Nissan Ariya Evolve – Road Test

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The new Nissan Ariya Evolve 87kWh Sportpack – all-electric coupé styled mid sized SUV

driven by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

The Nissan Ariya not only turns heads but has the ability to change minds about electric vehicles.

Striking styling both outside and in comes with deep carpets, arm-chair comfort, double-glazed windows and cabin-filling air conditioning, so its better equipped than many homes costing four or five times the Ariya's list price. It also has a genuine range of about 300 miles.

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What you get for your money is a lot of technology, luxurious trim and driving systems which you can really use to maximise efficiency and enjoyment – and go over 300 miles on a single charge.

It's not a cheap car, but for what you pay it is good value when stacked up against equivalent rival evs or traditional petrol challengers.

Ariya is the culmination of Nissan's ev experience gained since its first Tama 1947 runabout and much more recently the enormously successful LEAF from 2010, the world's first mass produced ev with almost 390,000 sold over its two generations.

Nissan has decided it can make more of its ev technology if it raises its game in terms of market sector and buyers' preferences, so the Ariya arrived to appeal to potential Tesla buyers. It has been sharply styled to do that in the Crossover sector for SUVs and Coupés.

Independent NCAP tests not only showed it to be one of the safest evs but also the most efficient at using stored generated electricity. As a result it has picked up many independent awards, including also its styling.

The Nissan Ariya is sold in Engage, Advance, Evolve+, Evolve and Performance grades with a selection of equipment packs to enhance each level and choice of 63 or 87 kWh batteries with electric motors producing 160 kW, 178 kW, 225 kW or 290 kW. Prices officially range from *£46,145 to £60,585.*

Our mid-range Ariya Evolve had the 87 kWh battery and Sportpack trim including blue upholstery, nappa leather seating details, with 20-inch alloys including aero covers.



The mid-range powertrain is well packaged to maximise room in the cabin, with three driving modes to emphasise economy to sporting ability, plus variable regeneration, and being low slung it corners well despite being only front wheel drive in our test car.



MacPherson strut front suspension and multi-link rear arrangement really help to give the car a sporting response in the quickest mode with adjustable steering and big disc brakes to instil confidence.

Engaging the e-pedal can add a couple of miles to even short journeys and produces a single-pedal experience which is ideal in urban traffic or when parking.

Over a few trips after an overnight charge to almost 100% capacity we were able to go up to 300 miles and it seemed fairly consistent in achieving this range.

The motor’s response was very good with strong steady power irrespective of load, near silent delivery, and no gearchanges to contend with. It changed modes instantly without hesitation.

The car’s near 2.2 tonnes weight due to its battery pack was barely noticeable except when cornering and it tended to run wide on tighter turns but it also smoothed out the ride a lot.

Bumps were smoothly absorbed but I thought the damper reaction was sometimes sharp. Road rumbles and suspension noises were noticeable only because the Ariya was otherwise very quiet, unless you opened the all-powered windows or sunroof.

Closing the double-glazed windows dramatically blocked external noise and then the dual zone air conditioning came into its own, with some noise as a result. The closed system worked well and had good output, directional control and temperature variation.

The car’s infotainment is fully compatible with mobile devices and operating systems, the central screen is of a decent size with a lot of clarity and it quickly moved between selected functions. The display in front of the driver was similarly efficient and supported by a head-up display onto the windscreen. Heated wheel, plus heated seats front and rear and powered settings for those in front were welcome.



All the seats were deeply shaped and supporting, and with the tilt and reach adjustable column the driver has an endless range to become comfortable and enjoys memory settings for the seat and door mirrors.

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Secondary controls were touch contacts for most on the lower fascia, console box and wheel-spokes which were clear in the day but less obvious in poor light conditions. Those stalks for main lights and wipers were partly hidden behind the wheel.

Apart from a slit to the back window, vision was fairly clear all around the Ariya, including with the headlights in use, and the large front wipers quickly cleared the screen.

Access was very good and the boot-lid opened and closed at the touch of a button. Once inside the room was generous for a four/ five seater with leg and headroom being spacious, but I think a family might struggle with the capacity of the normal boot unless the partitioned floor was utilised, while the offset split back seat gives some practicality.





VERDICT

As it is, the Nissan Ariya Evolve 87kWh Sportback is a very attractive model for today's green-conscious buyers but it is also good enough to win over some petrol-loving purists as well.

It would do even better if the warranty was longer as that is now the standard for a car which deserves better.

For: Extremely comfortable, very roomy cabin, good performance and range, low tax costs,

excellent controls, refined, quality build.

Against: Average warranty disappointing, some road noises, unclear secondary switches, poor rear vision and average bootspace.



FAST FACTS

Nissan ARIYA EVOLVE 87 kWh Sportpack



Price: £54,085

Mechanical: 242 PS motor, 87 kWh battery, front wheel drive, automatic

Max Speed: 100 mph

0 – 62 mph: 7.6 sec

Range: 300 miles

Insurance Group: 34

CO2 emissions: Zero

Tax costs: Bik rating: 2%, VED £ZeroFY, £ZeroSR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.60 m (15.09 ft), W 2.18 m (7.15 ft), H 1.66 m (5.45 ft)

Luggage space: 408 litres (14.41 cu.ft) for 4WD version to 466 litres (16.46 cu.ft) for 2WD version as tested

Kerbweight: 2,164 kg (4,771 lb)