

# Prius produces 90% fewer emissions than a gas-only vehicle.

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previous model, in addition to offering significantly improved passing performance.

While the original Prius was about the size of an Echo, the 2004 Prius falls between the Corolla and Camry in terms of passenger volume. It has enough increased passenger and cargo space to move from the compact to the mid-size class: 96.2 cubic feet compared to 101.7 cubic feet for the Toyota Camry. The rear seat in Prius provides a generous 727 mm (28.6 inches) of legroom.

Rear cargo room measures 16.1 cubic feet. Combined with the standard 60/40 split fold-down rear seatbacks that are new for '04, the hatchback design greatly increases cargo capacity and flexibility in the new Prius.

Compared to the hybrid technology used in the previous model, the new Hybrid Synergy Drive provides longer periods of electric-mode-only driving, as well as significantly higher peak electrical power. It combines a 1.5-liter 4-cylinder Atkinson Cycle gasoline engine and an electric drive motor. The gasoline engine for the 2004 Prius produces 76 hp and 82 lb./ft. of torque, compared to 70 hp and 82 lb./ft. for the previous model. As on all other Toyota passenger car engines, Variable Valve Timing with intelligence (VVT-i) optimizes power delivery across the engine speed range.

The permanent-magnet electric drive motor produces its maximum power of 50 kW (67 hp).

The electronic continuously variable transmission does not have fixed gear ratios, but instead provides infinitely variable ratios in response to driving conditions.

A regenerative braking system further boosts system efficiency. When the Prius is coasting or the brakes are applied, the electric motor functions as a generator, capturing kinetic energy that would normally be lost as heat through the brakes, by transforming it into useable electricity to recharge the batteries.

Toyota invited journalists to California to test the Prius and were told to take the cars and drive them to the top of Mount Wilson. It's one thing to drive hybrids on the flat, but getting up into rarified air is a real strain on the gasoline engine and the electric motor.

You put the dainty, little 'dashboard' mounted gear

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