

Fusion a 'green' alternative

Continued from pg. 1

vines and leaves will grow when you're driving efficiently, and shed its foliage when you don't.

Like all press vehicles, my tester came with a few extras. These included an \$800 appearance package that offered 18-inch machined aluminum wheels, rear spoiler, leather-wrapped steering wheel and grippy charcoal fabric with red contrast stitching. Also on board were heated front seats (\$600) and a few tech items like reverse sensing system (\$400), rearview camera on 8-inch monitor (\$700), and navigation (\$700).

And if you want even more goodies, there's adaptive cruise control, blind spot detection with cross traffic alert, lane departure warning, lane keeping assist, rear parking sensors, auto high beams and more.

Overall, even the SE interior has a premium look with plenty of soft touch materials, piano black appliques, metallic and chrome accents and a modern flat-panel centre console with touch-sensitive controls.

In rear, passengers will find plenty of headroom and legroom, and separate ventilation with 12-volt and 110-volt power outlets below.

The 60/40 seats fold flush to a raised

deck in the trunk, under which you'll find the battery pack. But unlike most hybrids, it doesn't eat up a lot of space, as the Fusion's cargo capacity is still a cavernous 453 litres.

Driving dynamics were also a pleasant surprise. You would expect barely a whiff of sportiness in a car that by its intent discourages spirited driving, yet the Fusion Hybrid offers not only responsive steering, but a taut ride that's a pleasure in the corners.

And although this is no sports sedan, the car's 2.0-litre Atkinson cycle four cylinder (141 hp, 129 lb/ft, 188 hp system total), paired with the instantaneous torque of the electric motor, provides plenty of punch off the line, and when you need it for highway passing.

The Fusion's predecessor had a 2.5-litre engine and a few more horses, but the new electric motor is more powerful than the one it replaces, allowing the 2013 to run on electric-only up to 100 km/h for short distances.

One area where Ford deserves a big 'thumbs up' is in their hybrid system's ability to transition seamlessly between gas, gas/electric and electric-only modes. Other than the tiniest shudder when the petrol engine kicks in—less than I've experienced in cars



Even in mid-range SE trim, the Fusion Hybrid's cabin has plenty of soft-touch materials, attractive fabrics and metallic finishes. Touch-sensitive controls and an eight-inch display with Ford's SYNC infotainment system are part of a comfortable and functional interior.

costing thousands more—I'd be hard pressed to detect these shifts without the real-time graphic display.

There's still more to say about this vehicle, but sales figures speak for themselves. Year-to-date, as of July, Ford had moved 13,347 Fusions, which includes 729 hybrids.

These are big numbers, and suggest as I did in my last review, that the Fusion, built on an all-new global chassis, has knocked it out of the park in terms of styling and technology.

I would also add that in the Hybrid version, Ford offers a 'green' alternative that delivers all of the above, and with few sacrifices—other than your time at the fuel pump.

Ford Fusion Hybrid SE 2013 (at a glance)

BODY STYLE: mid-size sedan

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front wheel drive

ENGINE: 2.0-litre Atkinson cycle inline four cylinder with electric motor (combined 188 hp)

TRANSMISSION: electronically-controlled, continuously variable transmission

CARGO: 453 litres

FUEL ECONOMY: 4.0L/100km (city/hwy/comb); as tested 6.2L/100km (city/hwy/comb)

PRICE: SE Hybrid \$29,999 (see web site for packages and stand-alone options, as well as latest offers)

WEBSITE: www.ford.ca

Construction Sale In Progress



2013 IMPREZA 2.0i

Japanese engineering from

\$21,923* Lease payment
\$199
for 24 months*

\$2,745 down*

0.9% lease rate*



2013 OUTBACK 2.5i

Japanese engineering from

\$30,423* Lease payment
\$319
for 24 months*

\$3,486 down*

0.9% lease rate*



2014 FORESTER 2.5i

Japanese engineering from

\$27,978* Lease payment
\$279
for 24 months*

\$2,884 down*

2.9% lease rate*

■ ALG 2013 Best Midsize Utility* ■ Bluetooth® iPod®/USB/AUX Integration
■ IIHS Top Safety Pick▲ ■ 7.5 L/100 km City, 5.5 L/100 km Hwy¹

■ ALG 2013 Best Midsize Utility* ■ All-Wheel Drive Standard
■ IIHS Top Safety Pick+▲ ■ 8.6 L/100 km-City, 6.5 L/100 km Hwy¹

■ All-Wheel Drive Standard ■ 8.3 L/100 km City, 6.3 L/100 km Hwy¹
■ IIHS Top Safety Pick▲ ■ Bluetooth® iPod®/USB/AUX Integration

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