Plug or gas it up

Battery electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are becoming increasingly popular with consumers and the auto industry.

Consumers want to go green while the auto industry is under more pressure than ever to leverage technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the vehicles they produce.

electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles need to be plugged in to charge their on-board batteries.

- Battery electric vehicles are 100 percent electric and use an electric propulsion system for all phases of driving. All their power comes from a zero-emission electric motor, powered by electricity from large re-chargeable battery packs inside the vehicle. The vehicles must be plugged in while not in use to charge these battery packs.
- Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles use both an electric motor and an internal combustion engine. The electric motor is similar to that of the battery electric vehicles but you won't get caught on the road with a dead bat-

tery because the internal combustion engine kicks in before this happens.

Electric drive vehicles are substantially more efficient than their combustion engine counterparts. The energy conversion efficiency from on-board storage to turning the wheels is nearly five times greater for electricity compared to gasoline, at about 76 percent and 16 percent respectively.

More information about electric vehicles is available on the Natural Resources Canada website at www.

-www.newscanada.com



Continued from pg. 3

Below the i-MID, my tester also included the standard-equipped, voice-activated navigation system, which can provide turn-by-turn directions in the i-Mid screen above.

Overall, the interior includes an abundance of hard plastics—mostly black. I would have liked to see more soft-touch materials and a nicer mix of tones and textures.

But the Civic gets it right in other areas, like comfortable seating with ample head and leg room both front and back. Rear 60/40 seats flop forward to increase the trunk's 344 litre capac-

MSRP for the Si is \$25,990. Although that's a huge premium over the base Civic (\$14,990), you do get a lot for the extra \$11K.

In addition to all of the power and performance mods mentioned earlier, the Si includes 17-inch alloys, rear spoiler, power moonroof, air conditioning, Bluetooth and a seven-speaker, 360-watt AM/FM/CD audio system with eightinch subwoofer, speed-sensitive volume and steering wheel controls.

Sure, it has stiff competition in other sporty compacts like Mazdaspeed3, Lancer Ralliart and the three- and five-door Golf GTI, but all come in around \$30K. Perhaps a more fair comparison would be the Nissan Sentra SE-R Spec V (200 hp, 180 lb/ft). Without doing a detailed analysis, the Honda provides a few extras like nav, moonroof and limited-slip differential, which are extras on the Spec V.

As for exterior styling— I'm good with it. The Civic's steeply raked windshield, front spoiler and more aggressive grille complement the vehicle's wedge profile. Some complain that it lacks verve, but I'm good with Honda's small, incremental styling changes rather than going fullbore into the unknown.

Although Civic is Honda's sales leader, the Si only makes up 4.5 per cent of Civic sales, making it a bit of a niche vehicle. But it does represent what the company claims is at the heart of its engineering.

Over the years, Honda has pumped its racing heritage and the fun-to-drive character of its vehicles, and more than any other car in its lineup, except perhaps the Accord HFP (my next review), the Si embodies these qualities in spades.

Honda Civic Sedan Si 2012 (at a glance)

BODY STYLE: Compact sedan

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front wheel drive, six-speed manual only

ENGINE: 2.4-litre, 16-valve, DOHC, i-VTEC four-cylinder (201 hp and 170 lb/ft of torque)

FUEL ECONOMY: 10.0/6.4/8.4 litres/100 km (city/hwy/combined)

CARGO: 344 litres **PRICE:** \$25,990

WEBSITE: www.honda.ca







181

1.650

163

1.499

171

1.499

DARETO COMPARE V

Horsepower (hp)

Towing Capacity (lbs)

Torque (lb.-ft.)

2012 ESEDAN

DARE ™ COMPARE ✓	2012 KIA FORTE 2.0 LX M/T	2012 Honda Civic DX M/T	2012 Mazda 3 GX M/T
Horsepower (hp)	156	140	148
Torque (lbft.)	144	128	135
Interior Cargo Space (L)	415	353	335
Heated Sideview Mirrors	1	×	×
6 Speed Manual Transmission	1	×	×
Steering Wheel Audio Controls	1	×	×

THE ALL-NEW FUEL-EFFICIENT



HWY: 5.7L/100KM CITY: 8.1L/100KM

DARE ™ COMPARE ✓	2012 KIA RIO 5DR LX M/T	2012 Toyota Yaris LE M/T	2012 Ford Fiesta S M/T
Horsepower (hp)	138	106	120
Torque (lbft.)	123	103	112
Fuel Economy - HWY	4.9L/100km	5.2L/100km	5.1L/100km
Power Windows	1	×	×
Steering Wheel Audio Controls	1	×	×
Heated Sideview Mirrors	1	✓	×







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