



Electric Vehicles – Driving the Future

A Customer's Perspective

While preparing for Grenlec's all-electric vehicle (EV) pilot programme, we met Daniel Forster of Grand Anse, who drives the first EV imported into Grenada. Mr. Forster has graciously agreed to share his experience.



Q.

Where did you find your EV?

A.

We purchased the car by using the [Auto Trader](#) website. I chose a Nissan dealer close to a port (Portsmouth in the UK) to keep transport costs of the car as low as possible.



Q.

What type of car did you buy and how much did it cost?

A.

I selected a Nissan LEAF all-electric car. The cost of the car was approximately EC\$128,000, inclusive of insurance and all other costs to get on the road here in Grenada. While the upfront cost is higher than a comparable conventional combustion engine car, the operational and maintenance costs are much lower and you can recover the difference you pay for the EV over a comparable combustion model car in about a year.

The Nissan LEAF is available in three models. For Grenada, I recommend the basic model - the Visia. The two loaded premium models (Visia Plus and Acenta) have features that aren't needed in Grenada, like heated seats, a GPS and navigation system, etc.

Also, I recommend buying a model with built-in rapid charge capability. The basic model comes with a slow charger which takes about 10-12 hours to charge, the rapid charger takes about three hours.

Q.

How did you transport the car from the UK to Grenada?

A.

I used Geest Shipping in the UK to arrange the transportation from the UK to Grenada at a cost of approximately EC\$3,800. Geest also arranged for the car to be transported from the dealer to the port on a low loader lorry trailer for approximately EC\$600.



Q.

Did you get transport insurance?

A.

It is best to get the car insured for any transit damage that may occur while it is being shipped to Grenada. I used S-Tech insurance services in the UK. The cost for transit insurance is about EC\$400.

Q.

Did you use an agent?

A.

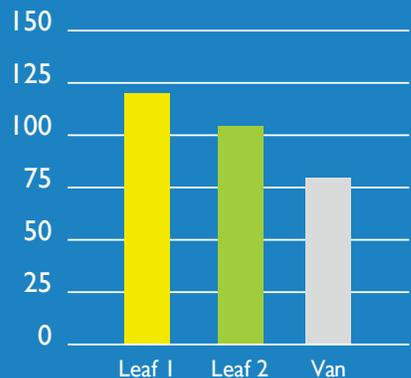
Once the car arrives in Grenada, you need an agent to clear customs. Agents are on your side and will make the whole procedure straightforward.

ONE YEAR LATER:

Fast Facts about Grenlec's All-Electric Vehicle Pilot

After one year, Grenlec's three pilot vehicles averaged the equivalent of 97 miles per gallon (MPGe) and a 39% reduction in fuel costs compared to their combustion-engine counterparts with similar usage.

Miles Per Gallon Equivalent



Grenlec data: Nov. 2016

Grenlec is considering acquiring additional EVs to replace fleet cars being retired. For more information about electric vehicles and Grenlec's services, please visit Grenlec.com/energise.



Q.

What about import duties?

A.

I would always call the relevant department at Grenada Customs and Excise. I made sure to have all the information at hand: log book, costs for purchase, shipping and insurance, etc. Customs and Excise will instruct you on the correct procedures and are very helpful. The paperwork and collecting a new registration/number plates took around half a day to sort. Insurance is about equivalent to a 1600CC vehicle.



Q.

What did you purchase as a charging station?

A.

The charging stations I looked at are ROLEC. You can buy these with a lead attached that plugs into the car, or with a socket to use with the car's supplied lead. The best option is to go for the lead version, then the car owner simply takes the lead from the small wall unit and plugs this into the car. The car is supplied with a standard 220V lead to plug into a normal household mains socket, so this extra charging station is not required, just more convenient.



Q.

How often do you charge the car?

A.

I plug the car in when I am home, every night, just like I would do with my mobile phone. A single normal charge provides approximately 72-mile drive range – perfect for Grenada. A 100% full charge takes a little longer but gives around 110-mile range.

Q.

What do you like about your electric vehicle?

A.

It's brilliant! Above all else is the fact that it makes no noise. When you drive around Grenada and can hear the birds and smell the fresh air, you experience beautiful green Grenada like never before. The car is cheap to run - takes about EC\$21 to charge up. We have installed summer tires that are more resilient to the higher temperatures and heat of the road in Grenada. The car is now three years old, 10,000 plus miles of Grenada driving so far. We've had no maintenance issues. We would never go back to a conventional car. Incidentally, for those who say the car is too quiet, the car actually makes a special noise and sends this forward, to help pedestrians and animals hear its approach. This noise cannot be heard in the car.



Q.

What are some of the misconceptions about electric vehicles?

A.

Some people think the EVs are costlier. In reality, they cost less to operate because of the lower cost of charging the vehicle versus buying gasoline. And, the servicing costs are lower—no oil, fan belts or the other routine maintenance issues of a conventional car. The car still requires a regular service to check brakes and such, this can be arranged in any number of garages right here in Grenada.

People ask “what if I run out of battery?”, The car’s fuel gauge keeps you informed of how many miles you can drive and the car gives ample warning when the battery level is low. I have not been caught out with a flat battery in 3 years of driving. The Nissan Leaf also uses its electric motor as a generator, putting power back into the batteries when coming down hills or braking. This keeps the car running longer on a single charge and brake wear to a minimum. The lithium battery lasts about eight to ten years and can be replaced at an affordable cost.

The car has all the features you would expect with a regular car—comfortable seating, digital stereo, climate control, ABS brakes with easy hill start, keyless entry, very good traction on the hilly terrain, and its top feature - it is very, very quiet. Top speed around 95mph.



Q.

Would you recommend an electric vehicle for people living in Grenada?

A.

Absolutely! Once we address people's apprehension about the technology and they drive the cars for themselves, you'll see more EVs in Grenada. We need to have the infrastructure in place and charging ports in visible, strategic locations such as shopping malls. Greater education and familiarity will help change people's perceptions and make the technology more viable. Once the infrastructure is in place, EVs will become more of the "norm" as they are in Barbados. Over the last couple of years, we've seen a significant increase in the number of EVs in Barbados, from just a few to more than 400.

Like other countries worldwide, Grenada is addressing environmental concerns to reduce our carbon footprint. EVs are just one solution for the future.