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American Test Of BYD's Tesla Model 3 Fighter: 'It's Way More Luxurious'

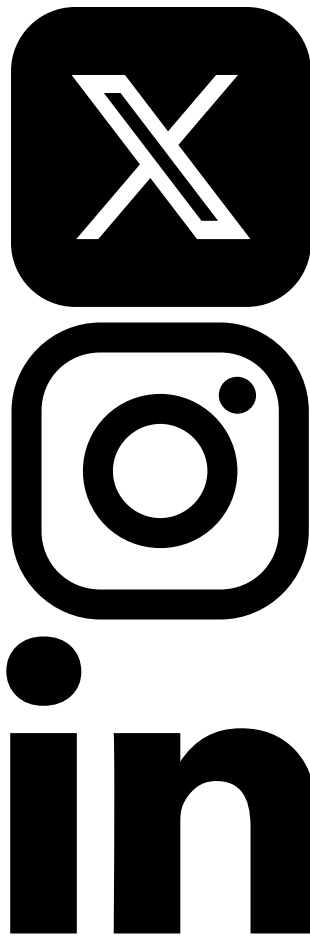
YouTube EV expert Kyle Conner says the BYD Seal needs some polish, but is incredible value for money. Maybe even better than a Model 3.

Jul 17, 2024 at 5:30pm ET

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By: **SUVRAT KOTHARI**



Just a few years ago, the **Tesla Model 3** seemed invincible. The electric sedan seemed like the go-to vehicle for early adopters in the U.S., as well as Europe and China. It offered cutting-edge software, seamless integration with the Supercharger network and performance that was the envy of top automakers. Then **BYD** launched the Seal in China in 2022 and in Europe in the fall of 2023. And the barrage of comparisons with Tesla's new fierce rival began.

The **Seal** matched the Model 3 in pretty much every category and its all-wheel-drive version is not only cheaper, but also slightly quicker according to **CarWow drag tests**.

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China's burgeoning EV market.

No country has democratized and commercialized electric vehicles and EV batteries like China. Its plug-in car market achieved a staggering 44% market share in May 2024. The U.S. has taken its own measures to catch-up, but we'll have to find out if they ever come to fruition.

The Seal has mostly garnered positive reviews from the automotive press in Europe. In [InsideEVs' review of it](#), our correspondent Alex Goy came out impressed, but found that it wasn't as polished as it could have been. But what is it like from the lens of an expert American reviewer?

[InsideEVs'](#) pal Kyle Conner, the host of [Out of Spec Reviews](#), traveled to Europe to test drive a bunch of Chinese EVs, including the BYD Seal. In his words, the Seal has “Audi-level build quality” on the outside and inside, it’s “way more luxurious than the Model 3.”

Before we delve deeper, here's some background. The electric sedans are closely matched on paper. In the U.K., for example, the Seal starts at approximately £45,000 for the rear-wheel-drive version and £48,000 for the all-wheel drive. The RWD delivers a WLTP range of 354 miles, while the AWD has a range of 323 miles.

The RWD Model 3 starts at just under £40,000 and has a range of 318 miles whereas the £50,000 Long Range AWD has a WLTP range of 390 miles.

Gallery: 2024 BYD Seal Review



Space optimization seems to be great on the Seal. Conner said it has one of the best rear seats in its category and the knee room is “Ioniq 6-like.” According to him, the overall interior has Genesis-levels of luxury whereas space is comparable to a Model S than a Model 3.

The Seal is powered by an 82 kilowatt-hour structural “Blade” battery pack, based on the lithium-iron-phosphate (LFP) chemistry. LFP packs are comparatively less energy dense than traditional nickel-based chemistries, but they’re more cost-effective and last longer. Even the entry-level Model 3 gets an LFP pack.

He also seemed to love the infotainment system. You can change its orientation from horizontal to vertical, or vice versa, depending on what suits you the best and the screen itself appears snappy and responsive. Unlike Tesla and GM, **who are moving away from Apple CarPlay and Android Auto**, BYD still offers both features on the Seal.

From behind the wheel, Conner said the Seal felt as fast as the Model 3 performance. “No doubt it’s geared towards luxury and comfort. But if you look at it from a performance standpoint, it’s actually pretty capable,” he said.

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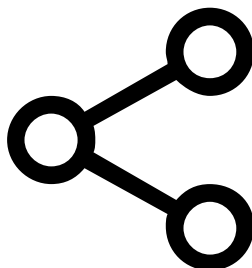
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In terms of ride and handling, there’s no reason to write-off the Seal. “Chinese cars haven’t been really known for their chassis dynamics or performance. But whoever did the chassis on this definitely paid some attention,” Conner said.

We’re unlikely to see the BYD Seal here in the U.S. anytime soon, or ever. Chinese imports are subject to **punitive tariffs** here, despite **studies** showing that 76% of American buyers under the age of 40 were open to Chinese-branded EVs.

U.S. automakers have several affordable models in the pipeline. Now buyers hope that they’ll also be competitive. All said, the video above is worth watching if you want to learn about the BYD Seal from a pure American lens.



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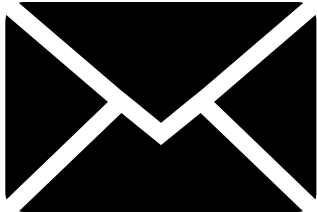
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TOP COMMENTS



ColliderBit Jul 17, 2024, 10:24 PM

If you watched the video, he still prefers the Tesla, and prefers the Tesla's cleaner interior. He said the BYD's stitches look more premium than buyers might prefer.



Solarman2 Jul 18, 2024, 8:09 AM

If you watched the video, he still prefers the Tesla, and prefers the Tesla's cleaner interior. I watched the video end to end, your reading and comprehension incapability allows you to pedantically insert your vast knowledge while trying to navigate more than one variable at a time. Kyle Conner also prefers the CT, yet, acquiesces the Chevrolet Silverado EV 4W/T is the electric truck champion. IN The video Kyle mentions at least once, in his opinion and subjective as the reasoning to pick one path of comment over another.

cyruspavel Jul 18, 2024, 6:26 AM

B



ColliderBit Jul 18, 2024, 7:07 AM

Mach E



Gussy24 Jul 18, 2024, 8:08 AM

I'm an owner and not quite. The Mach-E is certainly a viable alternative but it has plenty of shortcomings that keep it from being truly competitive with the Model 3. In my humble

opinion 😊

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