The drivers who can't offload their crap Teslas: Frustrated sellers say they're being offered 'demoralising' money for EV cars - with one owner blaming Elon Musk's 'anti-woke' behaviour

- Telsa owners in the UK say they're struggling to offload their used cars
- READ MORE: **Tesla's UK sales plunged 50% in a year as Chinese rival BYD sold almost twice as many EVs last month**

By JOANNA TWEEDY, ASSISTANT EDITOR, LIFESTYLE & TRAVEL

When **Tesla** first cruised into the mainstream UK car market in 2014, **Elon Musk**'s sleek, minimalist Model S - £49,900 for the most basic version - felt like it'd landed from the future, a vision of **vegan** leather seats, cutting edge software and panoramic glass roof. However, in just over a decade, the Tesla has gone from a shiny battery-powered status symbol for the eco-conscious middle classes to, well, a vehicle with a serious image problem.

Early adopters who traded in their diesel or petrol vehicles and got on board with Musk's vision have watched on aghast as the world's richest man - estimated to be worth around £490 billion, has become ever more political.

And UK owners now desperate to sell the electric vehicles, widely known as EVs, say they're being hit with crushing depreciation.

One seller in Kent says he's been left 'distraught' at how hard it's proving to secure a fair price for a Tesla Model X 90D that he paid £60,000 for just four years ago.

He blames the world's richest man directly, saying Musk's controversial views and often bizarre behaviour has tarnished Tesla forever.

He's equally unimpressed with Chancellor Rachel Reeves, who slapped new charges on electric vehicles in November's budget.

Last year, Tesla saw its total revenue fall by 3 per cent while profits tumbled by a massive 61 per cent. Meanwhile, Chinese rival BYD is flourishing. Figures released this week showed Tesla sold 44 per cent less electric cars than BYD in the UK in January.

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Low offers: Max Teh, a retired venture capitalist living in Kent, says he's been left demoralised by the apparent plunge in his car's worth, after he bought it for £60,000 just four years ago

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In the years since Tesla went mainstream in the UK - in 2014 - Elon Musk has become a much more controversial figure; pictured making a gesture at President Trump's inaugural parade in Washington last year

Self-proclaimed anti-woke warrior Musk seems to have fallen out of love with the automobile that made his name; the tech boss announced in January that Tesla would no longer build its iconic Model S and Model X cars and would instead invest billions into advancing artificial intelligence and robots.

Those who spent tens of thousands of pounds - a new top-of-the-range Tesla costs in excess of £100,000 - buying into Musk's brand say they've been left high and dry.

Retired venture capitalist Max Teh, 60, who lives in Tunbridge Wells in Kent, is currently trying to sell his 'beloved' Model X 90D ahead of a move abroad later this year.

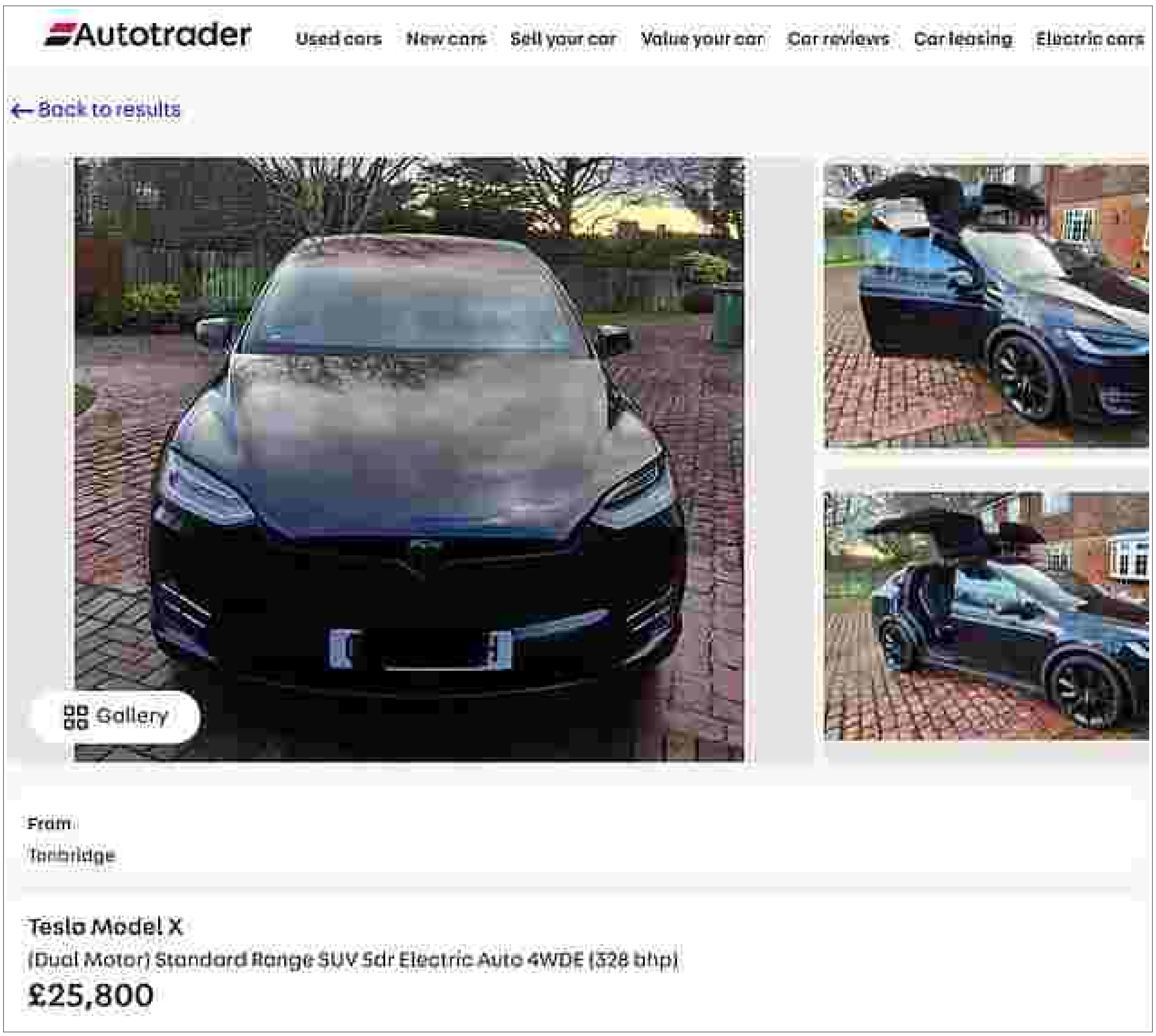
In 2022, he paid £60,000 for the 2017-registered car but fears he'll get a third of that cost back.

