

Style Crusader

LOOKING GOOD WHILE SAVING THE EARTH IS A DYNAMIC CHALLENGE. LIN WENJIAN TAKES POWER STYLIST **KAREN NG** ON A DAY TRIP IN BMW'S SWANKY HYDROGEN-POWERED 7 SERIES





WHEN BEAUTY AND A breathtaking behemoth get together, sparks fly. For one day in the life of vivacious Karen Ng, transport around town was the BMW Hydrogen 7, the world's first liquid hydrogen powered premium car with almost zero emissions.

Raised in Singapore, Ng spent 13 years in Hong Kong before returning home in late 2006. Having studied image styling in London, the head turner established Glitz by Karen Ng. An exclusive style consultant, she travels frequently to Europe to source the latest fashion ranges and accessories for her clientele. This glamour girl certainly knows the high life.

Noon

Ng's entourage picked up the state-of-the-art car from the BMW CleanEnergy Pavilion, a futuristic, glass and steel structure located at the corner of Beach and Ophir Roads. Following a smooth drive to Passion Hair Salon at Palais Renaissance, the car waits while Ng receives the finishing touches to her make-up. Despite an unrelenting downpour, she is in high spirits as she slips her svelte frame into the car's plush cabin while the assigned driver gallantly shelters her with a large umbrella.

Ng's first car was a BMW and the brand is on the list of luxury cars that she likes to be seen in. The BMW Hydrogen 7 has all the hallmarks of a typical BMW with one fundamental exception – the car is powered by hydrogen.

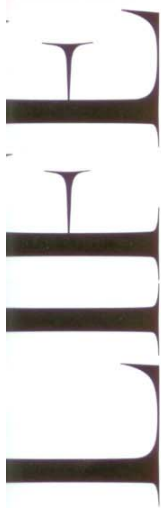
12.30 pm

Next stop: Au Petit Salut for lunch. Situated in a cosy, standalone three-storey building in the Dempsey-Minden cluster, the restaurant is run by Alice Ang, Ng's godmother. After fine French fare, Ng ascends the stairs to the third floor to peruse Salut Lifestyle's eclectic range of furnishings and accessories.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Karen Ng at Passion Hair Salon; stepping out of the car for lunch; at Salut Lifestyle; learning about the car; BMW Hydrogen 7 engine



RIGHT AND ABOVE Karen at The Link Boutique
TOP RIGHT BMW Hydrogen 7

Back in the car, Ng takes a look at the information about the clean energy technology powering the vehicle: "The ride is so smooth, I would not have realised it is hydrogen-fuelled. But it feels so good that I'm not destroying the environment." Performance is at a comparable level to those models equipped with a petroleum engine. Driving dynamics and motoring refinement are on par, and, as a result, the driving experience is of the highest standard.

2.30 pm

As a sophisticated trendsetter who often shops – both for work and leisure – a day in Ng's colourful life would not be complete without an hour or two in Singapore's top shopping districts. Today is no exception as she strides into The Link Boutique at Palais Renaissance to check out the latest clothes, shoes and bags.

This was a date with the future: an introduction to environmentally friendly transportation

3.30 pm

Nothing eases a day of shopping better than an invigorating session of foot reflexology, especially if it is administered by a qualified Chinese physician. Ng's feet are pampered at the lavishly appointed St Gregory Spa at Parkroyal hotel on Beach Road.

4.30 pm

The day's itinerary draws to a close as the handsome car makes a zippy journey to Ng's office at Ngee Ann City. Her parting question? "Will this BMW be available soon in Singapore?" No: this was a date with the future and tomorrow's world; an opportunity to experience hydrogen as an alternative to fossil fuel; and an introduction to environmentally friendly sustainable transportation that will become more widespread once infrastructure is in place, such as hydrogen filling stations.

Currently, there are only 100 BMW Hydrogen 7s worldwide. They are not for sale but are on loan to public figures who showcase the technology to the general public. **■**



RUNNING ON WATER

The future is hydrogen. That it is an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuels – one of the contributors to the greenhouse effect – is a bonus. Weight for weight, its fuel value is three times that of petrol. Hydrogen has always been used in space travel for space shuttles and boosters.

Recognising this trend, the silver-blue BMW Hydrogen 7 is the first volume-produced car powered by hydrogen. The result is an almost emission-free drive. A small cloud of water vapour is all you see from the exhaust. Due to the lack of hydrogen fuelling stations worldwide, though, the engine of the Hydrogen 7 is designed to switch to petrol once the hydrogen tank is empty.

On the appearance front, except for the small button on the steering wheel labelled "H2" – short for hydrogen – these majestic marques boast all the attributes of its acclaimed cousins, the 7 series. From its sleek double headlights to the arching silhouette, the Hydrogen 7 is breathtaking both when stationary and in motion.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: BMW HYDROGEN 7

ENGINE V12-Cylinder
ACCELERATION 0 to 100 kph in 9.5 seconds
TOP SPEED 230 kph
HORSEPOWER 260
CAPACITY 5,972 cc
OUTPUT 190 kW
RANGE (H2) Approximately 200 km
RANGE (PETROL) Approximately 500 km
FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED) 3.6 kg/100 km for hydrogen and 13.9 litre/100 km for petrol
CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSION (COMBINED) 5 g/km for hydrogen and 332 g/km for petrol
AGENT Performance Motors, 315 Alexandra Road. Tel: 6319 0100

BMW HYDROGEN 7 IMAGE: BMW