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## Mazda 6e – First Impressions

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## Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) samples the latest Mazda...

Despite the drive towards a 'greener' car market, the choice of what you can buy in Britain has been largely limited to SUVs and smaller cars, but that's changing with the arrival of the Mazda6e medium-sized saloon.

The result of a joint venture with China's Changan company which provided the powertrain and platform, the UK specific Mazda6e has a new 78 kWh single battery specification - priced at £38,995 for the Takumi and £39,995 for Takumi Plus.

With stylish premium saloon proportions combined with hatchback functionality, the Mazda6e reinvents the Mazda6 for the electric age after its introduction in 2002 as the 626 before it went into three generations and the hands of 170,000 drivers until going off sale in



2023.

It has been restyled using Mazda's Kodo Soul principles with flowing eye-catching lines from any angle and underneath is engineered for European roads with particular suspension, steering and brakes specified.

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As an additional benefit all retail and fleet customers will also be eligible for a £500 public charging credit when opening an account via the Mazda Public Charging App. This benefit provides customers with a £500 charging credit that's redeemable via the app across participating public charging networks. The earlier models were popular with retail and fleet customers and the new Mazda6e is expected to have the same appeal.

The new 78 kWh battery delivers a combined WLTP range of 348 miles, while 10 to 80 per cent charging on a 195 kW DC charger takes just 24 minutes. With a 258 PS power output the rear-wheel drive Mazda6e will reach 62 mph in 7.9 seconds and with 290 Nm (214 lb.ft) of torque delivers a 109 mph maximum.

The low roofline and short-deck coupé silhouette offer a sporty and stylish look while at the same time keeping the functionality of a five-door hatchback.

Standout design details include frameless doors and a bold lighting signature - all of which create a seamless and modern appearance. At the front the new glowing signature wing illuminates round the grille to give a unique face to the Mazda6e. It features dynamic illumination which makes the wings appear to flutter when the car is charging, while the lighting also indicates charge status.

Inside, the floating centre console and instrument panel enhance this sense of lightness. Premium materials feature throughout both trim levels: Takumi and Takumi Plus. Takumi models will feature black or stone Maztex artificial leather, while Takumi Plus gets premium tan Nappa leather with Artificial Suede Cloth woven fabric seat trim.



The driver-focused cockpit features a 14.6-inch touchscreen and a 10.2-inch instrument set, complemented by an augmented reality head-up display. Blending craftsmanship, thoughtful design and cutting-edge technology the Mazda6e is perfect for the age of electrification.

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A 336 litre (11.87 cu.ft) boot, excellent passenger space and 72 litre (2.54 cu.ft) front-boot ensure strong practicality.

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Jeremy Thomson, Managing Director, Mazda Motors UK, said, “The Mazda6e is the car our dealers have been waiting for, with a nod to the popularity of the Mazda6 it’s a real statement of intent for the future and illustrates how Mazda can bring great design, technology and style to battery electric vehicles. With the suspension, power steering and braking carefully calibrated by the team at Mazda Research Europe in Frankfurt to match UK preferences, I’m sure the Mazda6e will be an electric car that delivers the engaging driver experience.

With a UK price that sees both models under £40,000, this value proposition is even more tempting when you see the huge tally of equipment and technology fitted as standard across both the Takumi and Takumi Plus. The Mazda6e is also a car that positions Mazda strongly in the expanding D segment BEV fleet market, where the car’s blend of style, value, practicality and desirability will I’m sure win over business users”.

Mazda has worked with specialists in the field, secured a 44D insurance grouping and predicts the newcomer will retain 58.3% of its list price after three years and 30,000 miles, and that puts it ahead of main German rivals of comparable price when new.

Later this year it will be joined by the all electric SUV Mazda CX6e and account for about half of their BEV registrations.



## First Drive:

Mazda UK chose to demonstrate the new newcomer's ride and handling credentials over the twisting and undulating roads of North Wales and it was a very fitting backdrop to the Kodo Soul design.

Some of the UK's most challenging and yet rewarding and enjoyable roads were perfect for the smooth, responsive Mazda6e.

It had a compliant ride, well weighted accurate steering, strong brakes and packed a rapid punch if needed when overtaking.

Inside it was roomy, well equipped and had large instruments but like so many modern BEVs it needs a lot of familiarisation to quickly and safely use the features in the comprehensive central touchscreen.

In such a sophisticated car, I felt more could have been done to reduce or insulate the cabin from the suspension and road rumbles as it shrugged off the bumps and potholes and delivered an overall smooth experience.

## Verdict

It's going to be a keen competitor in the BEV sector as a quality saloon, lacking in little yet delivering a lot.