

BMW unveils eco-friendly iSolar carport that supplies power to its car

May 9 2014, by Bob Yirka



BMW has announced that in conjunction with the introduction of its new i8 hybrid vehicle in Los Angeles, the company will also unveil what is unofficially being called the iSolar carport. A housing for the i8 (and current all electric i3) that in addition to providing cover from harsh sunlight, will also provide electricity to charge the vehicles batteries. The carport was designed and developed by BMW Group DesignworksUSA.

A carport with solar cells on top solves two problems for car owners, particularly those that live in sunny locales such as southern California. In such places, home garages are rare, as there is very little need for protecting vehicles from weather such as ice, sleet or snow. Instead, homebuilders have added carports, which are essentially garages without walls. Instead, they simply have support beams. Carports are important because they keep sunlight (and hail) off the car while it's parked—sunlight not only heats the interior, but also causes paint to fade, a major problem in places like California, Florida and Arizona which have a lot of sunny days. The iSolar is just such a carport, but it comes with something else—solar collectors on the roof that serve to charge the battery of the car its protecting.

But that's not the end of the story—as part of its mission to become more eco-friendly, BMW has gone to great lengths to ensure that creating the carport doesn't contribute to global warming—its support structure is made out of bamboo. Also, the company has used glass-on-glass solar panels which are more earth friendly because they last up to 30 years—such panels in Europe actually come with a guarantee.



Electricity from the [solar panels](#) is directed to a wallbox that not only manages the flow of electricity, i.e. directing it to a hose with a nozzle attachment, but shows usage and allows for routing power to the house when the car's battery is fully charged.

If all that isn't enough, the carport is also visually appealing, with a slight resemblance to an insect, the iSolar would almost assuredly draw attention. Unfortunately, it's not clear just yet if BMW will actually make the carport available for sale, and if they do, how much they might charge for it.

More information: [BMW press release](#)

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