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Special pullout section

ROAD TEST

Pathfinder takes the next hybrid step

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Metroland Media

A journey, so they say, begins with a single step.

But it's all the steps afterward that keep things moving forward in the right direction.

One of Nissan's biggest steps was the total redesign of the Pathfinder, switching that midsize mainstay of the lineup from a body-on-frame, truck-based build to a modern unibody crossover design promising weight reductions, better fuel economy and an overall uptick in everything from interior refinement to ride and handling.

And the resulting 2013 Pathfinder earned rave reviews from critics and customers for fulfilling that design promise.

For 2014, Nissan has taken a next step with the Pathfinder Hybrid.

Nissan is a latecomer to the hybrid party but the technology seems such an eminently sensible next step on the road to better fuel efficiency, capturing the normally wasted inertial energy of deceleration and braking, storing that energy electrically, and then applying it as a power assist to gasoline engine acceleration demands.



The 2014 Nissan Pathfinder Hybrid, seen here in Mocha Sand metallic pearl and in Platinum Premium trim, adds a new mild hybrid choice to the Pathfinder lineup.

Which also leads to a number of side benefits and ancillary technologies such as smaller gasoline engines and idle stop systems, to name just a few.

The 2014 Nissan Pathfinder Hybrid employs some of those applications, starting with a smaller 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine that replaces Nissan's peren-

nial favourite, the VQ 3.5-litre V6.

The new compact 2.5-litre four-banger harnesses a roots-type supercharger that, surprisingly, runs on regular fuel - bonus points for that.

It also benefits from the power assist of an attached 15kW electric motor that taps regenerated electricity from a 144V

Lithium-Ion battery pack.

The resulting accumulative net power rating of 250 hp and 243 lb/ft of torque is not far off of the regular Pathfinder's V6 power rating of 260 hp and 240 lb/ft of torque.

The Pathfinder Hybrid feels quick off **See PATHFINDER, pg. 3**

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