



Driver Profile

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Considering an EV? Check out this driver's road-tested advice

By Jeannie Armstrong

When asked what it's like to drive an electric vehicle (EV), Russ quips, "Which one?"

Since 2018, Russ has owned a diverse range of EVs, from a Nissan Leaf to a Tesla Cybertruck.

His real-world experiences, from city commuting to highway travels, serve as a practical road map for anyone wondering whether an EV fits their lifestyle.

FINDING THE RIGHT EV FIT

As a business partner in a construction company and a water treatment specialist, Russ often travels across the province for business.

His EV journey began in 2018 with a Nissan Leaf.

"I was commuting for one of my jobs and it was a 100-kilometre round trip. That cost about six or seven dollars in gas per trip. With the Leaf, it cost around \$1.50 or two dollars," says Russ.

The positive experience with the Leaf opened the door to more EVs as the family's needs evolved. A Tesla Model 3 came next for work trips, followed by a Chevrolet Bolt EUV, then a Ford Mach-E. Over time, the family chose the vehicles that best aligned with their driving patterns and preferences. Today, Russ' garage holds a 2024 Model Y and a Cybertruck.

ASSESS YOUR ROUTINE

To determine which EV best matches your lifestyle, start by analyzing your driving habits. "Think about

where you're going and how often you make certain trips," says Russ.

For city commutes, nearly any modern EV will work. But if your routine includes frequent highway travel, especially in the winter, more careful consideration is required. "EVs have many intricate differences. Battery chemistry and thermal management are most important for cold weather operation and each manufacturer handles these in different ways," says Russ.

Russ found that his Ford Mach-E required longer charging times for his winter travel needs. "A winter road trip to Edmonton ended up taking about 10 hours including charging times." Ford has since made improvements to the battery heating system, he adds. Both Teslas perform well in extreme cold, he reports. "You don't need to worry about letting them warm up. In winter, it's actually easier for us to park our EVs outside and put the gas cars in the garage when we have guests."





CHARGING CONSIDERATIONS

For people thinking about buying an EV, charging access is an important consideration. Russ has a Level 2 charger at home, an easy upgrade because they already had a 240-volt welding plug in their garage.

“In the winter, we charge each vehicle every two or three days. In the summer, it’s common to charge once a week, depending on how much driving we’re doing,” says Russ.

TORQUE AND TECH

Driving electric is simply a different experience than driving gas. *“I like the instant power, the torque, the feel,”* says Russ.

As a car enthusiast, Russ sometimes craves the rumble of an internal combustion engine (ICE). *“We still occasionally drive ICE sports cars for fun, but for daily commuting, electric is the way to go,”* says Russ.

Technology also adds to the appeal of EVs, says Russ. Both Teslas have full self-driving capability.

“That’s quite the experience. I can leave my house, plug a destination into the map and let it go. It plans your route for you, tells you all the charging stations you need to stop at and how long to stay at each one — and drives you there.”

As well, Russ appreciates his EV’s “over-the-air” updates, noting that some EV manufacturers provide regular software updates to improve vehicle function and provide new features. *“This keeps the vehicle up to date and feeling new,”* he says.

SHOW AND TELL

Research is key to finding the right EV. *“Try to experience the vehicle. Most dealerships will let you take an overnight test drive in a demo vehicle. Take it on your everyday route to see what it feels like and what percentage of battery you’re using,”* says Russ.

He recommends seeking “lived experiences” from actual EV owners, including members of the SaskEV Facebook group.

The association hosts two public events every year: Drive Electric Earth Day at the end of April and the National Drive Electric Week event in September. *“It’s a good place to jump in. Owners share their EV experiences and also offer rides in their vehicles,”* says Russ.

For more information about electric vehicles, please visit [Saskatoon.ca/EV](https://saskatoon.ca/EV).