

Low-key magic act

Ford's humble hybrid just gets down to business. *by Joe Sage*

We welcome a mainstreaming trend among some hybrid vehicles, moving away from over-the-top, look-at-me bodywork or complex my-science-project interfaces. There really doesn't need to be anything mystical about a hybrid vehicle by now, any more than, say, fuel injection. A manufacturer can include hybrid powertrains of one sort or another in their engineering solution to achieve the particular combination of price, performance and fuel economy within a very normal package, if they are so inclined. Other brands are taking this approach this year, notably the new Kia Niro, a hybrid, and new Hyundai Ioniq, with hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fully electric versions all in the same wrapper. Ford Fusion Hybrid figured this out long ago—the first was released in spring 2009.

Fusion is Ford's biggest selling car, about double Focus and three times Mustang. Brandwide, it is topped only by Escape and F-Series. Ford has fully a dozen hybrid, EV or plug-in hybrid models—C-Max, Focus and Fusion—all subtle adaptations, simply delivering lower fuel bills in unassuming

packages. So significant is Fusion in the Ford stable, it comes in no fewer than twelve models, of which four are Fusion Hybrids and three more are Fusion Energi plug-in hybrids.

Our sample here, the SE Hybrid, adds 10-way and 6-way power front seats, nine-speaker audio and MyView screen customization at a base price just \$805 higher than the base S Hybrid. Titanium Hybrid and Platinum Hybrid trims start at \$30,630 and \$37,130, respectively. Even as features are added, fuel mileage is the same across the lineup.

A hybrid Fusion versus a conventional engine costs a few thousand dollars more at the low end, to just a few hundred in Platinum. Weight is less than 200 pounds more, no worse than one more buddy hopping in for a ride. The battery does shave four cubic feet off trunk volume. In any trim, the hybrid more than doubles city fuel mileage.

For almost anyone, the hybrid will pay for itself. This delivers all the self-satisfaction you need, without flashing your virtue to all the world. You can, of course, mention it any time you want. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L Atkinson Cycle
ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....7.6 kWh lithium-ion
BATTERY	.....1.4 kWh lithium-ion, peak power 35 kW
	EV range 21 miles, EV top speed 85 mph, total range 610 miles, charge time 7 hrs / 2.5 hrs (110/220)
TRANSMISSION	.....eCVT, rotary shifter
DRIVETRAIN	.....power-split hybrid, regen braking, FWD
HP/TORQUE	.....188 hp / 129 lb-ft
STEERING	.....elec power-assisted
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson struts, SLA, stblzr bar; R: ControlLink indep multilink, twin-tube gas shocks
BRAKES	.....power front/rear disc, ABS
WHEELS	.....17-in premium paint luster nickel
LENGTH/WB/TURN CIRCLE	.....191.8" / 112.2" / 37.6 ft
WEIGHT	.....3668 lb
LUGGAGE CAPACITY	.....12 cu.ft.
FUEL CAPACITY	.....14 gal
MPG	.....43/41/42 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$26,480
602A EQUIPMENT GROUP:	10-way pwr driver's seat w/memory, leather-trim seats and wheel, heated front seats, autodim mirror, intelligent access w/remote start, LED fogs, headlights and taillamps, heated side mirrors w/approach lamps and turn signals, warm interior accents .....2995
BURGUNDY VELVET PAINT	.....395
HYBRID SE TECH PACKAGE:	SYNC@ 3, dual-zone electronic auto climate, two 4.2-in screens, media hub w/ 2 USB ports & SD card reader, 110V power, reverse sensing .....995
ENHANCED ACTIVE PARK ASSIST	.....995
ADAPTIVE CRUISE W/STOP & GO	.....1190
DRIVER ASSIST PACKAGE:	Lane keep, blind spot and cross traffic alert .....1575
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....85
TOTAL before discounts	\$35,500
(SYNC & SOUND DISCOUNT)	.....(490)
(SE TECH DISCOUNT)	.....(500)
TOTAL	\$34,510

