

# MG S6 is range king of Category A EVs

Lee Nian Tjoe

The MG S6 goes farther than just about any electric vehicle (EV) you can buy with a Category A certificate of entitlement (COE) today.

With a beefy battery and an efficient motor powering the rear wheels, the car can cover 530km on a single charge, more than the 450km or so range of its peers.

This should be enough to reach Genting Highlands from Singapore in one go with plenty of kilometres to spare.

While rivals have to stop for at least one charging session in Kuala Lumpur, the MG's driver will already be at the summit, checking in to the hotel.

For those who keep their motoring within Singapore, that range advantage translates to two extra days of driving, or at least one round trip between Changi Airport and Tuas.

Among Category A EVs, only the Kia EV5, which is a slightly smaller car, does it better – by 10km – using a larger battery than the MG.

The S6 is the fourth model built on MG's dedicated EV platform. It comes after the MG 4 hatchback, the Cyberster two-seater convertible and, most recently, the S5, which is a sport utility vehicle (SUV) that rivals the BYD Atto 3 and Aion V.

The S6 uses the same 77kWh Nickel Manganese Cobalt battery as the Cyberster, rather than the smaller capacity lithium iron phosphate battery used in other MG EVs.

At 4,708mm long, the S6 is aimed at the likes of the BYD Sealion 7 and Tesla Model Y. Unlike BYD and Tesla, which offer their cars in a variety of outputs, the MG S6 is sold here exclusively with 109kW.

This qualifies the MG for the more affordable Category A COE, even though the car is offered with 180kW elsewhere.

At the most recent COE tender exercise on Jan 21, the cost of a Category A COE is \$12,133 less than a Category B one, so that is the minimum savings from tuning down the S6. The lower power output also means a saving of \$416 in annual road tax, at \$1,556.

The S6 looks more grown-up than MG's other EVs, mostly because the car is larger than the models before it.

The overall styling is also more subdued, and this approach may appeal to those who want to drive an EV but do not want to make a big fuss about it.

Aside from the “missing” radiator grille and lack of exhaust pipes, there is very little to signal its EV status. Pop the bonnet and, instead of an engine, there is a bin to store a bit of shopping.

Refreshingly, the S6 avoids the trend of finicky pop-out door handles for good old-fashioned handles, which are much more intuitive to use.

Even though the seat is mounted above the battery pack, the driving position feels natural, making entry and exit easy while maintaining good all-round visibility.

Further enhancing the ease of use is the array of physical switches for functions like setting the mirror positions, dual-zone air-conditioning and the volume.

For everything else, there is the 12.8-inch touchscreen infotainment system. Its menu structure is quite flat, so it rarely takes more than three taps on the screen to get



The MG S6 looks more grown-up than the carmaker's other EVs, mostly because the car is physically larger than the models before it. ST PHOTOS: KEVIN LIM



The car's rear bench is broad, with comfortable suede-like upholstery.



The cabin feels robust and comes with easy-to-use controls.

## MG S6 LUXURY

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| PRICE             | \$219,888 with COE, before applicable discounts     |
| MOTORS            | Permanent magnet synchronous with 77kWh NMC battery |
| TRANSMISSION      | Single-speed  |
| POWER             | 109kW   |
| TORQUE            | 350Nm   |
| 0-100KM/H         | 9.8 seconds   |
| TOP SPEED         | 200kmh  |
| POWER CONSUMPTION | 16.6kWh/100km                                       |
| CHARGING CAPACITY | 11kW AC; 144kW DC                                   |
| EV RANGE          | 530km   |
| AGENT             | Eurokars EV   |
| RATING            | ★★★★★   |

the job done.

You can connect your phone – whether Apple CarPlay or Android Auto – to the system wirelessly or with a cable.

The car is also equipped with

head-up display, which is uncommon among Category A COE models.

There are plenty of driving aids on board, including a speed-limit warning which was a bit unreliable during the test drive. It flagged 40kmh instead of 70kmh on part of Adam Road, triggering chimes.

