Based on a few charges, I learned that usually the Model 3 charges up to 80-90%, based on the default setting (80%). Most of my trips are within The Netherlands, and often something like up to 40km. Therefore, the 80% setting is OK for me as it gives me an action radius of around 450km. Once in a few days,

I need to recharge the car at night, and I don't expect to need a fast charge station alongside the highway often.

The thing that took me some time to figure out the first time is that I have to unlock the charging cable via the screen inside the car or the app that I installed later on.

Charging at Fastned is again a puzzle: which cable to use? The Tesla option doesn't work and gave a software error. After Googling, I found out that the Model 3 didn't need the Tesla connector of Fastned. What a confusion of standards!

## **Self-drive vs cruise control**

I didn't purchase the auto-pilot option as it's not legally allowed yet in The Netherlands, unless you still have both hands on the wheel. I also have doubts if the auto-pilot option is 100% already.

Nevertheless, I observed that the cruise control and safety options have a level of smartness which is beyond what I have seen before. Traffic jam driving is normally quite tiring. Now, Tesla's cruise control can handle the distance between cars quite well and accelerating and decelerating are quite appropriate. Only now and then it's a bit too abrupt. And it responds too quickly to other cars that are only slightly crossing the line between lanes or shadows of bridges and trees. I would assume that also the auto-pilot feature would have the same trouble. In a 'normal' setting, the anti-collision alarm rings also too fast, and corrects the car too quickly, given the crowded Dutch highways.

## **Recommendation**

Do I recommend the Tesla Model 3 long range to others? Yes, I do. It's a fabulous state-of-the-art car. A spaceship on wheels. A feel good experience as it's zero emission. The many

settings give a level of personalization that I never experienced with a car before. I only know this from the world of mobiles and PCs.

It's a great new tech toy and green experience. One that I wouldn't want to miss! Within our company, we now only order FEVs, and the Tesla Model 3 is within the budget of any eligible colleague.