

A Little More Prius From Toyota

By Ian Lynas

NEED a little more Prius; now you can with the launch of the Prius+. This is the first seven seater hybrid and with this new addition to the company's line-up you get a little more of what has become the world's most popular hybrid with sales topping the 2.6 million figure since the launch of the first generation model back in 1997.



Prius has evolved and now the new seven seater adds even more appeal. The distinctive wedge-like shape of the Prius remains but the new vehicle has a much more pronounced on road stance and of course it has the practicality of an MPV.

With a number of styling enhancements to distinguish it from the regular Prius this vehicle boasts class leading aerodynamics and it features a new interior which bristles with quality.

Another bonus, now there is 76 litres more luggage space on offer. The boot area delivers 232 litres and depending on which manner you

decide to fold the seats, you can end up with 1,750 litres of load carrying capacity, this making this Toyota a vehicle with a multitude of uses.

Delivering the power a mix, the well proven Hybrid Synergy Drivesystem, a 1.8 litre VVT-I petrol engine, a powerful electric motor, a generator, a high output lithium-ion battery, a power control unit and a power split device.

There are three driving modes and during deceleration and under braking the electric motor works as a high power generator to effect regenerative braking, recovering kinetic energy that would normally be lost as heat, storing it as electric power in the high output battery.

The further good news story comes on economy and emissions, as low as 96g/km with a possible 68.9mpg.

My chance behind the wheel came in Austria and Slovakia and an average figure achieved by the UK motoring writers was a wallet pleasing 54mpg.

Weight reduction has been widely employed in the construction of this new hybrid model from Toyota and this plays a part in lowering emissions and delivering good economy figures.

The new battery employed is more compact and in a different position from the standard Prius, hence it is also lighter.

There are two models to choose from, T4 and T Spirit with respective prices of £26,195 and £29,495.



Just as with the the standard model the buyer receives a high standard of equipment. Features I like



include a head up display, a well designed fascia layout and an excellent sat nav system. Colour choice is seven fold and there are few options. An indicator of just how well this latest Prius is packaged.

Owners of T4 models can opt for leather upholstery at a cost of £1,700 and the Toyota Touch & Go system at a cost of £850.

Like the rest of the Toyota range peace of mind with a 5 year/100,000 mile warranty and the battery has an 8 year/100,000 mile warranty.

Handling and comfort levels are most acceptable, but as with other 7 seater compact MPVs with all seats in use, then luggage

carrying capacity is quite restricted.

Judging by the success of Toyota hybrid models worldwide, clearly this has become an increasingly important sector of the market and we can expect to witness many more models in the future taking this route.