

Ford C-MAX Hybrid has legroom and a spacious cabin feel

Continued from pg. 10

been challenged by Consumer Reports and other testing publications.

It's one thing to run bench tests in a lab, quite another to put up with urban traffic, changing temperatures and variable road conditions, not to mention quasi-legal highway speeds of between 100-120 km/h. My real world results were less dramatic, coming in at 7.1L/100km (comb).

The powertrain package won't disappoint when it comes to performance. Although I drove moderately for the most part, the combined powertrain has more than enough oomph for on-ramps and passing maneuvers.

The C-MAX Hybrid may be a compact but its tall wagon architecture provides upright seating, plenty of headroom and a spacious feel to the cabin.

It provides 705 litres (24.9 cubic feet) of cargo space behind the second row, expanding to 1,538 litres (54.3 cubic feet) with the 60/40 rear seat folded flat.

Up front there is delight in the details of a well-constructed and sophisticated instrument layout. Some of the technology mentioned earlier includes the newest version of SYNC with MyFord Touch with multiple ways to control phone, navigation, entertainment and climate functions through voice commands, steering wheel controls, touch screens and buttons.

But I'd still kill for a tuning knob on the radio.

The SmartGauge with EcoGuide system uses a cluster to the left of the single gauge speedo to display fuel economy and a Brake Coach to hint at ways of improving your regenerative braking style. A cluster to the right shows Ford's creeping ivy of green leaves, a visual demonstration of your overall driving efficiency.



A handsome interior layout has less of a "techie look" than Prius but still comes fully loaded with info features.

Other available C-MAX Hybrid technologies include push-button start, active park assist, an upgraded AM/FM/CD/MP3 Sony Audio system, a voice-activated Navigation System, and a kind of funny but innovative hands-free liftgate that opens when your arms are full of groceries and you make a "gentle kicking motion" under the rear bumper.

All these technologies are bundled in a well-finished package that offers a surprising amount of versatile space and sophistication.

The C-MAX Hybrid handles itself well.

It has a wider turning circle than expected from a Euro-inspired design but the overall ride is pleasingly smooth and tautly controlled.

The C-MAX Hybrid SE starts at \$27,199 and includes AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control) and Curve Control, a 6-way manual driver's seat and 4-way manual front-passenger seat, dual-zone automatic A/C, tilt/tele-

scopic leather-wrapped steering wheel with cruise, audio and MyFord controls, 110-volt AC outlet, 17-inch aluminum wheels and a whole lot more.

A step up the trim ladder to the C-MAX Hybrid SEL (\$30,199) adds more goodies that can be supplemented with stand-alone options or packages.

And, I didn't want to confuse the issue, but a plug-in model—the C-MAX Energi (\$36,999)—offers extended EV range (32+ km) and even better fuel economy along with all the SEL goodies.

With the 2013 C-MAX Hybrid lineup, Ford has provided consumers with a new alternative in the hybrid market, blending gasoline power, electric power and a wealth of technologies into a package that offers a new kind of power—as they put it, "the power of choice".

Ford C-MAX Hybrid 2013 (at a glance)

BODY STYLE: five-door, five passenger MAV.

DRIVE METHOD: hybrid powertrain with front gasoline engine and electric motor, front wheel drive.

ENGINE: 2.0-litre 141 hp DOHC Atkinson-cycle four-cylinder engine (141 hp, 129 lb/ft) combined with 88kW electric motor (118 hp, 117 lb/ft) for combined 188 hp.

CARGO VOLUME: 705 litres (24.9 cubic feet) behind the second row, 1,538 litres (54.3 cubic feet) behind first row

PRICE: 2013 C-MAX SE \$27,199. As tested \$29,979 includes among other taxes and charges - Equipment Group 203A with power liftgate, reverse sensing, rear park aid, ambient lighting, MyFord Touch, Navigation and Sirius XM package (\$2,200), Winter Package with power heated mirrors and heated seats (\$350)

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