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# **HYBRID CARS**

## **WHY BOTHER?**

### **WHY TO INVEST IN A HYBRID VEHICLE AND HOW TO GET THE BEST DEAL!**

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## **Introduction**

The main topic of this discussion is HYBRID VEHICLES.

Like many individuals and groups out there in the real world, we ask the really obvious, but sometimes also tough questions to answer that most struggle with when contemplating the addition of a Hybrid vehicle to their driveway, garage and lifestyle.

Some of the questions go to the fundamentals, like: *Why hybrid vehicles? What are they? Are they any good? What do they cost? Where would they be found? Who uses them? How are they best applied?*

Even more intricate and complex questions surface than at first glance and consideration:

- *How do you make up your mind about hybrid cars?*
- *Is a hybrid vehicle even a viable option and alternative?*
- *Are there certain circumstances that a hybrid would be considered better, more efficient?*
- *What are the actual benefits of hybrid vehicles?*
- *What criteria is there to use and pay special attention to when buying a hybrid vehicle?*

All these questions, inquiry and advocacy of sorts, will unfold in the next 60-pages, as we probe, explore and investigate

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hybrid vehicles. This includes cars, SUV, minivans even concept and alternative, futuristic transportation vehicles, in more detail, we plan on placing them under even closer scrutiny to figure out exactly if it is worthwhile investing in a hybrid car (or not).

For the most part, in our opinion, it is early days yet to say that the jury is in! There is evidence and trends emerging, that hybrids are here to stay and hold the promise of future transportation vehicles. Others think the technology still has a long way to go. It hangs in the balance and sways between these 'extremes' as its development path continues to evolve.

### **To Buy A Hybrid, Or Not To Buy A Hybrid... That Is The Question!**

It is true that a very diverse set of drivers, owners and enthusiasts, (even most people), consider hybrid cars for a variety of different reasons (your own musings and reasons will probably just add to the list here) ...

- As a concept and environmentally sound alternative it shows good global citizenship
- It is a trend that they want to be part of and be associated with

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- Conservation and sustainability of our world, the legacy we leave for our children
- Leading by example and being a pioneer
- Weird-looking and a cool idea to have one, gadget, newest 'toy' to add to the list
- Fuel-economy and saving money, gas
- Less emissions and pollutants into the atmosphere
- Less gasoline/fossil fuel reliant
- Potential investment
- Keeping up with the Joneses!

Whatever YOUR particular incentive, motivation or rationale for getting one, hybrid car sales are soaring. According to recent news-reports in the USA over the last 12 months an increase of 139% was cited. It is a definite trend and here to stay. The wave of the future...undeniably here!

### **The Questions And Rationale Behind Hybrid Vehicles**

The best way to start off writing this book, I thought, was to ask several people (proud new owners, prospective buyers and just the general public at large, across gender, age group and preferences, randomly selected) the same two questions: (i) What are the TOP FIVE reasons to buy/invest in a hybrid as well as (ii) the TOP THREE reasons they would not consider buying a hybrid. (TIP # 1: *You can ask and answer these yourself to, it helps to provide some perspective*)

Most frequent responses regarding reasons to buy:

- Easy to drive, handling and ease of parking
- Fuel efficiency
- Doing my part/good for protecting the environment
- Reduction in fuel emissions
- Reduced engine maintenance costs
- Value, Economical, Purchase price
- Costs to operate
- Cutting edge technology
- Proclaimed longevity

Most frequent responses regarding reasons NOT to buy:

- Added cost to purchase a hybrid vehicle
- Do not like the selection of hybrid vehicles currently available
- A follower, not a leader when it comes to new trends
- Preferences for larger automobiles (for safety reasons)
- Larger vehicles are not yet available in hybrid versions
- Insufficient track record
- Driver and passenger safety concerns
- Lack of storage

The range, scope and depth of the answers received surprised me in some cases, not in others. What are your

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reasons? (TIP # 2: *write them down, sort and prioritize them, it helps later, when you get to the point where you might be stuck between two or more choices, or are trying to compare selection criteria*).

Here is another example of a typical response received on the question of to buy or not to buy...

<p>1. IN YOUR OPINION OR FOR YOU PERSONALLY, WHAT WOULD THE TOP FIVE REASONS, CRITERIA, INCENTIVES OR MOTIVATORS BE FOR YOU TO INVEST/BUY A HYBRID VEHICLE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is no more expensive to purchase.</li><li>▪ Is no more expensive to operate (fuel).</li><li>▪ Is no more expensive to maintain.</li></ul> <p>2. WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE DETERRENTS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS THAT WILL CAUSE YOU NOT TO INVEST/BUY A HYBRID VEHICLE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ None of the vehicles existing today are attractive.</li><li>▪ None of the vehicles are spacious enough.</li><li>▪ None of the vehicles has enough power for a full load in mountain roads.</li></ul> <p>3. IF YOU WERE TO BUY A HYBRID TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD BE THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT YOU WOULD BE LOOKING FOR - LIST AS MANY AS YOU WANT...</p> <p>Style, first, everything else is secondary.</p> <p>Reliability is second, everything else after.</p>
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Also talking with owners of Hybrid vehicles to get the 'facts' and inside scoop, going for a test drive yourself and comparing features and performance according to some pre-set criteria can all help you to make up your mind on what to buy.

