

EV watchers turn poetic over Canoo set for 2021

26 September 2019, by Nancy Cohen



Credit: Canoo

One word to describe a potentially hot talking point in the electric vehicle marketplace: Canoo. It's a small-sized van from the company of the same name and the vehicle will launch in 2021. It will be on a subscription-based service model.

"A company called Canoo wants to become the 'Netflix of cars'," wrote Georgina Torbet in *Engadget*. Numerous sites jumped to the opportunity to describe it after viewing what Canoo revealed thus far.

"A [space-age](#) transport pod," said *Engadget*. Space-age is not in the way you would guess with circus smorgasbord of loud messages and fancy hardware. Think space-age as a kind of sleek nothingness, a minimalist mood swing awaiting those sitting in this [vehicle](#).

A "kind of Twinkie-shaped, with tons of [glass](#) everywhere, including little 'safari window'" said Kyle Hyatt in *Roadshow*. *Jalopnik* referred to a "room-on-wheels design." *The Drive* thought "In some ways resembling a [modernist](#) Bahaus take on the electric microbus."

Well, you get a bit of the picture. While one would think the [subscription model](#) would be the key talking point it was not; instead, tech and car-watching sites were focused on what Canoo looks like; its design won the show. *Auto Futures* described the company as "on the bleeding edge of new [design](#) techniques and a non-ownership [model](#)."

Shakeup factors about the Canoo reveal were reported. Here are just two. (1) Zero screens, and you dock your phone. *The Verge* said the minimalist approach permeated the vehicle. No touchscreens—just one LED bar that splits the two panes of glass at the front, which offers simply basic information. Canoo will offer a phone or table mount that can be attached to the dashboard (2) a concealed information display has an array of RGB LEDs behind fabric and the lights shine through the fabric to display speed, range and more.

"What I loved about the vehicle when I got a chance to tour the [beta version](#) recently is that none of this stuff jumps out at you," commented Sean O'Kane in *The Verge*.

Jason Torchinsky, Senior Editor, *Jalopnik* said the Canoo had "an unashamed, streamlined, heavily-windowed box on a skateboard" as an envelope. He said front and rear profiles of the Canoo were just about identical; "were it not for the position of the rear-view mirrors and colors of the lights, it would be hard to tell which end was front and which was the rear."

Jump seats fold down. Torchinsky: "The rear of the vehicle has a U-shaped bench seat, with what

appears to be seat belts for three passengers. There's also some flip-down jump seats behind the front seats as well, adding two more places to sit." So, how many passengers could fit? "If there are [seat belts](#) provided for the side-mounted seats, you could have five on the rear bench, plus the two jump seats, plus the front seats, for a total of nine [seats](#)."

The inside of each door is lined with a peg board-style surface. Canoo designed an all-in-one "skateboard" platform, said O'Kane, that houses battery pack, electric motor, inverter, "and everything else that helps power the vehicle and make it go."

As for the "non-ownership" model, there will be some prospective takers who will be wary, in the absence of specific dealings, about the subscription model.

Consumers are never excited about the thought that they might get in a pickle where the car owns them and not the other way around. As with rentals of anything, there is always that discomfoting thought that they could have paid much less if they had purchased outright.

Alex M in *Medium* started with a summing up, in general, on what options are there when someone wants to get a car.

"A lease is a time commitment, meaning you're locked into a contract for two to four years with significant penalties for cancellation. Buying is a monetary commitment, where you legally sign to pay the entire vehicle price over a set number of years. Renting provides flexibility, but you likely can't get the car you want, and anything longer than 30 days is going to get seriously [expensive](#)."

So, will its subscription model be financially viable for them to survive?

"None of this is to say that launching a subscription in the [automotive industry](#), either as a new name or an incumbent, is easy," said the article in *Medium*. "The model is unproven and creates logistical and cost issues for the provider. Nevertheless, in an industry that has become complacent and reaped

the benefits of high barriers to entry for decades, we think it's long overdue."

O'Kane in *The Verge* will be interested to know what happens, in seeing the startup try to prove out its subscription model.

What's next?

The Canoo will begin road testing later this year. The Canoo launch is planned for 2021.

The Drive delivered a fuller look at the [plans](#). Provided cash is forthcoming, Canoo's current build represented "85 to 90 percent of the final design" to "a completely-baked design one year from now." There will be a ramping up for industrialization and finally plans are for a 2021 launch in Los Angeles.

More information: www.canoo.com/

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