OMODA 9 Launch (and First Impressions) at The House of OMODA

Published: June 9, 2025

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/omoda-9-launch-and-first-impressions-at-the-house-of-omoda/

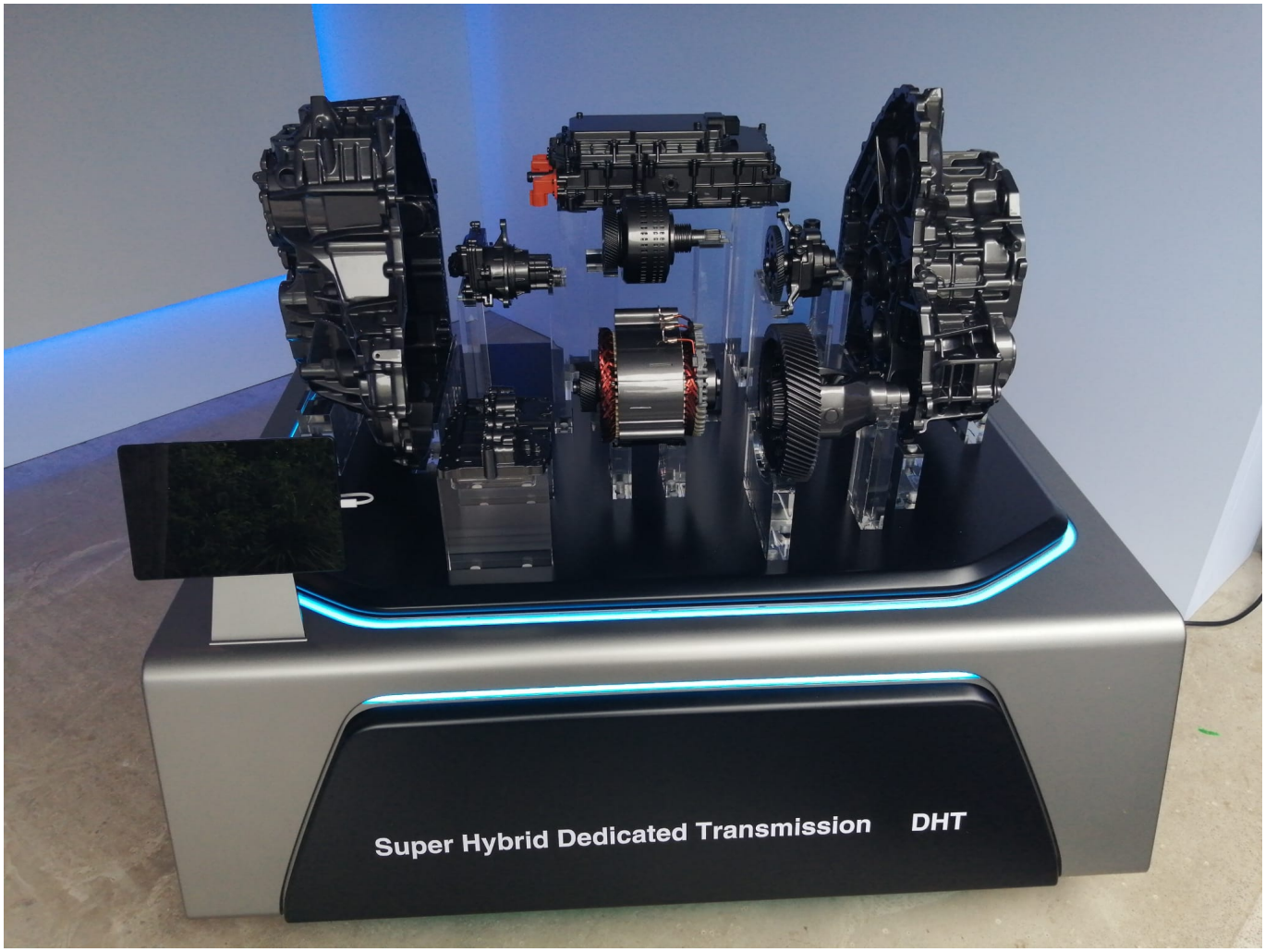


Guy Loveridge describes his first experience of the new OMODA 9...

When one is invited to a launch by a new brand, it is always exciting to see how they

approach things. To be invited to their “House” lifts the excitement a notch. When that house turns out to be a hugely stylish, architect designed affair on the outskirts of Hamble and the opening discussion with fellow journalists over breakfast covered optical surgery, trends in modern art and the as yet un answered question “Do you sweat when unconscious?” you know that you are in for an interesting day!

As has been written up on this sire before, I am no stranger to OMODA and JAECOO, but the OMODA 9 Press Launch, which was a vital part of this day, drew me down to the South Coast and I was delighted that I was able to attend. The vehicles are impressive and have a definite sense of drama about them. They are based around a competent chassis and innovative powertrain. The Petrol Hybrid is a 1.5 litre turbo, but the on the road power output is some 450 bhp.



Super Hybrid powertrain.

Combined with a huge torque figure and this luxury four wheel drive MPV can get to 60 miles per hour from a stand still in a sniff under 5 seconds.

Yes, you read that right, this beast can move. All of this with you cosseted in a cabin trimmed in vegan leather and in excess of 50 buttons and mode settings. We were treated a series of presentations by the design and engineering team, including Michael Duerr who had joined us from Frankfurt, the most memorable phrase from his 15 mins which showed the design cues from fighter aircraft and Sci-Fi was that the centre instrument cluster features a set of “Diamond Cut Physical Knobs for ease of haptic operation”! What that means in the real world is that not everything is touch screen and there is a set of

reassuringly solid turn dials that control the driving mode, the internal temperature and the screen modes. Otherwise there is a large pair of touch screens which give everything within the driver's eyeline.

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The test route was a mixture of narrow back lanes, B and A roads and both dual carriageways and eventually motorways, and the 9 was a genuine delight to drive. It felt happier on the road than a Cullinan and was assuredly a more pleasant machine to drive than the Bentaygo. High praise, I know but given this is coming to market at £44,990:00 with NO OPTIONS, that's right it is fully loaded. You get every bell and whistle on every model – there is no base nor top of the range – your only choice is the colour and wheels!

The face to face chats with the many OMODA and JAECOO personnel were as rewarding as their product. They are friendly, open and wanting to engage. Stories were told of feedback from early tests of the OMODA 5, which led to changes being made almost instantly. The UK Head of Product Oliver Lowe assured me that he had fed information back and the very next batch of ordered cars which came over the water had already had the changes implemented that he requested.

This is a company that cares and which is hungry for feedback and information. They have a website that features a Chat facility – but it's no AI "Chat Bot" this is answered by the next available employee who will have it flagged up on their work station computer.

Impressive stuff from a brand with Chinese sensibilities, it's the retail and car production arm of Chery who export more than any other Chinese producer in terms of engine and power train and whose German Design Lead happily credits a "Gen Z" zeitgeist aesthetic, drawing on Star Wars as their free-thinking inspiration for the front of the OMODA 9.

With a factory that is 98% automated, a product that gives 449 hp and an in house "Super Hybrid System", a certified combined range of 700 miles (that is, I am certain an under estimate figure) doubtless attributable to that jet fighter inspired aero package which give a

car which looks as imposing as a Challenger tank an extremely slippers drag co-efficient of just 0.308. Given this machine undercuts the XC60 by £10,000, the Velar and the Lexus by £20,000, I fully understand how the company have, month on month exceeded their sales targets each and every period from the brand launch into the UK market.

The car mirrors the company and the company espouse their motto “Live Your Best Life. NOW!”

