MG plugs in to electric car interest

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TWO NEW PLUG-INS FROM MG

By Chris Adamson.

(Photos from MG Motor).

October is going to be a busy month for MG, Britain’s fastest growing car brand, as it prepares to launch two new models; the MG5 EV and the HS Plug-in SUV.

The new additions will give the latest MG line-up a total of three plug-in electric vehicles helping it to cement its position as the only manufacturer to increase its UK sales volumes in 2020 (at the end of August MG registrations were up 32 per cent year-on-year in a market that was nearly 40 per cent down) and develop into the fourth best-selling electric car company in Britain.

By the end of next year MG (which now has 118 dealerships nationwide) expects plug-in cars to account for over 50 per cent of its UK sales.

MG5 EV



First into the showrooms is the new MG5 EV which stands-out in the fast growing EV sector by being a conventional estate car rather than a Sports Utility that everyone else (including themselves) is churning out by the day.

While others have chosen the SUV route to accommodate battery packs and additional motors within the footprint of a relatively small car, the MG5 has been designed to offer, according to MG, superior aerodynamic properties and better handling.

Judging if MG has achieved this will have to wait until more people have got behind the wheel. Certainly the very average driving characteristics of the most recent crop of MGs has been a common complaint among fellow motoring journalists and MG enthusiasts

Its target audience is high mileage fleet drivers and those, again according to MG, who

value driving efficiency, internal space and driving dynamics.




MG5
SW
EV



Over 63,000 examples of the MG5 have been sold in other markets worldwide since it was first launched in 2018 which isn't a huge number for a global brand.

Thanks to its stretched body style, the MG5 sits lower than most electric vehicles of similar size and capacity, with the 52.2 kWh water-cooled battery pack integrated into the car's chassis, giving it a low centre of gravity.

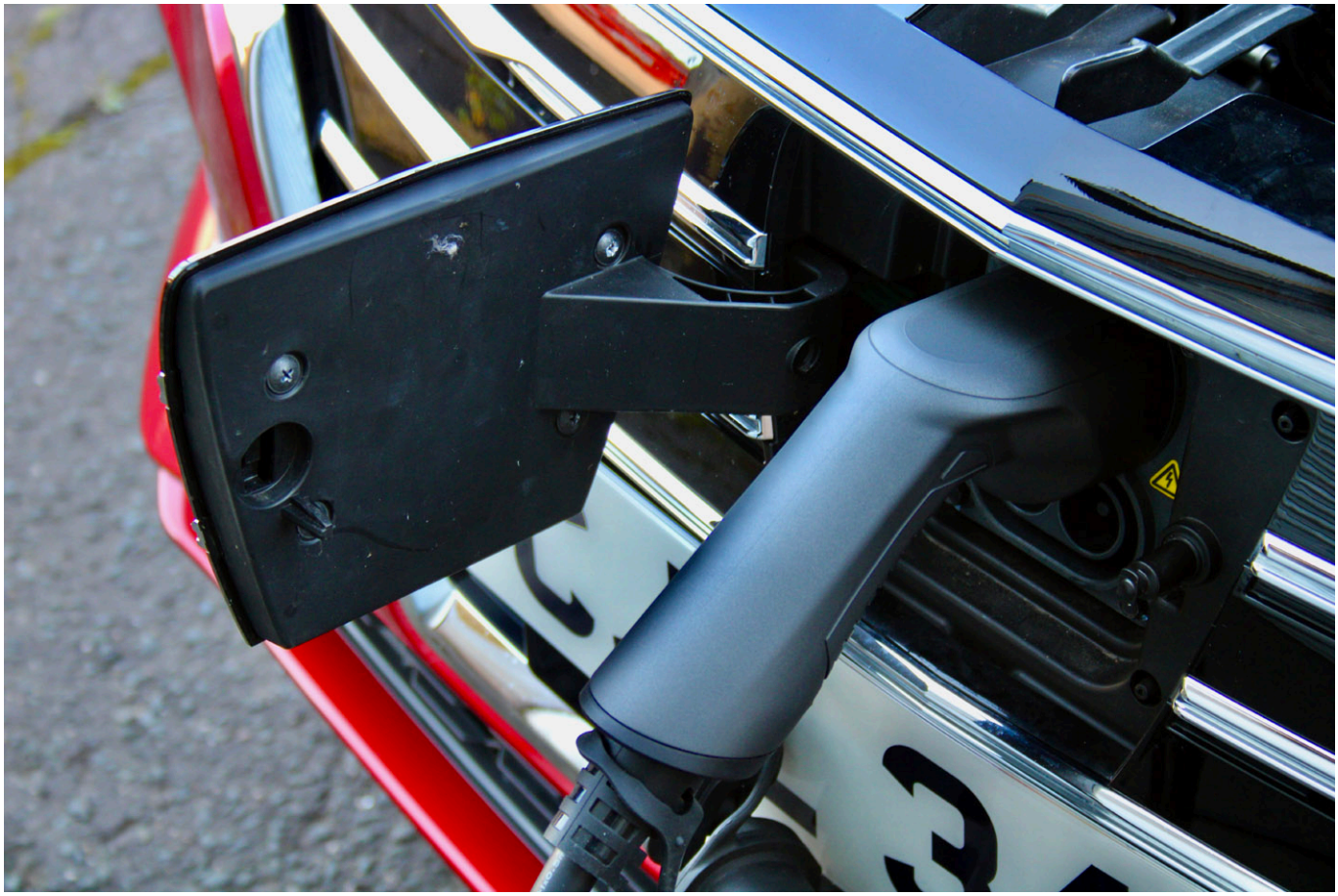
It was designed from the outset to appeal to buyers in global markets, so it sports a classical silhouette – a smart, low-roofed tourer with a distinctive kick towards the rear of its swage line.

