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The Electric Vehicle Revolution

The Past, Present, and Future of EVs
by Kevin A. Wilson

IN THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE REVOLUTION, automotive journalist Kevin Wilson provides a thorough, engaging overview of where EV technology is today, how it got there, and where it's going.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, EVs have gone from wonky who-cares vehicles like GM's EV1 and early Teslas to every manufacturer's must-have future.

Electric propulsion preceded fossil-fuel cars by decades and even vied for prominence in the early twentieth century auto industry against both steam power and internal combustion engines. From Electrobat (an early New York taxi fleet) through Columbia—which had built 1,000 electric cars before either Henry Ford or Ransom Olds had built a single gasoline car—viable business start-ups in the early auto age were as competitive and innovative as those in early twenty-first century Silicon Valley.

But it was not to be for electric cars in the early days of the 1900s, as the auto industry evolved to favor gasoline cars, thanks in part to the influence of the oil industry and the build-out of infrastructure to supply fuel across the country.

Gas-powered cars may have won the day, but post-WWII experiments with electric cars continued both within the established auto industry and from outside firms and visionaries, including cars developed by General Electric, Sears, and the Henney Kilowatt, alongside Ford and GM experimentals.

Rapidly evolving electronic technology beginning in the 1960s, along with growing concerns about emissions and pollution, set the stage for renewed interest in electric cars. Improved batteries for cellphones/laptops, electronic controls, computing, and beyond provided the impetus for a wave of more sophisticated and feasible electric vehicles, including GM's EV1 and the first Teslas.

Elon Musk's Tesla Motors proves the auto industry disruptor and sets the stage for responses by the mainstream auto industry, including Nissan's Leaf, Chevrolet's Bolt, and a host of high-end EVs from company's like Audi, Jaguar, and the like. Rival start-ups step in as well and government incentives, subsidies, and regulatory demands all drive unprecedented development.

Today, the rush to electrify has nations and companies competing to see who can declare the earliest end to internal combustion engines, but this radical transition won't be as easy as throwing a switch. *The Electric Vehicle Revolution* thoroughly explores the challenges of infrastructure, battery and vehicle tech, and the cost to consumers, as well as the long phase-in as EVs are set to replace existing gas cars over decades.

Whether you embrace EVs or have gasoline in your veins, *The Electric Vehicle Revolution* provides a fascinating, engaging, and stunningly illustrated overview of where the car world is today and where it's headed for the future.

KEVIN A. WILSON has been writing about cars, the industry, its history, and motorsports since 1986, initially for *AutoWeek* magazine, where he served in several editorial roles through 2009. As a freelancer through 2016, his work appeared in *Popular Mechanics*, *Road & Track*, *Automobile*, and *Car and Driver*, among others. He was on the *Car and Driver* editorial staff from 2016 to 2019. Long a member of the Society of Automotive Historians, Kevin has been chief judge of the Ypsilanti Orphan Car Show for more than 15 years. He lives in Waterford, Michigan.

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