Aston Martin’s first electric car is finally here

The first all-electric Aston Martin has finally been revealed, nearly four years after it was originally announced. Based on the existing combustion-engine Aston Martin Rapide sedan, the “Rapide E” officially debuted at the Shanghai Auto Show on Tuesday. Only 155 will be made, and Aston Martin didn’t announce a price for the car.

Powered by an 800-volt, 65kWh battery, Aston Martin estimates the Rapide E will be able to travel “over 200 miles” on a single charge. Twin motors mounted on the rear axle will generate 450kW (or over 600 horsepower) and can get the car up to a top speed of 155 miles per hour. That will happen fairly quickly, too — Aston Martin says the Rapide E will go from 0 to 60 miles per hour in under four seconds (which is a tick faster than the standard internal combustion Rapide S). When plugged into a high-speed charger, the car’s battery can be recharged at a rate of 310 miles per hour.



The car will be equipped with a 10-inch digital instrument cluster behind the steering wheel, and an 8-inch display mounted atop the center of the dashboard will handle infotainment duties (with physical buttons below it on the center console, echoing the layout of the most recent Rapides). Both Apple CarPlay and Android Auto will be supported.

On the outside, the Rapide E mostly resembles the combustion engine car it’s based on, save for some electric blue accents in the headlights and on the brake calipers. Under the hood is

where things are most different. The battery system has been designed around the space where the combustion version's V12 engine, gear box, and fuel tank normally go. This means the Rapide E doesn't have a full floor of batteries like, say, a Tesla. While that cuts down on design and engineering costs, it ultimately limits the number of battery cells (and ultimate capacity) that an automaker can fit in the car. In the end, the Rapide E weighs 4,717 pounds, which is about 400 pounds more than the internal combustion Rapide S.

[embedded content]

The Rapide E was announced in 2015, right around when Aston Martin was going through a big cost-cutting push that resulted in hundreds of layoffs. To get the Rapide E (then just called "RapidE") project off the ground, the British automaker lined up funding from Chinese financiers. Then, in 2016, Aston Martin announced it would build the car with Chinese tech conglomerate LeEco — the company founded by Jia Yueting, who *also* founded (and now runs) struggling EV startup Faraday Future.

Aston Martin's first electric car was supposed to hit the road in 2018 and be made in greater volumes. But LeEco pulled out of the joint venture in 2017 amid its own cash crunch. Aston Martin turned to Formula One engineering house Williams to help bring the car to market, and narrowed the scope to just 155 vehicles. (Williams also helped build the batteries for the first-generation electric racecars of Formula E.)

The Rapide E will be built in the village of St. Athan in South Wales. That's also where Aston Martin plans to build the all-electric vehicles of Lagonda, its recently resurrected sub-brand dedicated to EVs. Aston Martin is calling the facility in St. Athan the company's "Home of Electrification."

https://www.theverge.com/2019/4/15/18311951/aston-martin-rapide-e-electric-car-shanghai-auto-show