

PUMPED ON AIR POWER

A European company, MDI, has developed a concept for a car it claims will run on air. A New York firm called Zero Pollution Motors has obtained the license for US distribution of the cars and plans to deliver the first models next year at a price of \$20,000 Canadian.

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The concept of an air car is similar to a steam engine only in this case air replaces steam.

The vehicle planned for the US market would have a dual energy engine with speeds of 130 kilometres per hour and a range of 1,200 kilometres.

The design involves one or more tanks of compressed air under the floor of the car with a separate tank holding eight gallons of fuel. Depending on how fast the car is going, it would either use air or a combination of air and fuel. At speeds of less than 50 kilometres per hour, it is claimed that it would run on air power. The internal combustion engine used to heat the air could

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run on gasoline, biofuels or a combination. With claims that the car could deliver over 100 miles per gallon, the promoters see it as a strong competitor for hybrid vehicles. Some skeptics have pointed out that the required air pressure would be 4,500 pounds per square inch or about 120 times the tire pressure of a typical six passenger sedan. They claim that the amount of energy required to produce that type of pressure would make the car non-competitive.

The largest car company in India, Tata Motors, entered an agreement with MDI to develop the technology. Tata is currently producing a car for the Indian consumer that sells in the range of US \$3,000.