

Bright prospects for Lada Priora CNG

Despite the Russian automotive industry is retrograde, AutoVAZ has started tests of Lada Priora CNG, a new natural gas vehicle. Five autos have been rolled out for testing, and a rear crash test is being worked out to check the methane tank safety system. Two 80 liter gas tanks are placed beneath the trunk lid, saving room in the storage compartment, and store enough fuel for a range of 330 km. The maximum speed is 175 km/h and the engine's capacity is 88 hp.

The design of the mechanism allows the car to be quickly turned from a natural gas vehicle into a standard gasoline car – when it runs out of methane, the car will automatically switch to gasoline (manual switch is also available). The gasoline tank capacity is 15 liters - enough for a 170 km travel without refueling.

Priora CNG will likely enjoy high demand, especially in the regions where incomes are low. Moreover, Gazprom's program stipulates introduction of 200 automobile gas filling compressor stations in 47 regions across Russia by 2015. Along with already existing stations, their number will approach 418. Demand for Priora CNG will depend on the number of filling stations that provide methane which is substantially cheaper than gasoline.

By Kirill Lebedev