His X 90D has had just two owners including himself and cost over £100,000 when it rolled off the forecourt.

It's well loved, garaged everyday and has only been serviced by Tesla. Agents such as webuyanycar.com are currently valuing similar vehicles at just £11,500.

Teh says he's so distraught by the low offers he's received so far that he's considering shipping the car to the EU country he's moving too.

Speaking to the Daily Mail this week, Teh, who describes himself as a 'hardcore fan' of the brand and the technology - he's only driven a Tesla for the last 13 years - says he's been devastated by just how much his car has plummeted in value.



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The advert on AutoTrader for Max Teh's 'beloved' Tesla Model X 90D - the 60-year-old told the Daily Mail he's convinced that Elon Musk's Right-wing views are behind the depreciation

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View gallery

The immaculate vehicle has had just two owners and is kept in a garage overnight, and has been serviced by Tesla

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An 'anti Elon' bumper sticker that's become a common site on Teslas on both sides of the Pond

He says: 'I'm looking for around £26,000, less than half the price I paid for it, or about a quarter of the price of when it was new... but so far offers have been pretty low, and it's demoralising.'

The retiree won't reveal what the lowest offer he's had is, but says: 'They've been very disappointing - I've had a number of people on **Facebook** telling me it's only worth £16,000! As a good used car, the price shouldn't drop so much over four years.'
Does he think Musk's behaviour has impacted his car's resale value?

'Yes! Experiencing such a price drop definitely has to have something to do with Elon Musk's politics and behaviour.

'There was an obvious price drop and brand damage when Elon became involved in the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and that particular gesture that he made at a Trump rally.'

He's referencing the controversial arm movement Musk made in Washington on President Trump's Inauguration Day last year, in which he thanked Donald Trump's supporters for paving the way back to the White House.

Musk slapped his hand on his chest and extended his arm straight outward and upward with his palm facing downwards.

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Ginny Buckley, the chief executive of Electrifying.com, the electric car buying and advice site, says for many in the market for a new EV, there are now just too many other great EV car brands available... that don't come with a controversial CEO

The Tesla, Space X and X CEO hit out at critics at the time who suggested the gesture looked like a Nazi salute, writing on his social media platform X that the '"everyone is Hitler" attack is sooo tired'.

Seller Teh says: 'I'm an innocent bystander and a loyal fan of the brand and technology but I am hit because of his behaviour and politics.

'The backlash from his involvement in the Trump administration reverberates so far and deep that it's felt even now and is continuing.'

There are, of course, other major factors attributing to potential depreciation beyond the Tesla CEO's occasionally bizarre behaviour.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced in November that electric vehicles will be subject to a mileage-based electric Vehicle Excise Duty (eVED) charge from April 2028, costing the average driver an extra £250 per year.

In London, electric vehicle drivers now have to pay the £13.50 congestion charge to travel into the capital's charge zone. Pure battery-powered EVs had been eligible for a 100 per cent discount, but on January 2 this year, that was reduced to 25 per cent for cars, and 50 per cent for vans and lorries.

