

Review: Chevy Volt leaves skiers with cash for lift tickets

By Justin Keppler, Ski Channel

Skiers and snowboarders around the world spend millions of dollars in fuel costs every season as they travel to and from their favorite ski resorts. In fact, many would say that the hardest part about each sport is just getting up to the mountain.

With gas prices now reaching astronomical levels, enjoying a day out on the slopes is becoming more and more difficult. It's clear that things simply cannot stay the same. In order to adapt to these ever-increasing transportation challenges, consumers have begun searching for alternative energy sources to fuel their active lifestyles.

There are a number of options currently on the market, with more than 43 all-new models being introduced through 2015. One of the standout electric vehicles on the market today is the 2013 Chevrolet Volt, developed and produced by General Motors.

"It is imperative we seek vehicles like the Chevy Volt. With the popularity of snow sports, and the increasing number of people pursuing the backcountry, this car is a vital part of the answer for the future."

The good folks at Chevy have created the Volt to address the consumers growing concern for fuel efficiency and emission levels. One of the primary features of this electric vehicle line is its extended range. Thanks to an additional gasoline-powered motor-generator, drivers are no longer consumed with anxiety when they stray too far from the nearest EV Charging Station. Feel free to go that extra mile, because when the

battery runs out, the gasoline system will automatically kick in, and your driving experience won't miss a beat.

The EPA rates the Chevy Volt at 98 miles per gallon-equivalent while in all-electric mode. During driving situations that require a combination of gas and electric (like when you're running late for first chair), the vehicle operates at 60 mpg. And when you deplete your battery power, due to you buddy warming up his feet while you were still on the mountain taking a few final runs, you'll still be able to make it down the mountain at an average of 37 mpg (35 city/40 highway) while using the gasoline powered motor-generator.

"Climate change is already effecting our mountains and one of the most effective individual actions we can take to decrease our carbon footprint is to become smarter about how we get there. Battery powered transportation, like the Chevy Volt, is a realistic alternative now that will truly make a difference".

Edmunds, a leading resource for automotive information has put the Chevy Volt to the test to determine if it can truly deliver on its eco-friendly claims. According to Senior Editor and Green Car Expert John O'Dell, "The Chevrolet Volt's nearly 35 miles of all-electric range will get many skiers and boarders up the mountain with no tailpipe emissions, and those who can plug in at the cabin or lodge might be able to do the whole trip gas-free. For those who live farther away from their favorite snow, the Volt's EPA-estimated 60 mpg overall fuel efficiency – gas and electricity combined – still makes it a great green ride."

O'Dell went on to explain, "Using the Volt's seat heaters instead of the cabin heater also will help save battery power and increase all-electric range while still keeping you toasty. And with front wheel drive and traction control, plus a low center of gravity, the Volt's a good snow car when equipped with the proper tires and cables (when required)."

Anyone that knows how to enjoy a day on the snow, recognizes that it is a luxury that should never be taken for granted. To show their continued dedication to addressing climate change, ski resorts around the nation have begun implementing environmentally sustainable practices; such as energy efficient lift systems and snowmaking operations to lessen their carbon footprint. Ski resorts also appreciate that winter sports enthusiasts are typically quick to embrace cutting edge technologies – especially when they have potential environmental benefit.

One shining example is Stevens Pass, which made headlines when they installed the nation's first EV Charging Station in a mountain pass environment. Stevens Pass has established an eco-friendly reputation by not only seeking sustainable methods to preserve and maintain its world-class snow conditions, but also by providing its community with the tools to follow their lead.

“Since we installed our two charging stations in May 2011, we've seen users every month of the year, and have served hundreds of EV drivers so far,” explained Ross Freeman, Environment & Sustainability Manager at Stevens Pass. “Washington State's electrification of U.S. Highway 2 makes an all-electric trip from the city to the mountains (and beyond) entirely possible.”

Freeman went on to say, “We strive to make a real difference in reducing our carbon footprint, and supporting the use of electric vehicles puts us one more step ahead of the competition.”

The ski and snowboard industry has never been afraid of evolution. Each year, exciting changes to products are developed and new ideas are eagerly embraced. When making purchasing decisions for other important facets of life, they expect the same level of commitment to finding a better way. Chevrolet has created a vehicle that not only appeals to those

residing on the forefront of innovation, but anyone with an adventurous spirit.