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The horseless carriage, electrified in New York

By Sean McFarland **Electric vehicles** **New York auto show**

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Horseless eCarriage Prototype
(Sean McFarland)



With animal rights activists calling for the end of the horse-drawn carriage era, several companies have begun fielding equine-friendly alternatives. One proposal put forth by a Florida company at the 2014 New York auto show attempts to preserve the romance of a cruise through Manhattan's most famous park, without the horsepower.

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The horse-drawn carriages of Central Park have been a staple of New York City tourism since the early 1900s. But while these chariots carry thousands of awe-struck visitors through New York City's largest park every year, they have recently come under attack, with critics – including Mayor Bill de Blasio – citing what they call inhumane treatment and boarding of the animals at the front.

Jason Wenig, owner of a high-end coachwork and fabrication business, [The Creative Workshop](#), proposes the Horseless eCarriage. This electric leviathan is a homage to the classic cars of the "brass era". However, unlike the polished vehicles of the early 20th century, Wenig's creation is electric.

With a claimed 100-mile range, the front-engine, rear-drive coach generates the equivalent of 84 horsepower and a top speed of 30 mph. Charging its lithium iron phosphate battery from a 220-volt outlet should take six hours, according to the company. For a vehicle that weighs about 7,500lbs when filled to its eight-passenger capacity, this carriage is no dainty surrey with a fringe on top.

The green and black carriage is awash in clever details, such as LED turning signals housed in oil lamps, three-abreast rear seating and even historical New York guidebooks on the seatback. For all this, Wenig argues that his creation is cheap to build and maintain – at least relative to keeping a team of horses in hay.

The eCarriage, however, is no shoe-in. It must secure political backing, both from elected officials and in the form of grant money to offset vehicle costs to carriage operators – who work privately. Regardless of whether this creation ends up seeing Center Drive, its nostalgia-baiting design and sheer girth are enough to overshadow many cars at the auto show.

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