Sadly, because there is no requirement for huge amounts of engine cooling, the MG5 is

missing a distinctive large grille and the headlights give it a pinched expression, so from virtually every angle it is a rather anonymous.

Power comes from a 115 kW electric motor, which has an output equivalent to 156 PS. The motor sends power to the front wheels, which it is promised will give the car very similar handling characteristics to those of a conventional large C-segment estate car.

It has a claimed driving range of 214 miles on the WLTP cycle which is significantly better than the MG ZS (rising to 276 miles for city use) and can be charged from zero to 80 per cent charge in 50 minutes using a CCS connection while a full charge at home using Type 2 fast charging can be attained in around eight and a half hours.



MG is hoping that one of the attractions for potential purchasers will be the versatile boot

which is accessed through a wide tailgate opening. With the rear seats up and load cover in place there are 464 litres (16.39 cu.ft) of boot space (about average), or with the load cover retracted that extends to 578 litres (20.41 cu.ft) with the rear seats still in place.

Drop the 60:40 folding seat back and the load capacity increases to 1,456 litres (51.42 cu.ft).





Rear seat passengers are promised ample head room and legroom, even when seated behind a tall driver. Those in the front are offered six-way adjustable driver's and four-way adjustable passenger seats, with cloth upholstery on the Excite and leather-style upholstery on the Exclusive. The Exclusive also gets heated front seats and driver's lumbar support.

A total of five colours are available including two new choices – Piccadilly Blue and Westminster Silver. The others are tri-coat Dynamic Red, Black Pearl or Arctic White.

Centre piece of the interior (which shares a lot in common with the rest of the MG range) is an eight-inch colour touchscreen with smartphone mirroring capability, compatible with both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.



On the gadget side, it gets a six-speaker 3D audio system, a DAB radio, 4 USB ports, electric windows all-round, air conditioning, regenerative braking, cruise control with speed limiter, an auto-hold electric parking brake, rain-sensing wipers and push-button starter as standard. In addition, MG5 EV also features MG's rotary gear selector, which debuted on the brand's MG ZS EV last year.

Safety systems include front, side and curtain airbags, electronic brake assist, ABS with EBD, twin ISOFIX points in the rear, a tyre pressure monitoring system, Hill Start Assist and seatbelt warnings for front and rear passengers.

The MG5 EV range is on sale in two versions (one fewer than most MGs), with prices starting at £24,495 for the entry level Excite after the government plug-in car grant is taken

into account.

Excite comes with 16-inch ‘Meteor’ alloys, remote entry with push-button start, air conditioning, four electric windows, electrically adjustable mirrors, smartphone compatibility, an eight-inch colour touchscreen and seven-inch driver information display, cruise control, a leather steering wheel, rotary gear selector, speed-sensing locking, three driving modes, rear parking sensors and follow-me-home headlights.

The Exclusive version (priced from £26,995) adds leather-style upholstery with heated front seats with six-way electric adjustment for the driver, one-shot electric rear windows, silver roof rails, electrically adjustable folding heated mirrors, smart keyless entry with push-button start, an automatically dimming rear view mirror, rain-sensing wipers and satellite navigation.





