Electrified classic Mini, developed by Fellten – Brief First Impressions

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Kim with the electric Mini.

Kim Henson travels in a classic Mini converted to fully electric

operation…

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Recently, at a multi-vehicle driving event in Somerset, I had the chance to ride as passenger in a classic Mini modified to fully electric drive using a propulsion kit developed by Fellten of Bristol.

Jerome Andre, who was at the Mini's wheel for my brief experience of the car, explained that his firm supplies the complete kit for professional installation, with a growing network of installers at home and abroad becoming involved.

The kit for the classic Mini (1984 to 1996, right-hand drive versions) comprises all the components/assemblies required, ready to install in the vehicle. He stressed that, deliberately, there is no cutting/modification required to the body shell, so that if ever desired the car could be returned to its original internal combustion engine form.

At the heart of the conversion is a brand new British Motor Heritage front sub-frame, already set up complete with all electrical drivetrain components fitted. Pre-assembled battery packs (front and rear) are also supplied ready to install, with all required safety systems and high voltage wiring pre-made.

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Installation is said to take around eight hours, and is a case of removing all the petrol-powered drivetrain units, plus exhaust system etc, and installing the new electrical set-up.



The finished vehicle deliberately has the same weight and weight distribution as the original car, and has a larger boot capacity.

A traditional-style three gauge instrument panel is part of the kit…



Highlights of the specification include a 19 kWh high voltage battery, a 72kW Zonic motor (100 bhp; 175 Nm or 129 lb.ft torque), single speed transmission and regenerative braking.

The claimed acceleration time from rest to 60 mph is 11 seconds in ‘City’ mode; 8 seconds in ‘Sport’ mode, and the mileage range on a full charge is said to be up to 110 miles. Cleverly, charging is effected via a socket in what used to be the petrol filler pipe!



Quick off the mark

I am used to travelling in petrol-powered Minis, in standard form and with various performance modifications, and with my experience of these cars in mind, it was evident that the Fellten converted car was a very sprightly machine. It was quick off the mark and cruised easily at speed. It was also quiet in operation, although a subdued ‘transmission noise’, very similar to that of the petrol versions, was evident.

The ride, handling and steering aspects of this electric Mini felt near-identical to those of the orignal car too.

VERDICT

An impressive performer, with electric propulsion but deliberately retaining many of the original Mini's endearing characteristics.

How much would one cost? Well Jerome advised that a typical conversion cost from a professional installer would be between £50,000 and £60,000, approximately. Certainly not cheap, but a fascinating vehicle.

Fellten also provide bolt-in kits for other classics, including the Porsche 911 (964) and Land Rover Defender models. Their kits are designed, developed and built in the UK.

Important note: About their kits for the Mini, Fellten say:

"Our Mini Kit is designed for 1984-1996 right-hand drive models but can also be adapted for earlier Minis with non-hydrolastic suspension (Mk1-Mk3). To use this kit in a left-hand drive vehicle, you will need to acquire a right-hand drive brake servo and a brake conversion kit for the pedal box.

Our kit is exclusively designed for Saloon Minis. Currently, we do not offer solutions for the Van, Estate, Pickup, Moke, Riley, or Wolseley variants."

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