HELL-CAR BURNS MODEL’S HOME

By RICHARD JOHNSON with Paula Froelich and Chris Wilson

VERONICA Webb’s eco-friendly electric car turned into a fire-spewing death machine the other night, burning down her Key West house and killing her beloved dog, Hercules.

Despite her long devotion to various green causes, the six-month pregnant supermodel says she’s through with electric cars after her Chrysler Gem overloaded while charging late last Monday night, sending flames through her air conditioning system and consuming everything in its wake.

"We got the car because it was supposed to be great for the environment, but no one ever warns you how dangerous they are," Webb tells PAGE SIX’s Ian Spiegelman.
Firefighters who rushed to the scene told Webb that good intentions often turn lovely homes into blazing death zones. "They said they see this kind of thing with electric cars all the time," she says. "Electric cars and golf carts are always overloading their chargers and burning up, but no one knows about it."

Among the hidden dangers, Webb says, were four hidden high-powered batteries. "There are four extra batteries that aren’t shown in the [owner’s manual] diagram. They need to be serviced but you can’t service them if you don’t even know that they’re there."

Luckily, Webb was in New York shopping for baby furniture when the blaze erupted, but her new husband, Wall Streeter turned amateur archaeologist George Robb, was asleep in bed. He barely escaped with his life. "By the time the fire department showed up, they didn’t even go inside to look for survivors because they assumed that anyone left inside was long dead. They said George got out with 30 seconds to spare."

Her devoted long-haired dachshund, 8-year-old Hercules, was not so lucky. "At first George called me saying Hercules had gotten out and was okay. Then he started saying he was cold. He wasn’t breathing. He couldn’t survive in that smoke."

Hercules, who had a cameo role in Ben Stiller’s "Zoolander," might have survived if Webb’s Gem had been the only electronic device that malfunctioned that night. "Our $4,000 fire alarm system never went off," she says. "All of us blindly trust our fire detectors, and I would hate to see this happen to anyone else."

Webb says that after her insurance company contacted Chrysler, the automaker set up several appointments to inspect the wreckage, but never showed up and never called to reschedule. A Chrysler spokesman did not return our calls.

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