MG HS



MG HS

Joining the MG5 is the MG HS Plug-in SUV which becomes MG's first model to feature a Plug-in Hybrid drivetrain (seen by many experts as the preferred propulsion combination of the moment), combining the well tried and tested Longbridge designed and developed 1.5 litre turbocharged petrol engine with a 90 KW electric motor.



This offers an EV-only range of 32 miles with zero tailpipe emissions while overall the official combined CO2 emissions figure is just 43 g/km which should mean it will be cost effective to run.

According to MG, using a Type 2 fast charger, the MG HS Plug-in can be charged from zero to 100 per cent in three hours.

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MG HS Plug-in also introduces a new 10-speed transmission which works with both the petrol and electric motors. Power from the petrol engine is channelled through a six-speed automatic gearbox, while the electric motor transfers power through a four-speed electronic

drive unit.

Together the electric and petrol motors develop a combined power output of 258 PS (compared to 162 PS for the standard petrol model) giving it a performance advantage over the combustion engine only HS. MG says it will accelerate from zero to 60 mph in 6.9 seconds.

Externally the Plug-in version looks almost identical to its petrol only stablemate which itself is a relative newcomer only being introduced to the UK 12 months ago as a larger alternative to the ZS, which remains MG's overall best-selling model.

At the front, the latest iteration of MG's stellar field grille perfectly frames the largest MG logo yet. At the rear, twin tailpipes and an aluminium lower bumper add a classy and sporty finish. Exclusive versions also get LED headlights, with eye-catching LED sequential indicators front and rear.

Inside there are better soft-touch materials than previously appeared on MG models plus piano key buttons, turbine design air vents and soft-touch door cards. Rear seat passengers get reclining seats, twin air vents, two USBs and a fold-out arm rest, which opens to reveal storage space and twin cup holders.

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Boot capacity is a big selling point on the HS Plug-in. The tailgate (powered on the Exclusive version) opens up 448 litres (15.82 cu.ft) of luggage space. Folding the rear seats flat extends the total capacity to 1,375 litres (48.56 cu.ft) – this is better than many EVs where storage is compromised by battery packs.

There's also a dual height boot floor virtually eliminating any lip when loading items and giving a flat load space over the entry sill when needed.

One of the key promotional features of MG HS Plug-in is its high-tech driver assistance suite

called MG Pilot, which is carried-over from the 5-star Euro NCAP rated petrol version and comes as standard.

MG Pilot includes Active Emergency Braking. At speeds below 27 mph, the car will automatically deploy the vehicle's brakes to avoid a collision with a car, bicycle or pedestrian. At speeds above 27 mph, the vehicle will brake automatically to reduce the likelihood or mitigate the severity of any impact.

Using a combination of forward-facing radar and camera technology Lane Keep Assist will automatically intervene if it detects the car leaving lane or leaving the carriageway, providing steering input to ensure the vehicle remains on the road. Blind Spot Detection provides a visual warning to the driver of any nearby vehicles in adjoining lanes.

Another feature is MG Pilot's Adaptive Cruise Control that automatically adjusts the car's speed to maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead.

MG Pilot also includes Traffic Jam Assist, which enables the car to automatically follow the car in front at speeds below 35 mph, automatically steering, braking and accelerating within the same lane.



Two models are offered in the MG HS Plug-in line-up, starting with the £29,995 Excite which comes with MG Pilot, 18-inch 'Hurricane' diamond cut alloy wheels, leather-style trim, electrically adjustable heated front seats, auto headlamps and wipers, keyless entry, dual zone climate control, a 10.1-inch colour touchscreen with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay capability, a 360 degree parking camera and smart silver roof rails.

The upmarket Exclusive trim (£32,495) adds a power-operated tailgate, panoramic sky roof, full leather upholstery with ambient interior lighting which can be fully-adjusted to the driver's preference, metal sports pedals, an electrically adjustable passenger seat and LED bi-function headlights with sequential LED turn signals.

Like all MG models the MG5 EV and HS Plug-In come with a seven year / 80,000 mile fully

transferable warranty as standard.

While the MG5 EV is clearly aimed at the business sector the HS Plug-in will appeal to cost conscious families thanks to its spacious accommodation, low running cost capability and its competitive purchase price – rivals such as the Ford Kuga, Mitsubishi Outlander, Peugeot 3008 and Vauxhall Grandland X are all between £3,590 and £6,705 more expensive and none match MG's seven year warranty.