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If you are considering a hybrid, maybe getting this book, was your way of figuring out if the value-proposition held anything for you specifically. We wish you well on your selection endeavor and musing on purchasing a hybrid (or not!)

As gas prices keep soaring, with not relief for consumers on the horizon any time soon and fossil fuels not a sustainable, renewable energy source, the sale of hybrids seem to be in a positive correlation. The higher the gas prices goes, the higher the sales tend to be for hybrid vehicles as people try every which way to break free and save a couple of bucks!

### **So what is or what makes a 'hybrid' vehicle?**

A typical hybrid electric vehicle or HEV as the automotive industry aptly quipped and dubbed its newest brain-child and ingenious concepts, is a popular option to consider if you are in the market for a new or replacement vehicle.

But what makes a hybrid a HIBRID vehicle? In simple terms. As the word implies it is a combination, mix or cross between two things. The 'hybrid' actually in effect has TWO engines. One is electric and the other is internal combustion (which we all know, love and are used to). These work on their own, independently, as well as together or collectively/

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collaboratively to make your car go and perform consistently.

The hybrid cars generally run on a either or basis UNTIL the driver would require MORE POWER, or wanted to go much faster, say passing, changing lanes or flooring it. Then the combination of the two engines together deliver the power and performance on-demand that you want and desire.

They can work individually quite well and self-sufficiently, BUT YET, they also collaborate and pool their resources under certain circumstances to give you that extra horses under-hood, willing, capable and able.

They are like flip-sides of a coin, working separately, but combined is their best currency and purpose. They operate almost in tandem.

If you are opting for , or looking particularly for a low emission, fuel efficient and downright wonderfully aerodynamic, automotive style and design, then the Hybrids are for you!

## **Fundamental Steps To Consider When Buying A Hybrid**

1. There is a wide variety and choice of hybrid vehicles already on the market, with lots of newly launched,

concept and alternative innovative hybrids making their way onto the market. Supply and demand fuels and drives this fire further. Do not assume that your choices are limited just because the technology is relatively new. DO NOT GET OR BE CONFUSED OR MISLED BY INDUSTRY VERBIAGE: Learn the terminology, language and culture behind these vehicles. (Tip # 3: Take the time to study the differences, classes and types of hybrid vehicles – it will help you narrow the field and tell the real hybrids from the ‘impostors’)

- (i) Super Ultra Low-Emission Vehicle (90% cleaner than the average new 2002 model year car, according to the California Air Resources Board Standard); and
  - (ii) An Ultra Low-Emission Vehicle (about 50% cleaner than the average new 2001 model year car).  
NOTE:
  - (iii) There are also furthermore zero-emission cars on the road at present, but they are electric vehicles, plug-ins, not HEVs.
2. Self-assess your current situation, commute, driving habits, preferences and needs. How and where you drive your vehicle (most) is a definite valid question to

be asking. This reflection and consideration will help you decide whether an HEV is right for you.

- Typically thought, as a general rule of thumb, hybrid vehicles are reliable and greatly suited for urban and suburban driving:
- The short trips and stop-and-go traffic make for impressive fuel savings, if your car runs on an electric engine at low RPMs.
- Highway and interstate commuters who drive these cars will have lower fuel economy.
- Combination/hybrid engines (combustion/electrical assist) less to no difference on the fuel economy.

3. They say that variety is the spice of life. Choices and options are limited still with Hybrid vehicles and sometimes for the more popular models you might have to wait a while for delivery of yours as well. Lots of hybrids are being introduced in the market and it will be expanding annually. *(Tip # 4: Keep a watchful eye on the car-shows, expos and industry announcements on Hybrids. The market is highly competitive and some automakers are even collaborating to get products to market quicker)*

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4. SLIGHTLY HIGHER COST will still be an issue. They are high in demand, short in supply, complex technology to manufacture and will become cheaper as the market grows. Some aftermarket offerings are already making its way into the marketplace.

5. Availability and maintenance might be an issues in certain areas (outside or urban centers for example). Repair and auto-body shops that work on hybrid cars have to be researched closely as well to ensure smooth operating and regular service as required, done by someone who is familiar and certified to work on these cars.

Take advantage of numerous tax deductions and even free parking for the purchase of a hybrid car.

If you are considering a serious purchase of a Hybrid vehicle

- Consider all the pros and cons, benefits and costs of a Super Ultra Low- and Ultra Low-Emission vehicles
- Keep in mind that the availability and choice for HEVs are limited

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- Local repair shops, maintenance and cost of ownership might be a little more expensive than your normal run of the mill car, SUV, truck or Minivan.