Since speed-limit monitoring, along with others like lane assist and driver monitoring, resets each time the car is started, the programmable hotkey is a lifesaver. It allows the driver to restore the preferred setting with a single click, bypassing the need to toggle each feature through the screen.

Accommodation at the back certainly feels like an upgrade over previous MGs, with more room for shoulders, hips and knees.

The adjustable backseat can recline a bit more than usual, which is useful during long drives.

Just as relevant for road-tripping is the spacious boot, which can be expanded from 674 litres to 1,690 litres by folding the rear seats. This is more than sufficient for a family weekend getaway.

Be careful when using the foot-

activated boot opening function. The sensor under the bumper can be overly sensitive, mistaking a casually moving foot as the cue to start closing the boot while you are still loading up the trunk.

Good thing then that the hatch will stop trying to close when something – or someone's neck – gets in its way.

The upholstery is a combination of vegan leather and a suede-like material, which has a muted, almost dusty, look. It is comfortable and holds occupants in place better than fresh, slippery leather.

Overall, the MG's cabin feels more robust and functional than luxurious; more like Toyota than a Lexus, which is not a bad thing for a family car.

The S6's motor output may have been tuned down to comply with the Category A COE criteria, but the car still has plenty of torque – at 350Nm – which is more than the turbocharged 2-litre in a BMW 5-series.

What this means is that the EV delivers effortless progress, even with passengers on board.

The car is more responsive in the

The electric SUV can travel up to 530km on a single charge

## COMPARABLE CONSIDERATIONS

### BYD Sealion 7 Dynamic (\$269,888 with COE, before applicable discounts)

This is the standard-bearer for large electric SUVs. The Sealion 7's cabin feels posher than the MG's, although the popular EV is probably at its best in the more powerful Category B COE form, which also comes with a bigger battery and up to 480km of operating range.

### Tesla Model Y Rear-Wheel Drive 110 (\$105,519 without COE, \$227,153 with latest COE)

Tesla comprehensively ups its game with the facelifted Model Y. The American EV, even in Category A COE version, still feels sprightly, balanced with a pliant ride. It also has a very spacious rear bench which is electrically adjustable.

## Torque Shop

Are drive cars with multi-link rear suspension dynamically superior to those with the torsion beams?

Multi-link suspension systems are more complicated than torsion beam suspensions. As its name suggests, there are several separate linkages, usually five in the overall assembly of the multi-link arrangement.

While this makes it possible for each wheel to move independently of the others on the same axle, the real benefit is in the greater degree of freedom to design the way each wheel moves under different load conditions, terrains and cornering speeds to

achieve the optimum geometry.

The resulting benefits from such a set-up are enough to prompt carmakers to use the technology on both the front and rear axles of the car.

Compared with the relatively simpler Macpherson struts, and especially the rear torsion beam designs, the multi-link systems are more complex to design due to the higher level of precision necessary for the various mounting points on the undercarriage. Having more components also leads to higher material costs.

Multi-link suspensions also take up more space. This can mean sacrificing a bit of cabin space as well.

The torsion beam rear axle, on the other hand, was made popular by the first-generation Volkswagen Golf in 1974, a car that was lauded for its ride and handling characteristics. This was despite the torsion beam layout being rather rudimentary.

With very few components required, the entire assembly was light and compact, barely encroaching into the rear luggage or passenger compartment. This was an important consideration in a compact hatchback like the first-generation Golf.

A transverse beam connects the left and right suspension arms. The truly interesting aspect of its design is that the beam can twist, acting like torsion

spring. If you hold a steel ruler at the two ends and twist, you will get an idea of what the spring effect is like.

While the torsion beam provides the roll stiffness, it also causes some degree of camber and toe angle changes, benefiting ride and handling.

The Golf's legendary handling bears testimony to the genius of the torsion beam rear axle.

The multi-link continues to be the quintessential suspension system, but the torsion beam maintains its place in the suspension design bible for being competent, adaptable, compact and relatively inexpensive. **Shreejit Changaroth**