

H-racer

The toy that makes oil companies tremble

Hold the future in the palm of your hand this month. Then watch it zoom around the living room. The 6-inch-long toy car called the H-racer does what Ford and Toyota still can't: convert water into hydrogen with solar power.

When Shanghai-based developers Horizon Fuel Cell Technologies unveiled the racer last year, *Time* magazine called it one of the year's best inventions. Company co-founder Taras Wankewycz admits it was created by accident. "We were testing a thin-film fuel cell technology in our labs," he says. "To demonstrate the power-conversion device on a small scale, we mounted it on an off-the-shelf toy car we found lying around the office. Our eureka moment came when we looked at the demonstration and thought, *Why not turn this into a real toy?*"

The fuel cell-powered car comes with a tiny refueling station. Just fill the tank with tap water and plug in the solar panel. Bubbles rising in the water signal oxygen formation. In 10 minutes, you're ready to roll. Flip the switch and watch the car travel up to 100 feet on one tank. And because the toy uses only about eight cubic centimeters of oxygen and hydrogen to form electrical energy without combustion, there's no chance of another Hindenburg on your street.

Wankewycz hopes to eventually roll out full-size fuel cell cars to reduce America's dependence on oil. "For this technology to be successful, it's better to start small and simple," he says. And that begins with the design; the company made the toy out of non-toxic, recyclable materials. Not that we plan to throw out ours anytime soon. We're still playing with it. \$99, amazon.com

Fuel for Thought
Can this toy car save the planet?