

VOICE AUTOMOBILE



The Choice Between Hybrid, Plug-In Hybrid, and Electric

By Nauman Farooq

It used to be, that if you were looking at getting a car, as far as propulsion was concerned, you only had two choices; gasoline (petrol) or diesel engined vehicles.

Depending on where you live, your choice could expand to include vehicles running on compressed natural gas, propane, or very rarely, hydrogen.

However, most people looking to go further on a single tank of fuel, or those looking to save the environment, look at hybrid vehicles. But, the choices in hybrid-electric vehicles are expanding; so this week, we will look at three different examples, to see which is best!

2018 Toyota Highlander Hybrid: The very first hybrid vehicles the world saw, had a system very similar to the one found in the new Toyota Highlander Hybrid. These vehicles give hybrid-electric assist, to help you save

on fuel. They charge their battery pack while the vehicle is braking, or by sending a small amount of current to the battery pack when the vehicle is cruising on its 3.5L V6 motor (combined system output is 306 hp). While most such vehicles can propel a car under only electric power, the range is extremely small – the Highlander Hybrid barely moved half a kilometer under only electric propulsion. So, such a hybrid vehicle will only marginally improve your fuel economy, and works better in the city than on the highway. During my test week, I recorded an average fuel economy score of 10.4 L/100 km – Toyota claims this model can achieve 8.3 L/100 km. While I don't have personal test figures of the non-hybrid version of the Highlander, I do have figures from the test I did of the Infiniti QX60, which is a similar sized vehicle to the Highlander. The QX60 averaged 11.4 L/100 km, so while the Highlander Hybrid did better, a



1.0 L/100 km advantage is nothing to boast about.

So, the Highlander Hybrid is perhaps not the best example of a conventional hybrid vehicle, but Toyota does have models, like the Prius, which make really good use out of their hybrid systems.

As a vehicle, the new Highlander Hybrid is spacious, comfortable, well equipped, and competitively priced – yours from \$50,950. But, if you want to go further on electric energy, per-

haps the next option will be of more interest to you!

2018 Honda Clarity: The newly introduced, Honda Clarity, is a plug-in hybrid vehicle. The advantage this setup has over the conventional hybrid vehicles, is that it has a much bigger battery pack, which can be charged up by plugging the vehicle to a wall socket – or better, charge it through a dedicated level-two charger, which reduces charge times. So, as an example, if you

plug in your Clarity to a 110-volt level-one charger, it would take you 12 hours to fully charge it up. By using a level-two charger, it took just 2.5 hours to charge the vehicle fully. What does that get you?

According to Honda and the MTO, the Clarity can cover 77 km on electric energy alone – if you need to go further, a 1.5L four-cylinder motor will take you the rest of the way. Total system

Continued on page 10



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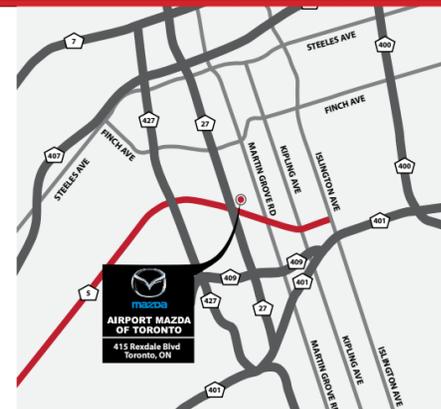
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