



TESLA MODEL X

It might not be 'X-rated', but this electric SUV is a superb family car, writes Tim Barnes-Clay

Tesla's latest darling – the Model X, isn't as sexy as its 'X-rated' moniker might suggest, but it impresses in other ways.

Unlike the Model S, this Tesla doesn't look sporty, but you shouldn't let its large frame deceive you. The Model X, as driven in 90D form, will shoot from zero to 60mph in a blisteringly-quick 4.8 seconds. Top speed is a more usual, but still fast, 155mph.

The Model X is a large SUV, and therefore it isn't the most graceful of cars. It does have a certain something about it – most notably 'Falcon Wing' rear doors that open upwards and look, unsurprisingly, like falcon wings. They also remind you of the DeLorean from the 'Back to the Future' film franchise. The Falcon Wings even have sensors to stop them clanging into the low ceiling of a parking garage – or another car, if you're parked too closely. They are practical, too, making rear seat ingress and egress utterly stress-free.

Of course, looks, speed and DeLorean-esque doors aren't the be-all and end-all of the X. The car's SUV practicality and cool badge will probably be enough to tempt families seeking a premium car that's different to, say, a Range Rover or Jaguar F-Pace. What's more the Tesla is totally electric.



With a claimed all-electric range of 303 miles, there's not much dividing the X from the above-mentioned fuel-drinking SUVs. That said; even with Tesla's Supercharger system, it's still quicker to fork out at the pumps in a traditionally-fuelled vehicle to continue your travels. Still, parking up just off junction 15 of the M1, I quite enjoyed my 50 minutes plugged into a Tesla Supercharger. It was free, too. All I had to do was punch in the car's registration into an iPad – then I was able to hook the X up and chill out with a coffee. Great stuff, and quite relaxing. I guess if you own a Tesla you build this time into your day – if you're smart.

You can also plug your Tesla in at home. I tried it, and, overnight, my domestic socket only gave it about 50 miles of extra range. Still, that was enough to get me to the Supercharger point to fully charge up the next day for my Northants to Heathrow commute.

The quick acceleration is escorted by a delicate whirr of the motor, but other than that, and a bit of wind and tyre roar, the X is weirdly muted inside – even at motorway speeds. When the quietness gets too much, the

Tesla's hardcore music system bounces notes off the car's insulated interior.

On the subject of the interior, it must be said that the Model X has a fine cabin. The plush white leather seats in my test car not only looked the business, but felt gorgeous, too. And the X's oversized iPad-like centre touchscreen is poles apart from any system in any other SUV. Nevertheless, touchscreens are fundamentally tricky to use while moving fast, so I would like to have seen a few shortcut buttons instead.

All the seats, which reminded me of gambling stools in Las Vegas, have oodles of adjustment, and you can specify four, five, six or seven seats. My test car had seven, and in the second tier there's loads of head and legroom. Alas, behind these chairs there's not much space to shout about. Taller occupants will find themselves stooped over and hemmed in, though they're roomy enough for smaller children.

But the boot is huge; 2,180 litres means there's lots of space for cases, buggies and shopping. The floor of the load area can also be lifted to decrease the loading lip, and a panel can be detached to expose a cavernous



section behind the rear chairs. This can be used for stowing things such as the X's cumbersome charging cables. And, due to the fact the car has no engine, there's a 187-litre boot in the front of the Tesla too.

The handling is great in a straight line, but the X is not a car to hoon around twisty rural routes. In the bends it feels weighty, so it's not a chuckable machine, and this rains on the parade when it comes to pure driver enjoyment. Don't get me wrong, it's still a fine car, though, and it won't come unstuck, thanks to a four-wheel-drive system.

Driving the Tesla makes you feel good; you're doing your bit for the environment. So, if you're feeling 'green' and you're not living in the sticks miles from any Superchargers, then the Model X is a compelling alternative to other potent, luxury SUVs. You won't get much change out of £85,000. Still, that's a bargain when you consider you won't ever have to buy diesel or petrol.

