

FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION EV BY JOE SAGE

It seems most EVs have come to fruition quick, big, expensive and premium featured—quite distant from the original concept as a simple plug-and-play local vehicle. Fiat returns the concept to its roots with the new 500e—still quick and well featured, styled to beat the band, but notably small, with price following accordingly.

In fact—as they emphasized when we drove it at NWAPA Drive Revolution (also in this issue), the entire Fiat 500e weighs less (at 2952 pounds) than just the battery alone in some of the other EVs we drove at that event. Equilibrium achieved.

The Fiat 500e is breaking new ground by breaking old ground anew. Remember the first EVs a decade or more back? People were afraid we were facing a future of small, low-powered golf carts. Instead, the EV realm developed appeal through unexpected power, size and degrees of luxury. The 500e brings us back toward the original concept in terms of size, but with every benefit, advance,

advantage and breakthrough that has come to EVs through those years of evolution.

You can compare its specs among all ten EVs we had just driven at NWAPA, which in fact was just the week before, good prep for when this copy arrived at our offices for a full week.

The first thing most people note about the 500e is that it is small—and it is, but then again it isn't. Their redesign for generation three brings a car they say is marginally larger, but feels significantly larger. If you look at just the cabin, it can feel about as roomy as an extended cab midsize pickup. Front legroom is a fraction less than 42 inches, about as generous as anything gets. (Rear legroom is minimal.) Its tidy engine compartment and hatchback profile are what make it small overall.

For use around town, in particular, this is a best-of-both-worlds formula. This car is phenomenally maneuverable—its remarkable 31.5-foot turning circle proves that.

It's just not so optimal for long road trips, with minimal cargo capacity and relatively short electric range. (Minimalists, already likely attracted to the car, will unlikely be fazed by the cargo volume. And a 35-minute recharge time can still enable certain road trips, with a little planning.)

The 500e is stylish, too. Not only is it one of the most recognizable vehicles on the road, with a genuine European flair, but the attention to detail (see photos at upper right) makes you wonder why everybody else seems to miss a lot of opportunities. Everything has its own special Italian touch.

This electric Fiat's pep is what really hooks you. Power is one thing, but power-to-weight is what matters, and, along with the full-torque-from-zero aspect of an EV, the 500e puts a smile on your face with every mile. It's quick, with a highly responsive throttle, and very precise, with its battery-based low center of gravity leaving not a trace of front-drive build. Rear suspension is very simple, and it



has drum brakes in the rear, but you would never notice either, other than for how effective both are. The suspension, while appealingly firm, also gave us smooth passage over familiar, notoriously punishing freeway seams. Cabin visibility is fantastic.

A blast to drive, it's like being a teenager who just got a license—it'll have you thinking up more errands, just to take it for another spin.

This EV is the only Fiat 500 for 2024, starting at \$32,500, with most trims \$36,000 (including our "Inspired by Beauty" and a variety of other "Inspired by" versions). Also still available as of now, however, is the four-door gasoline 2023 Fiat 500X.

This thing should sell like hotcakes—or silver-dollar pancakes. It's responsive, accurate, economical and downright cute. But it has been off to a slow start, not yet widely discovered by the buy-

ing public, unfortunate in its own right, but also as the greater corporation navigates shifting sands of EVs, the latest flavor of EU directives and other factors. (It's just now making the rounds with the media, and we can't help but notice that our colleagues have also loved this little guy.)

Fiat, in fact, is the best-selling Stellantis brand worldwide, at 1.35 million units, out of 14 brands including our familiar Dodge, Jeep and Ram, as well as Peugeot and Opel in Europe. They say Fiat shows the world how relevant—and how Italian—the company is, with it acting as their "Trojan mouse" into the broader market overall.

We certainly hope people start to discover this, and soon, as it deserves a significant spot in the marketplace, in the whole EV story—and perhaps in your very own garage. ■

PINT-SIZE, PURPOSE-BUILT, POTENT, A BIT PRECOCIOUS, WITH GREAT ATTENTION TO DETAIL, AND WITH A SONG IN ITS HEART.



The Fiat 500e comes with its own soundtrack—making a joyful noise with various merry tunes it plays at startup and shutdown (which we never did figure out how to turn off), plus a faint sort of symphony as you pass about 20-21 mph.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Turin, Italy
VEH. TYPE	A-segment mini-compact hatch
SEATING CAPACITY	four
MOTOR	AC 3-phase w perm magnetic rotor
BATTERY	Li-ion, nickel magnesium cobalt, 352V 42 kWh, 96S 2P cell config
HP/TORQUE	117 hp / 162 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	gear reducer 1-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
TOP SPEED	94 mph
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut; R: twist-beam axle
STEERING	elec power, column
BRAKES	F: 11.06 x1.02 vented disc; R: 7.99 x1.49 drum
WHEELS	17x6.5 cast alum, gloss black painted w diamond finish
TIRES	205/45 R17 BSW summer, Goodyear Efficient Grip Performance or Pirelli Cinturato P7 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	142.95 / 91.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	4.48 in
TURNING CIRCLE	31.5 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	39.25 / 35.35 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.81 / 29.45 in
CARGO CAPACITY	7.51 cu.ft
WEIGHT	2952 lb
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION (F/R)	58.9 / 41.1%
CHARGING CONNECTOR	CCS Combo1
CHARGING TIME:	
LEVEL 1 120V 13A	(5-100%)37 hours
LEVEL 2 240V 48A	(0-100%)6 hours
85 KW FAST CHARGE	(0-80%)35 min
RANGE	149 miles
MPGe	121/100 (city/hwy)
BASE PRICE	\$36,000
SELECT FEATURES:	one-pedal driving, electronic stability control, lane-departure warning-plus, drowsy driver detect, traffic sign info, rain-sense wipers, ParkSense rear park-assist, 7 airbags, keyless Enter 'n Go, cluster w 7-inch TFT display, Uconnect 5 Nav w 10.25-inch touchscreen, SiriusXM 360L, 6 speakers, wireless Apple & Android, 4G LTE Wi-Fi hot spot incl trial, Alexa built in (Wi-Fi req'd), wireless charge pad, front row USB A&C, pushbutton start, LED headlamps & tail lamps, Level 2 active driving assist (ADAS), blind-spot monitor & cross-path detect...incl
DESTINATION CHARGE	1595
TOTAL	\$37,595

CURRENT FIAT 500 LINEUP

500e (2024 model)	
Inspi(RED)	\$32,500
Inspired by Beauty	▼ 36,000
Inspired by Music	36,000
Inspired by Los Angeles	36,000
500X (remaining 2023 inventory)	
Pop	\$30,245
Sport	33,275