

## Chevrolet Volt MPG: like no other car, or somewhat polarizing?

<http://gm-volt.com/2011/03/29/chevrolet-volt-mpg-like-no-other-car-or-somewhat-polarizing/>

The Chevrolet Volt has been generally well received, and the idea of a range-extending gasoline engine paired with electric power is not a difficult one for many people to comprehend.

It has been said, however, that not all people “get” the car’s full value.

So, in the face of less-than-stellar reviews from the likes of *Consumer Reports*, *Edmunds Inside Line* blog, and some local publications around the U.S., Chevrolet recently issued statements sticking to its guns that the Volt delivers unprecedented economy.

And widely variable mileage as well.

Unlike strictly internal-combustion-powered cars that perform within a fairly limited economy range, GM is citing individual owners recording from 62 to 93 to 231 MPG.



***With somewhere around \$1 billion invested in the Volt, Chevrolet is doing all it can to line up customers for its first-generation Volt.***

“I haven’t filled up my Volt since I took delivery,” said Mike DiPisa of Lyndhurst, N.J.

DiPisa bought his Volt home in December, and at the time of his statement, 1,391 of his 1,485 miles traveled had been achieved by using electricity, thus Chevrolet calculated his economy at 231 MPG.

Similar stories are given for other Volt drivers, and Chevrolet says the Volt is what you make of it.

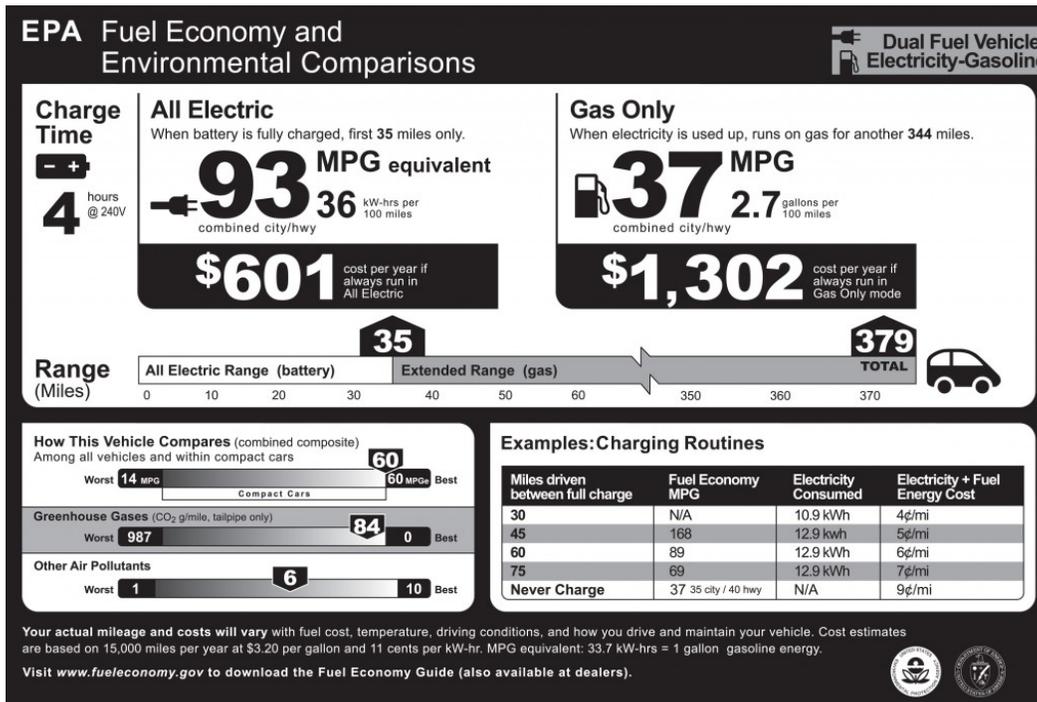
“Three Volts. Three distinct fuel economy stories,” say Chevrolet’s marketing department.

“The Volt is great for any lifestyle and can handle the driving demands of daily life,” said Volt Marketing Director Cristi Landy, “The majority of Volt customers are finding that by recharging their cars daily they are seeing exceptional real-world fuel economy.”

## Federal baseline

Despite what Chevrolet's marketing team is saying, the average figures the EPA put on the Volt are 93 MPG equivalent (MPGe) in the city/highway for the first 35 miles, when the battery is fully charged, and the car is driven in all-electric mode, and 37 MPG for the city/highway estimate (during gas-only driving).

It allows for potentially higher MPGe assuming lower mileage, and a charged battery, but does not go so high as 231 or several hundred miles as some have said they have seen. The EPA bases its comparatively conservative numbers on its simulated driving cycle from last year.



*Chevrolet say the Volt can get hundred of miles per gallon. The federal government says the above are the facts. What is the truth?*

The Volt's official EPA figures reflect another unusual turn of events: Estimated MGPe in the spot where the "city" average usually goes (calculated for the Volt in all-electric mode) is 60-percent better than the spot where the "highway" average usually goes. This is because the latter figure accounts for the car using gas only during the driving cycle test the EPA used.

## Bogus Figures?

But some people – and professional car reviewers alike – are less generous in sizing up the Volt, and are grappling with what to make of it.

In a recent blog write-up testing its efficiency and costs, Dan Edmunds said he would cater to readers' desire to see MPG figures such as Chevrolet is touting, but he pooh-poohed the idea other than to say it satisfied a political-social sentiment.

"Some of you expressed an interest in seeing the 'apparent' mpg, looking at gasoline used over all miles driven and ignoring electricity," Edmunds wrote, "It's a bogus figure from an overall cost and consumption perspective, but it has a use if all you care about is reducing our dependence on gasoline that's derived from oil."

Frankly, Edmunds is not the only person who says things like this.



*Electricity – and installing stations across the country – all cost money. MPG figures in the hundreds of miles per gallon, critics say, are therefore a false metric.*

In discussing the Volt with several other “car people” we’ve heard criticism leveled at GM for pushing to see the highest possible EPA MPG rating on the Monroney sticker.

### **Balance needed**

At GM-Volt, we know the Volt is a revolutionary car. It meets multiple needs, and is an excellent “bridge” technology as we attempt to transfer away from dependence on oil.

To those of who have a Volt, what has been your experience? What are your views on this topic?

We have already noted some citing high MPG ratings. Are ultra-high MPG estimates truly even-handed assessments of the Volt’s operational cost?

If you do think Chevrolet’s media department has it right, do you think it is only a matter of time before more people agree?