

Arctic Trucks bets on electric pickup

During the opening of its brand-new facility outside Drammen, Arctic Trucks launched a "world premiere" Hilux rebuilt for electric operation. The off-road specialist believes in a significant market.

For many Arctic Trucks is synonymous with some of the coolest "four-wheelers" available.

Large wheels, wide bodywork and terrain features that make the cars particularly suitable for glacier expeditions and driving in Arctic regions are among the specialties of the brand.

This year, the company which has its origins in Iceland, is celebrating 20 years in Norway. And this week, they moved into a brand new 3,300 (in the near future 4,300) square meter plant at Solbergmoen just outside Drammen.

At this special occasion, they also released the news that they partner with the Dutch company Tembo 4x4 e-LV, and will focus on the electric conversion of the Toyota Hilux.

Friday they showed the first vehicle in Norway. After the rebuilding, the Hilux pickup is no longer called a Toyota, since Toyota is not involved in the conversion, it is now called the Tembo 4x4 e-LV.

Not for the road yet

There are many concepts and plans of building electric pickup ups but we haven't seen a lot of electric pickups in real life.

For example, Tesla entrepreneur Elon Musk has long promised a pickup – but until this moment we are still waiting for it, American company Rivian claims to have R1T ready next year and Ford is electrifying its bestseller F-150. Not to mention Bison, Bollinger and Workhorse.

You will not yet see Tembo 4x4e-LV on the road as the first electric pick up either. It cannot be registered for use on public roads yet, and will initially be sold as a battery-electric machine tool.

- The customers will primarily be mining companies and construction contractors who will run emission-free inside closed areas. And it's actually a pretty big market. We have been in contact with several of Norway's largest contractors, and they are just wondering how fast we can deliver the car, ”says general manager Ørn Thomsen of Arctic Trucks Norge AS.

The reason for this is that mining companies spend large amounts of money on cleaning the air in the mines, and see significant savings if they can use machines and vehicles without local emissions inside the mines.

The car that was shown in Drammen was commissioned by the Swedish mining group Boliden AB.

- Although electric utility vehicles still cost more in purchases than diesel vehicles, it will still be profitable for mining companies because they release the expensive treatment plants. In construction areas, emission requirements are becoming increasingly stringent, which also opens up more electrical machines and cars, says Thomsen.

Renovated in Drammen

At the same time, Arctic Trucks is working with the Norwegian authorities to get the car type-approved for use on the road with white or green license plates.

- How long that process will take is impossible to say about now. However I think that the market for this pickup will be professional customers in construction and public agencies, says Thomsen.

Arctic Trucks sets off its own race in the new plant at Solbergmoen for converting cars to electric.

The company becomes the dealer of the electric pickup for the whole of Scandinavia. Tembo supplies electric motor, battery pack and software in a "conversion kit".

- The customers buy the Toyota Hilux from the dealer in the usual way, so they deliver the car here to us for rebuilding. Then we take out the diesel engine and make other adjustments before we assemble the electrical components, explains Thomsen.

Seeing great potential The

owner and general manager of the Dutch company Tembo 4x4 e-LV, Frank Daams, was present at Arctic Trucks to show off the pickup. The company was started by his father in 1969, then with a focus on agricultural machinery, while Frank took over in 2014.

The company has been working on the development of the electric car for the past 3.5 years. Currently, they have converted eight Land Cruiser 70 series and this one Hilux into electric drive. The eight Land Cruisers are delivered to customers in Ireland, Canada, Australia and Germany.

- We see a global potential to sell at least 600 to 700 cars over the next three years. At the factory in the Netherlands, we have the capacity to convert 100 cars a

year, but we are focusing on several partners such as Arctic Trucks, who can build the cars for their markets – for example we already have partners in Canada and in Australia, says Frank Daams to YrkesBil.no.

According to Daams, the maximum total weight of the electric pickup is 4,000 kilograms, and he states that it can pull trailers with the same weight limitations as the standard Toyota Hilux - but rush to add that, of course, it affects the range dramatically.

Open for sale before the end of the year

Daams also states that Tembo is in dialogue with Toyota, with a possible cooperation in prospect.

- Last week we had six Toyota representatives from Japan visiting us who showed great interest in our project. Hopefully we can get Toyota on-board in the further development of the vehicles, he says.

Ørn Thomsen says that in Scandinavia they will start small with some selected customers, and that the first car will be delivered in August.

Tembo 4x4 e-LV

Engine power (max / continuous): 95/60 kW

Torque (max / continuous): 250/165 Nm

Max speed on road: 80 km / h

Max continuous speed off-road at 15 percent increase: 35 km / h

Max increase: 45 percent

Battery: 28/56 kWh

Range: 80 km (28 kWh) / 120 km (56 kWh)

Charger: 15 kW onboard charger, 2.5 hours from 20 to 80 percent (240V / 32A). 25 kW onboard charger will soon be available and will charge from 20 to 80 percent in one hour.