

PRESS INFORMATION

Isny, July 2021

Short version

E.HOME Alps Challenge: successful practical test for the first caravan with electric drive

To enable caravan journeys with electric cars without losing range, the caravan and motorhome manufacturer Dethleffs developed the electrically driven E.HOME Caravan in cooperation with the Erwin Hymer Group and ZF. On a demanding caravan tour across the Alps with a prototype, the project partners have now proved that the E.HOME concept is ready for market.

Any caravan owner who has ever made their way across the Alps will be familiar with the scenario: The weight and increased drag of the caravan increase fuel consumption. For an electric car, towing a caravan can quickly reduce the range to half or even less. In 2018, Dethleffs and its project partners Erwin Hymer Group and ZF Friedrichshafen AG presented a potential solution for the first time: the prototype of a caravan with an electric drive – the E.HOME Caravan. With the E.HOME Alps Challenge, the project partners now wanted to use a 386 km long route across the Alps – popular among caravan owners – to prove that the electric drive of the caravan can compensate for the higher energy consumption caused by towing and that the towing vehicle can reach its usual range even with a caravan attached.

The route starts at the Dethleffs factory in Isny im Allgäu in Germany, follows the Fernpassstraße across the Fern Pass and continues along the A12 and A13 motorways past Innsbruck across the Brenner Pass. In Italy, it continues along the A22 through Bozen and Trento on to Riva on the northern shore of Lake Garda. For the early morning start, the battery pack of the towing vehicle and the caravan were fully charged. On the first km towards the Fern Pass it already became evident that the electrically driven caravan not only has a positive influence on the range but also on the comfort and safety of driving. Acceleration like a solo vehicle, stable cornering thanks to the low centre of gravity and reliable straight-

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ahead driving because the outfit remains stretched apart even on downhill sections – all these factors not only make driving feels safer, but actually provide a measurable improvement.

At 80 to 84 km/h on the motorway and an overall average speed of 62.3 km/h, the fully electric outfit was on its way south. At the Brenner Pass, 200 km after the start of the journey and 180 km from the destination, both battery packs still had more than 50 per cent charge. Strong headwind, however, slowed down the E.HOME outfit and dampened the optimism of the team. Would the headwind result in higher energy consumption? Would the remaining energy be enough to reach the destination?

After 6 hours and 12 minutes and 386 km of taxing Alpine roads, the E.HOME car/caravan combination reached the town centre of Riva on Lake Garda – without any recharging along the way. Quite to the contrary: The charging indicator even showed a little remaining energy in the battery packs of both vehicles. The overall result: 82 kWh of energy consumed by the towing vehicle and 74 kWh by the E.HOME Caravan. And beaming faces among the development engineers of the project partners Dethleffs, Erwin Hymer Group and ZF.

The E.HOME Alps Challenge provided the evidence: The E.HOME Caravan raises travelling with a caravan to a whole new level. The E.HOME Caravan ensures that caravanning holidays with an electric towing vehicle are no longer limited by range while also offering unrestricted driving pleasure with maximum safety.

Dethleffs Managing Director Alexander Leopold: “Although there are still a few hurdles to overcome until we reach production maturity and approval capability – the E.HOME Caravan developed by Dethleffs, the Erwin Hymer Group and ZF is already a practical and future-proof solution for environmentally friendly and ecologically sensible caravanning for everyone. This once again allows us to prove our claim of being a caravanning pioneer.”

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About Dethleffs

“Not without my family!” This decision taken by Arist Dethleffs in 1931 inspired him to design Germany’s first ever caravan, which he called the “Wohnauto” (original camper) – all because the ski pole and horsewhip manufacturer wanted to have his family by his side when he went on long business trips. Very few people were familiar with the word “leisure” back then; family holidays were a privilege and tourism was still in its infancy. The invention of the Dethleffs caravan marked the beginning of a new era – especially for the company, which eventually devoted itself entirely to the production of caravans, followed by motorhomes.

The pioneering spirit of Arist Dethleffs can still be felt throughout the company to this day. It can be found in the ongoing development of model ranges, in the countless innovations and, needless to say, at the heart of the Dethleffs camping story – the family. The company has had close ties with Isny im Allgäu since the very beginning and, with its position as a “friend of the family”, has its sights firmly set on the core values of the brand.

In addition to motorhomes and caravans from the Dethleffs brand, camper vans and urban vehicles for the Pössl and Crosscamp brands are also developed and produced in Isny.

Erwin Hymer Group

The Erwin Hymer Group is a 100 percent subsidiary of Thor Industries, the world’s leading manufacturer of recreational vehicles with more than 25,000 employees worldwide. The Erwin Hymer Group unites motorhome and caravan manufacturers as well as accessory specialists, hire services and financing services under one roof. The motorhome and caravan brands Buccaneer, Bürstner, Carado, Crosscamp, Compass, Dethleffs, Elddis, Eriba, Etrusco, Hymer, Niesmann+Bischoff, Laika, LMC, Sunlight and Xplore, the motorhome rental companies Crossrent, McRent and rent easy, the chassis specialist Goldschmitt, the accessories specialist Movera and the touring portal freeontour all belong to the Erwin Hymer Group. Further information can be found at www.erwinhymergroup.com.