Kia charges ahead… News and reviews of current models, and a glimpse into future plans…

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Kia looks ahead…

…reports Robin Roberts, WheelsWithinWales.

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Less than ten years ago, Kia began development of its Soul electric car and now it's one of the world's leading makers of low carbon models, but is still keeping the internal combustion engine option open.

As it prepares to roll out the forthcoming Niro range across Europe including hybrids and battery only models as its latest offerings in a truly massive range, Kia is mindful that some parts of the world don't have an electric charging infrastructure.

So Kia needs to continue building and selling petrol engined models to maintain its place in the global car industry, as Kia Motors UK head of public relations Daniel Sayles explained.

"Kia has an extensive programme of electrification over the next few years," he said.

"We will be introducing 14 new electric models by 2027 including the EV9 large SUV with seven seats and then we intend to roll out more in a programme which will see the newcomers with prefix numbers 1-9. We already have the EV6 sports model which is the basis for the EV9 and they are being built on Kia's Electric Global Modular Platform."

Like other car makers, Kia has developed a 'standard' platform which has a few fixed points but can be fitted to a car of any length or width and share a common powertrain layout but of differing outputs.

So the next generation Xceed and its family will be using the EGMP base and it can be modified for smaller models over coming years.

Currently, the EV platform models are assembled in Korea but inside three years they will be made in Slovakia as well for the European market.

Mr Sayles added that they are very excited about the future of EVs with more than 2,500 rapid chargers (50kW+) now available via Kia Charge, as of April.

Kia Charge – an exclusive service designed to simplify public EV charging – now gives Kia owners access to more DC connectors in the UK than almost any other brand.

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DC charging is crucial to allowing electric vehicle owners to recharge quickly while en route to a destination. Since April 2021, Kia Charge has seen its number of available DC rapid chargers grow by 33 per cent in the UK, from 1,951 connectors to 2,591 – more than any single ‘super charger’ network in the UK.

These include DC chargers of 50kW or more, as well as high-power charging stations that can recharge at up to 350kW.

But that’s not the final throw of the dice for petrol engines in Kia’s global ranges.

“We know that Europe will still need petrol engined models because of infrastructure shortcomings until 2034 and we will make what our customers want to buy and demand is still there.”

At the same time, Kia is looking at future forms of batteries to ensure they are the greenest, most efficient and have the longest ranges without costing enormous sums of money.

The present e-Niro is currently the best selling electric car in the UK and that’s a great platform from which to build sales of the new generation model coming this July which could see half of them being pure battery vehicles.



Kia’s e-Niro 64 kWh 4

Kia success has been down to its comparatively young range of models, latest technology and strength of its dealership network which have combined to earn it the Car Brand of the Year Which? Award 2022.

All New Niro comes this summer as a hybrid, PHEV and BEV priced from £27,745, £32,775 and £34,995 respectively in the familiar 2,3 or 4 grades with automatic transmission only.

Soul EV Maxx

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As it all started with the Soul EV nearly two decades ago we wanted to see what the latest

solo version was like…

Kia Soul EV 64 kWh Maxx produces 201 bhp with its automatic powertrain, from £34,995.

On a nearly full-charge it was indicating about 244 miles range, and depending which of three driving modes – economical, normal or dynamic – were selected the distance and performance would vary.

It is a very practical car inside and out with a large cabin, reasonable boot and very comfortable interior now brimming with the latest gadgets, screens and controls.

The price is not cheap but it doesn’t look cheap either and has a distinctive style with extensive piano-black finishes to set it off.

The seats were very comfortable and all the controls were responsive to hand or foot, with good roadholding, a smooth ride and respectable performance on country roads where it easily kept up with traffic flow.

Kia increased the power two years ago when it also made some cosmetic and equipment changes over the first generation which had been launched with a 27 kWh battery and then raised to 30 kWh as the market took off.

Sorento 1.6 T GDi PHEV 4 AWD



All this development and experience has been put to good use at the other end of their UK range of SUVs in the Sorento 1.6 T GDi PHEV 4 AWD costing £55,355 as tested.

This has a petrol and electric motor package packing 261 bhp with 35 miles pure ev range producing just 38 g/km emissions and using combined petrol and electric you might see a typical 176.6 mpg with over 800 miles range.

Sorento really is the height of Kia luxury and ease of driving, rivaling the best from more expensive British and German prestige brands.

It was very quiet, extremely comfortable, and capable of covering ground quickly and in a very composed manner. With eight seats available it was also very roomy as a family car for

long weekends and holidays.



So you can see Kia has come a long way since it arrived in the UK in 1991 and has lived up to its motto of “Movement that inspires”, both what it’s doing for itself and the buyers it serves.

Note: If you would like to read additional brief road test/impressions reports by Kim from Wheels-Alive on five current Kia models, please go to: kias-galore-briefly-test-driven.