

USA - ECD Auto Design: E-Type Electric First Drive

Editor: In April 2023 we covered a story about E.C.D Auto Design. The Florida-based company had just announced that the US\$225 million-dollar firm was to become a publicly-traded company and was to build custom EV E-Type's. Zac Palmer, road test editor with automotive website "Autoblog", takes the first one for a drive.

ECD Auto Design E-Type EV

Turns out, making a light, reasonably-powered electric convertible is a great idea.

ECD announced its foray into the E-Type world about a year and a half ago, and by the time we showed up, it'd already produced seven restored and/or heavily modified E-Types.

While one can stick with the original Jaguar powertrain for restoration builds, it's also offering some rather tempting swaps.

If there's something you should know about ECD, it's that this company loves a good American V8, and that's exactly what ECD is offering in the E-Type, too. GM's 450-horsepower LT1 can be plopped under the long hood of the E-Type should you want to turn it into a tire-destroying muscle machine. On the other end of the spectrum is an electric conversion option, which is the E-Type variant we got to drive.

Before you scream "sacrilege!" we won't bury the lead on this one: An all-electric E-Type is actually a hoot to drive.

Admittedly, what makes it fun to drive is also what makes other modern-day sports cars fun to drive. It's lightweight at just 2,940 pounds, features a 51/49 weight balance, has a 305-horsepower motor doling out power solely to the rear wheels and you can take the roof



off! Today's EVs, even the smaller ones, are considerably heavier than this one.

Also, you simply can't go out and buy a new electric convertible sports car, because they don't exist.

Of course, this EV is light and massively characterful to drive because it's quite literally an E-Type from the 1970s that's had its inline-six heart ripped out. There are no regulations or crash standards it needs to adhere to, so you're left with what is essentially a "new" E-Type, but better. And we do mean better, too, because ECD will install an upgraded suspension and braking system for more modern (and safer) dynamics.

The ride is a good bit stiffer than a regular E-Type, but the body control and roll resistance is much improved, lending greater confidence when driving it with vigour. You'll still need to use a fair amount of lock from the delicate wooden steering wheel to get turning action, but this electric E-Type genuinely feels light on its feet and balanced when you swing it left or right.

The brakes do a slightly worse job of masquerading as modern performance car brakes, but they're still better than what stock brakes from the 1960s or 1970s will give you. Plus, you can turn the regenerative braking on or off depending on whether you want the car to automatically decelerate once you lift off the throttle – ECD says it's working on a one-pedal drive mode for future builds, too.

Slamming the throttle brings the instant-on shove of a performance EV, and the corresponding electric whine you can hear with the roof off is entertaining. We'd guess the 0-60 mph time is right around 5 seconds as it stands with the 305-horsepower motor, but ECD says it's working on developing a more powerful 450-horsepower electric motor for those who want even better acceleration.

After driving the E-Type around at its current power level, though, we're left wondering if more power would make the experience any better. The E-Type was used in racing many years ago, but as a road car, this amount of power with its corresponding suspension and braking capabilities feels perfectly in balance.

As for areas of improvement, ECD says it's constantly working with its battery supplier Ampere EV to fine-tune the software and improve battery performance (we actually lost drive momentarily on our test route due to a software glitch, but a quick cycle of the key had us back up and running normally).

The 42-kilowatt-hour battery pack itself – the only size option – fits snugly under the E-Type's long clamshell hood, while



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the motor and running gear route their way back through the chassis. ECD claims its electric E-Type can do about 200 miles of city driving or 140 miles of highway driving.

You can recharge it at a DC fast charger with a CCS plug, and it charges at a maximum rate of 50 kW, allowing you to go from 0-100% in about 45 minutes. That's very slow by modern EV standards, but perhaps acceptable for a retromod that seems unlikely to venture off on many lengthy road trips.

ECD says that by the end of 2024, it'll support Tesla's NACS plug, but folks who take delivery of their E-Types between now and then will be given

adapters, and eventually the company will install NACS ports in its cars.

The E-Types retain as much of the original car as possible. ECD can buy new body panels directly from Jaguar, and it keeps the exterior looking about as faithful to its original form as can be. That's where the originality of the appearance ends, though. The colors, upholstery, trim and pretty much anything to do with the appearance can be customized to your heart's content. All of the cars are painted and put together on-site and then tested for several hundred miles before they're ultimately delivered to customers around the country.

In a word, the end products are beautiful. Then again, this is an E-Type. When has that ever not been the case?

Pricing for the E-Type restoration begins at US\$299,995 (A\$444,000) and only goes up from there depending on whatever luxury or powertrain options you may choose.

The end product is essentially a brand-new E-Type with whatever form of motivation excites you. We can vouch for the electric version being great fun to drive, but an LT4 boomed by us while visiting the site, and it's nearly as tempting.

And don't worry, traditionalists. ECD is happy to restore (and even improve) the original inline-six or V12 that these E-Types came with from the factory. However, the company warns that you're in for an entirely different maintenance experience over the lifetime of the vehicle should you pass up the modern powertrains.

No matter the choice, a brand-new E-Type built to these standards is some forbidden fruit that very few builders in the world can give you.

To read Zac Palmers full story goto: [Autoblog E-Type EV](#)

