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This Should End Well: Harley-Davidson Vows to Go All-electric

A 300-pound, hairy wrestler in a pink tutu; ice cream and bacon; doughnuts and seafood. While certain things just don't go together, all three preceding combinations may work better than what has just been called inevitable: Harley Davidson's entire line of motorcycles going electric.

This was proclaimed the future of the storied motorcycle brand by none other than its CEO, Jochen Zeitz. Per the [Robb Report](#) (RR):

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Author: [Selwyn Duke](#)

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“At some point in time, Harley Davidson will be all-electric,” the executive [recently told \[architecture and design magazine\] Dezeen](#). “But that’s a long-term transition that needs to happen. It’s not something you do overnight.”

Zeitz’s pronouncement seems guaranteed to make a not-insignificant portion of the manufacturer’s customer base cringe. For many enthusiasts, the thing that really sets a Harley apart from other motorcycles — American-made or otherwise — is a thunderously loud internal combustion engine. But the company knows that no matter how important those large-displacement mills might be change is on the horizon.

Okay, it’s not *quite* as crazy as it sounds (but almost), as the RR states that apparently-suicidal Harley plans to “ease its way into” ~~electrøcutiøn~~ electrification.

“It takes decades, right?” Zeitz told Dezeen. “But you have to also think in decades rather than just thinking about what year and the short-termism that everyone is exposed to as a public company. We have to think about the transition, and preparing for that transition is why LiveWire [the name of Harley’s first electric motorcycle, launched in 2018] was born.”

Alright, so maybe it’s not time to sell short on Harley stock just yet. But some observers certainly aren’t optimistic about Zeitz’s vision for the future. For instance, American Thinker editor-in-chief Thomas Lifson [has the company](#) on “corporate suicide watch” and asks, “what does Harley-Davidson really have to offer aside from a bad boy image connected to loud exhaust pipes and the buy-American preferences of some motorcycle gangs clubs?”

“I am not a biker nor an expert on motorcycles, but I spent a lot of time as a consultant to two of the world’s biggest auto manufacturers and talked to a lot of engineers about manufacturing tolerances and other arcana of internal combustion engines, and I know that Harleys are not exactly pushing the frontier of excellence,” Lifson continues. “In fact, one American executive with whom I worked was an enthusiast and drove a BMW machine, while others praised the engine technology of Japanese manufacturers.” Experienced motorcyclist commenters under Lifson’s piece seconded his opinion.

Lifson also has a theory as to what may be driving Harley’s hara-kiri compulsions. “Perhaps it is just an attempt to pre-empt critics,” he suggests, “possibly including the CEO’s college indoctrinated children, claiming that Harley emissions are making ‘the oceans boil’ as Al Gore recently claimed at Davos, after deplaning from his Gulfstream private jet, the Flying Squirrel.”

Or maybe it’s ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) pressure from multinational investment management corporation BlackRock, which not only [refuses to invest](#) in “un-woke” companies but also pressures other entities to not do so.

Then again, the explanation could be full-throttle acceptance by Zeitz of our zeitgeist. Mindful that he’s a *German* businessman, consider that aside from his perhaps not fully understanding the American market, Germans also appear to [have greater interest](#) in electric vehicles (EVs) than most any other nationality. This isn’t really surprising, either. With 50 percent of my ancestors hailing from Germany, having spent much time in the nation, and being a keen observer of cultural differences, I’ve noted that Germans are, well, let’s say, an unusual bunch given to embracing fads.

EVs are a fad, too — and a bad fad. Famed investigative journalist John Stossel [reported](#) on this [late last year](#) (must-see videos below).

The bottom line is that, [according](#) to [many analysts](#), EVs pollute more on balance than conventional autos do (the former’s production is quite energy intensive and requires the mining and use of rare-earth elements), run on electricity generated mainly with fossil fuels, and could overwhelm a power grid that’s already strained in certain places, such as California. As for the wind and solar “renewables,” they’re unrealistic, low-yield energy

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sources that simply cannot provide the juice necessary to power civilization.

Returning to Harley, Zeitz could, again, just be playing to a woke audience with his electric ambitions, much as the Chinese do when humoring us about cooperation on “climate change.” Regardless, planning “decades” down the road is both dubious and quite optimistic. After all, Harley isn’t the only thing that may not exist as we know it in 30 years — there’s the world, too.