## **An eclectic list of current Hybrid vehicles, Different Types, choices and price-points**

Here is a line-up of the newest 2006 Hybrid Cars:

- Ford Escape Hybrid is a hybrid SUV first, with V6 power and a four cylinder fuel economy to boot. According to online sources, it is a popular choice and winner in/for BOTH functionality and environmental awareness categories.
- Honda Accord Hybrid is faster than a conventional model and a V6 hybrid.
- Honda Civic Hybrid is a slightly modified and converted vehicle. Its features are pretty much the same, but it offers greater fuel economy and less emissions.
- Lexus RX400h Hybrid is the top-line entry in the hybrid SUV class, it is a popular selection for the upper class budget and environmentally conscious.
- Mercury Mariner Hybrid is Ford's first hybrid attempt at the market.

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- The all-time favorite Toyota Prius Hybrid for a breath of fresh air and affordable, yet responsible automotive excellence.
- Toyota Highlander Hybrid SUV is a popular choice as well generating a lot of buzz and interest lately.

**Taken from online sources, here is a summary of SOME MORE HYBRID EXAMPLES FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM TO MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER AND WHET YOUR APPETITE:**

### **Hybrid Sports Utility Vehicles**

#### **Acura RD-X**

- The RD-X is a concept model
- projected release year of 2007
- Acura is dedicate to make a difference
- They illustrate their will and ability to build an impressive hybrid SUV

#### **BMW X5 Hybrid**

- BMW developed a concept hybrid

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- It is based on the current X5 model
- Powerful V8 gasoline engine assisted by an electric motor with an astonishing 479ft-lb of torque

### Chevrolet Tahoe / GMC Yukon

- combination of Chevrolet's hybrid technology
- gasoline-electric upgrades
- increase economy by 30% in the large hybrid SUV's, and similarly efficient trucks
- expected to appear in 2008

### Chevrolet Equinox

- Available for the 2006 model year
- Similar to Tahoe Hybrid,
- 30% boost in fuel economy from Chevrolet's Hybrid Technology

### Dodge Durango

Not yet...

### Ford Escape

- world's first production hybrid SUV

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- balance of practicality, environmentally friendly emissions and fuel economy.

### Lexus RX 400h

- LUXURY DEFINED!
- hybrid version of their popular RX model
- smoother, quieter operation, increased performance
- host of high technology accessories
- delivering class topping fuel economy and emissions ratings.

### Saturn VUE

- mid-sized SUV
- GM's hybrid system
- better gas mileage, performance and practicality main features

### Toyota Highlander

- Practical and environmentally conscious
- world's first 7 person hybrid SUV

## **How to Buy a Hybrid**

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After weighing your options and letting your curiosity get the better of you and start researching the Hybrid's potential to increase fuel economy and reduce emissions... you start to hunt and shop around. Yet, the internet and printed dealer brochures, car reviews and owner opinions only tell you part of the story.

ALSO NOTE: It is a fact that there are a wide range of what is put under the umbrella or identifier 'hybrid' that simply is not! NOT ALL are created equal.

**HYBRID CAR FACT:** HYBRID vehicles being marketed as hybrids, do not all utilize and leverage the full spectrum of hybrid technologies that are available.

If the environment is a personal priority and selection criteria for you, ensure that you know what you are getting and what really is under-hood, past the hype and marketing lingo.

According to online sourcing and research regarding Hybrid vehicles, there are currently FIVE TYPES of hybrid technology available to automakers:



- Idle-off capability. The engine turns off when the vehicle is stopped in traffic or at a light, and turns back on when you move your foot from the brake to the gas pedal.
- Regenerative braking. The electric motor helps slow the car, and functions as a generator to convert some of the energy typically lost during braking into electricity (thereby recharging the vehicle's battery).
- Power assist and engine downsizing. The electric motor helps propel the car, in particular during acceleration. Because the motor and engine share the power load, the engine's size can be reduced, saving even more fuel.
- Electric-only drive. The electric motor can power the vehicle by itself at low speeds and when first starting the car.
- Extended battery-electric range. The car runs solely on electric power for 20 to 60 miles before engaging the gasoline engine. You have to recharge the car's battery by plugging it into an external electricity source.

There are numerous types and classifications making their way into this automotive category and hot seller:

- "mild" hybrids (Honda's Insight and Civic Hybrid) employ the first three technologies above
- "Full" hybrids, (Toyota Prius and Ford Escape Hybrid) also sport electric-only drive.

"Plug-in" hybrids that utilize all five technologies are not

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## 2004 Toyota Prius power-train

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### HAVING A FINAL SAY OR WORD....

ENVISION WHAT TOMORROW WILL LOOK LIKE ON OUR ROADS...

Ideally what would we all like to see? Dare to dream a little...

Here is one online opinion as a sample: (Source: Motor-trend 2004 Hybrid Guide)

*Within the next decade or two, there's a good chance you'll be driving a vehicle powered by an advanced powerplant that's far removed from the familiar internal combustion engine now residing beneath your hood.*

*Government regulation, environmental pressures, and market competition have spurred accelerated research and development into alternative fuels and the vehicles that run on them, creating a new twist in the motor vehicle's evolution.*

ARE YOU PART OF THE NEW **HYBRID** REVOLUTION YET?  
READY TO CAST YOUR VOTE?



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## Recommended Resources

**Looking for some killer deals?**

<http://NetActivated.com/Steals-n-Deals>  
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