

Sonic boom

Would this guy drive just an average Civic?

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2016 Ford Mustang

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TEST DRIVE

Mileage Plus

2017 Toyota Prius v Five

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

Prius is a legacy member of the small, hybrid-powered economy class. Introduced in the U.S. market in 2000, it was joined by the midsize, wagon-esque v model in 2012.

The v takes the basic Prius premise, and — literally — expands on it. Compared to the standard, Prius model, the v is 3.6 inches longer, .6 inch wider, 4.9 inches taller and rolls on a wheelbase that's 3.1 inches longer. Increasing the car's size increases its practicality to a wider audience. The specific payoff for supersizing Prius is more room for cargo and rear seat passengers.

2017 Toyota Prius v Five
MSRP: \$30,935 · As Tested: \$35,105

Cargo capacity in the v ranges from 34.3 cubic feet to 67.3 cubic feet. That compares to 27.4 in Prius. There's 2.5 inches more rear leg room in the wagon (and surprisingly, 1.9 inches less front seat leg room). The v's rear seats are adjustable, so you can choose the amount of space to apportion for people or parcels. At full pushback, there's enough room for six-footers front and back.

Rear seatbacks fold to a flat load floor, and the rear front-passenger seat folds forward as well, to allow long cargo inside. Hidden beneath the load floor is an additional storage bin. It makes a nice spot to put the rear seat headrests when no one is in back, thereby



The Prius v is the mid-sized, wagon-esque version of the market-defining hybrid economy vehicle Toyota first introduced to the U.S. in 2000. The powertrain pairs a 1.8L, four-cylinder gas engine (left), with an 80 h.p. electric motor.



improving rear visibility.

The 2017 v carries over from 2016 largely unchanged. The exception concerns Entune — Toyota's multimedia system, which allows integration of your smartphone with the vehicles' navigation, information and entertainment services. The Entune head unit has been upgraded for 2017, and now includes Siri Eyes Free as well as voice recognition.

Prius v is from the school of center-oriented dash designs. Slide inside and the driver's straight ahead view is a steering wheel, backed by nothing but dashboard. The instrument panel is located atop the center stack,

beneath a hooded binnacle. HVAC switchgear is located below the touchscreen, which sits one step below.

Adjusting temperature, fan speed and vent direction requires that you first toggle to those settings. It's one step longer than the process would take with conventional controls, but easy to adapt to.

The specific payoff for supersizing the Prius is more room for cargo and rear seat passengers.

To the right of the digital speedometer and fuel gauge is a screen that the driver can program to provide several different displays of auxiliary information. The information is useful, but I continue to think that Toyota is missing the boat here by not providing a more

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