

# Cabin a pleasant, quiet place even in gas mode

From pg. 1  
plant in South Korea.

Hyundai has improved fuel efficiency in this new version of the Sonata Hybrid by using a 2.0-litre in-line four-cylinder that replaces the 2.4-litre engine in the outgoing model. It is combined with a 38 kW electric motor inside the six-speed automatic transmission housing where it replaces the torque converter.

Many of the manufacturers have names for their hybrid systems and Hyundai's is Blue Drive.

The 2.0-litre engine in the Blue Drive system produces 154 hp and 140 lb/ft of torque, while the electric motor adds 51 hp and 151 lb/ft of torque for a combined 193 hp.

For 2016, the Sonata Hybrid has a number of design elements that differentiate it from the traditional Sonata.

Features such as a unique front grille, front and rear bumpers, front fenders, front and rear lights, chrome side mouldings, badges and new wheels set it apart from the gasoline-powered Sonata and help it achieve an amazing coefficient of drag of 0.24, best in class, according to Hyundai.

A key feature of the Blue Drive system is a new lithium-polymer battery pack that is 13 per cent more powerful than the outgoing one with a capacity of 1.62 kWh.

More importantly, the battery now sits below the trunk floor, meaning more rear seat legroom and a 10 per cent increase in cargo volume to 380 litres. It also allows for 60/40 split folding rear seats that open up even more cargo volume when required.

For 2016, the Sonata Hybrid comes in three flavours, Hybrid, Limited and Ultimate, starting at \$29,649. This compares with a starting price of \$24,749 for the GL base model in the gasoline version.

That's nearly a \$5,000 price differential and one that many consumers wouldn't consider with the cost of fuel as it is today. Buyers tend to think with their wallets and until fuel prices start to climb, it will be difficult to persuade them that this is a good deal.

But for those who put fuel economy above performance and require a midsize sedan, the Sonata Hybrid makes a lot of sense.

The cabin is a pleasant place, quiet

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