

## The New Toyota Prius Plug-In Hybrid

by Ian Lynas

Some 20 years ago Toyota began to pioneer the hybrid car and today they are world leaders. While some may have cast doubt on the future of such vehicles they have been proved wrong.



The means of powering a car are fast changing; even diesel is in danger of being outlawed, so the future is for alternative means.

One of the most successful hybrid cars to date has been the Prius from Toyota, a car even favoured by a number of Hollywood A listers and now comes the new Prius Plug -In Hybrid.

This new model raises the game even higher, a very technical vehicle which scores two world firsts with a solar charging roof which is an option on one of the grades available and gas injection heat pump air conditioning.

I have been to Spain to try the new car first hand, which included tackling the traffic in Barcelona and a giant helping of motorway and country driving, all to display the overall ability of the new Toyota.

So why should any one buy such a car? Right away it is correct for the environment, emissions are very low at 22g/km and the latest Prius offers class leading all electric EV driving range. That range is now beyond 30 miles in EV mode the top speed has been increased to 84mph.

Often it has been said to me, that all very well having such a car but charging time is just too long. Again Toyota scores with their latest offering. When using the Type 11 Mode 111 Mennekes connector charge time is a mere two hours or from a domestic supply three hours and ten minutes.

Earlier noted the solar roof panel, this can provide an extra three miles per day, do the sums for a year, however in Northern Ireland we probably have less sun than anywhere else in Europe. This option is an additional £1,500 and time will tell just how many go for this option.

During 2017 Toyota in the UK are



looking at a sales total of somewhere in the region of 500 units.

The real question for most is how does the newcomer perform? Right away I must say it does deliver spirited performance, handling is better than I imagined and this is the best soundproofed Prius to date thanks to the adoption of extra soundproofing.



This is one car that you can truly enjoy your favourite music.

The new Toyota Global Architecture platform has greater rigidity and the lower centre of gravity is a plus in terms of roadholding.

Drive modes include, HV, EV, EVCity and Battery Charge Mode powertrain switching.

From start and at lower speeds with Normal drive mode the Prius Plug-In will automatically run in EV mode, using electric power alone, thereafter the full hybrid drive system automatically combines power from the engine and electric motor or engages electric power

alone, of course this is all down to driving conditions.

The seamless electric continuously variable transmission delivers power effortlessly. Going from rest to 62mph takes a whisker over 11 seconds and top speed is 101mph.

For some these figures may seem modest, however I found the new Prius Plug-In Hybrid to be quick off the mark.

Style wise, the new Toyota does stand out from the crowd, just as previous models did; its angular styling with a bold frontal area and front and rear LED lights and two tone 15 inch alloys provide a sharp profile.

However it is to the interior where the new car gushes personality. Right away the eyes are drawn to the generous eight inch screen. The clear, dual zone layered dashboard with a satin chrome finish adds richness and the two seat rear cabin design maximises occupant space and comfort.

Somewhere there is a price to pay and the boot cargo space is somewhat restricted due to the placement of the battery which has its capacity doubled.

Safety remains a priority and the new Prius features Toyota's Safety Sense package which includes Pre-Collision Safety with pedestrian recognition and all speed Adaptive Cruise Control.

Two grades are offer, Business Edition Plus and Excel, both with high levels of equipment and to pricing, the Business Edition Plus after the government grant costs £32,395 and the Excel costs

£34,595 and of course the Toyota five year/100,000 mile warranty.

You could say that the car of the future has arrived and the best way to appreciate this Toyota is a visit to your local dealer and a test drive.



## NOW SOME GOOD NEWS



The all-new Toyota Prius Plug-in offers customers much more in terms of advanced technology, equipment, safety features and driving rewards than the original model that it's replacing. Those benefits now extend to a lower price tag as well, with a reduction in on-the-road prices prior to the car's official on-sale date.

Toyota has been able to bring down the price of both the Business Edition Plus and Excel models by £3,200.

Factoring in the £2,500 available for new car purchases through the UK Government's plug-in vehicle grant scheme, the new range is now available

to customers from just £29,195, more than £2,000 less than the cost of the previous Prius Plug-in.

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