The EV discount will be cut further from March 4, 2030 to 12 per cent for cars and 25 per cent for vans and lorries.

Teh thinks the changes have also had a knock-on effect on his resale price. 'The UK Government should not blow hot and cold on the zero-emission policy and the push for EVs to replace ICE [internal combustion engine] cars over time or the momentum will be lost.'

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Will Telsa care that car owners are struggling to sell? It's unlikely, says EV expert Ginny Buckley, who says the brand are now focused on investing in its Optimus humanoid robots and AI technology (pictured)

[redacted]ice site, says customer research suggests UK drivers' love affair with Tesla could be cooling.

'There's no doubt that Tesla absolutely revolutionised the EV market. They brought lots of new buyers into electric vehicles via great cars but also through their charging infrastructure - for a very long time, it was by far the best and most reliable infrastructure in the UK.'

She continues: 'Research we've done at Electrifying.com over the last year shows that the popularity of the brand with car buyers is stalling - around two-thirds of buyers were saying that actually Elon Musk himself was putting them off buying a Tesla.

'He's a polarising and controversial figure and the brand has very much been built around Elon Musk. The two are interchangeable, Tesla and Musk.'

Will the billionaire care that Tesla seems to have fallen out of fashion? Buckley doesn't think it'll keep him awake at night.

'They care that they make money. Musk doesn't care whether he sells autonomous taxis and robots or Model 3 cars.'

There is an interesting flipside too though.

Britons who are more aligned with Musk's politics might actually want to snap up a second-hand Tesla for the first time.

A survey conducted last summer by Buckley's team suggested that 26 per cent of car buyers would be more likely to buy a Tesla because they agreed with Musk's world view.

Registrations of Teslas plunged more than 50 per cent compared to the same month in 2024, with only 718 entering the road in January compared to 1,458 a year earlier, figures shared this week by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show.

In contrast, Chinese rival BYD delivered 4,021 cars to Britons, of which 1,326 were EVs.

make	Month 2026-Jan SUM of total	EV Market Share	2025-Jan SUM of total	EV Market Share	Difference	Growth (%)
FORD	2271	8.12%	933	3.12%	1338	143.41%
KIA	2112	7.55%	1802	6.04%	310	17.20%
VOLKSWAGEN	2073	7.41%	2066	6.92%	7	0.34%
SKODA	1985	7.10%	949	3.18%	1036	109.17%
AUDI	1701	6.08%	1594	5.34%	107	6.71%
BMW	1694	6.06%	2865	9.60%	-1171	-40.87%
RENAULT	1599	5.72%	1012	3.39%	587	58.00%
MERCEDES-BENZ	1410	5.04%	2149	7.20%	-739	-34.39%
BYD	1326	4.74%	1097	3.67%	229	20.88%
VAUXHALL	1324	4.74%	1437	4.81%	-113	-7.86%
HYUNDAI	1178	4.21%	1280	4.29%	-102	-7.97%
POLESTAR	1066	3.81%	762	2.55%	304	39.90%
PEUGEOT	849	3.04%	1716	5.75%	-867	-50.52%
VOLVO	844	3.02%	915	3.06%	-71	-7.76%
MINI	833	2.98%	1206	4.04%	-373	-30.93%
MG	796	2.85%	868	2.91%	-72	-8.29%
CUPRA	763	2.73%	1035	3.47%	-272	-26.28%
LEAPMOTOR	745	2.66%	2	0.01%	743	37150.00%
TESLA	647	2.31%	1510	5.06%	-863	-57.15%
CITROEN	493	1.76%	452	1.51%	41	9.07%
PORSCHE	391	1.40%	741	2.48%	-350	-47.23%
JAECOO	339	1.21%			339	
OMODA	305	1.09%	109	0.37%	196	179.82%
TOYOTA	225	0.80%	470	1.57%	-245	-52.13%
DACIA	178	0.64%	356	1.19%	-178	-50.00%

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View gallery

New Automotive lists the brands with the highest EV sales in January, with Tesla plummeting to 20th overall in the order

Tesla posted the biggest decline in electric-only car sales of any major manufacturer and dropped to the 20th most popular brand, separate analysis by New Automotive reveals

What do those who work in the motor trade think of the brand?

Ben Spriggs-Coe, who runs Grosvenor Garage, in Barnes, in south-west London, says now could be the time to pick up a bargain - if you can handle your money indirectly lining Musk's pocket.

'They've been designed well, they're pretty good cars. Customers we've had who've run Teslas have said they're brilliant cars - and cost effective to run. You may need to replace the battery at the 70 to 80,000 miles mark but then you would get that with any car,' says the garage owner.

'You only need to hop on something like AutoTrader and look at the Teslas, and you'll see some really good bargains and often ones that have already had the battery replaced.

'In effect, you're getting a really good car that's got longevity ahead of it - especially if you go for some of the earlier models that still have the free charging included.'