

# Built for Speed

## Japan's Electric Aspark Owl Does 0-to-60 MPH in 1.9 Seconds!

Jack McGuinn, Senior Editor

The feat doesn't compare with breaking the sound barrier for the first time—but try and tell street-legal hyper car enthusiasts that.

We are referring to the fact that on February 11, Japan's Aspark Owl electric hypercar tested at 0–60 mph in 1.9 seconds—a “ridiculous” achievement, as *Top Gear* ([topgear.com](http://topgear.com)) describes it. For perspective, the Owl outdid familiar, gas-powered beasts such as the Bugatti Chiron (2.3 seconds) and the Lamborghini Aventador (2.7 seconds). Of perhaps greater apples-to-apples, competitive significance, the electric Aspark Owl's 1.9 seconds has easily eclipsed the 0–60 performance of the Tesla Model S P100D (2.28 seconds). Beyond *Top Gear*, the Owl's performance has captured the attention of industry publications *Car and Driver* ([caranddriver.com](http://caranddriver.com)), *Jalopnik* ([jalopnik.com](http://jalopnik.com)), *Motor Trends* ([motortrends.com](http://motortrends.com)), and—a seemingly less likely source—*Forbes* ([forbes.com](http://forbes.com)).

Then again, perhaps *Forbes'* coverage of the event does in fact make sense, in that much of the magazine's readership is comprised of millionaires and billionaires. You see, the Aspark Owl carries a price tag of \$4.4 million dollars, and only 50 units will be produced. One wonders what the dreaded “destination fee” could be for such a vehicle; and leasing is probably not an option.

Aspark Co. Ltd., R&D division, announced in early 2014 its intention to produce “the world's fastest accelerating electric car.” Just Google Aspark Owl and you'll be taken to sites with photos and videos galore; Facebook is a likely resource and seems to be the only online source with video showing the Owl's engine. (In fact, the Owl has two engines—one for each axle.) The carmaker—referred to by *Jalopnik* as “a mysterious Japanese company that is primarily a technical consulting firm”—is indeed a bit—*mysterious*.

But check it out at [aspark.com](http://aspark.com); there you'll find photos of the car and home movie-looking video of the acceleration test. Speaking of which—unless you've got some skin in the game as an investor or are part of the design-and-build crew—the test is about as exciting as listening to the grass grow. 1.9 seconds? Blink or sneeze—you've missed it.

There is also a caveat regarding the 1.9 mark. The Owl was outfitted with what some refer to as non-street-legal Hoosier racing tires to accommodate the Owl's 563 all-wheel lb-ft of torque. Nevertheless, as *Jalopnik's* Bradley Brownell puts it, “A 1.921-second 0–60 is a 1.921-second 0–60.” Also pointed out is the fact that most of power used to run the car was provided by “super capacitors” rather than batteries.



Introduced at the 2017 Frankfurt International Auto Show, the Owl claims 430 hp as well as all that torque, and weighs in at a light-weight 1,900 lbs. Described at *Jalopnik* as having a “space frame wrapped in a carbon fiber body,” the car somehow reminds of a cigarette boat on wheels. Upon first sight—it looks a bit batty—as in Batmobile. It's also a mere low-riding 39 inches tall.

Also, according to *Jalopnik*, “(The Owl team) apparently prioritized weight over range, as the car only promises 93 miles of total driving distance per charge. Between the resulting light curb weight, a 4.44 final-drive ratio, and enormously wide tires to take all that torque (275 section fronts and 335s out back), the recipe for success seems like it might be there.” And, the site reports, “The body only weighs 110 pounds—leaving the remaining 1,790 pounds to the chassis, powertrain and drivetrain.”

This all sounds sexy and exciting. But a question presents: Who would need a car that does 0–60 in 1.9 seconds? What do or can you do with it? Where, except maybe the Autobahn, can you safely put such a car through its paces without ending up with a fistful of speeding tickets—or worse? Yes, we all have our moments of goosing the speed limit, but that's often because maybe, for example, we're running late for something important. The Owl, says *Jalopnik*, “could soon become the zippiest car you'll ever pull up next to at a stoplight.” OK—imagine two cars waiting out a red light—one the Aspark Owl, the other a Ford Focus. Waiting for the green light, are you the one anxiously revving the engine as you prepare to race off in the 0–60-in-1.9-seconds Owl? Or are you the one in the Ford, maybe obliviously listening and seat-dancing to Fleetwood Mac?

Perhaps the answer is that if you can afford to buy one, you can afford to develop your very own proving grounds-type property where you can satisfy your need-for-speed fixation without killing anyone. An expensive hobby for sure, but when money is no obstacle the Aspark Owl should provide many hours of speeding-like-crazy enjoyment. **PTE**