

Cruisin'
Does Toyota have a replacement for the FJ Cruiser?
PAGE 2



Albany Auto Show...
Going on now at the Times Union Center.
PAGE 3



Ranger report
The latest news on Ford's revived light pickup.
PAGE 2



The area's most complete automotive resource and listings.

1,857 vehicles for sale inside — plus more than 7,000 online at timesunion.com/cars

Automotive

timesunion.com/cars

Subscribe to your next Volvo?
PAGE 2

TEST DRIVE

Low Profile Luxury

2018 Toyota Avalon Hybrid

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

Few cars fly further under the radar than this one. Avalon — Toyota's full-size sedan — has one of the lowest profiles of any flagship in all of Autodom. The 2018 edition marks year six of generation four for Avalon, which first came to this market in the 1995 model year. Avalon prices range from \$33,500 (for an XLE V6) to \$42,800 (for a Hybrid Limited). With a handful of options, my XLE Premium Hybrid had an as-tested price of \$41,890.



Introduced in 2000, Prius was the first mass-produced gas-electric hybrid vehicle to be sold stateside. Hybrid versions of the Avalon have been offered as part of the lineup since 2013. Gas powered Avalon's use a 3.5L V6 that makes 268 horsepower and 248 lb.-ft. of torque. Hybrids combine a 2.5L Atkinson-cycle four-cylinder gas engine with an electric motor for

2018 Toyota Avalon Hybrid
MSRP: \$38,950 · As Tested: \$41,890

a total output of 200 horsepower. EV drive mode allows the car to be driven solely on electric power for short distances. Otherwise, it's some combination of gas and electric. As in all Toyota hybrids, regenerative braking is employed to capture the kinetic energy of the wheels when decelerating or braking, storing it in the hybrid battery. Drivers can scan various readouts on the status



THE AVALON, Toyota's family sedan introduced in 1995, has been available as a hybrid for several years now. The full-sized model emphasises room and ride comfort, and while optioned-up skirts the lower end of the luxury segment.

of the hybrid system via the dashboard display screen. Fuel economy is an expected benefit of hybrid ownership. In the case of the Avalon, gas versions are expected to return 21 miles per gallon city, 30 highway and 24 combined. Hybrids are rated at 40/39/40, with an expected cruising range of about 680 miles. My eight days behind the wheel netted 38 miles per gallon.

The Avalon Hybrid's power flow is smooth and largely silent. At low speed in all-electric mode, it's golf car quiet, and once you crest 20 mph and the gas engine kicks in, it's only slightly louder. With the CVT transmission, there's a steady state drone while

accelerating, but it's not bothersome, just background noise. Electric motors produced full torque instantly. When throttled, the gas engine gets a boost from said motor, and the Avalon responds with comfortably quick (mid 7-second range from 0-60) acceleration.

Being a family sedan, the suspension has been tuned towards the comfort side of the ride-handling spectrum. Steering effort is light and lacks feel. Cornering is not sporty, but is confident in all normal driving situations. Ride quality is first rate — this is a fine, long-distance traveler.

Avalon is all about understatement, and that vibe

Continued on page 2



Avalon appeals as an under-the-radar pick; a near-luxury sedan for the non-label shopper.

GO AHEAD. OPEN IT UP.



The Times Union Auto section indulges your need for all things fast and furious.

timesunion.com/cars
TIMES UNION

PHOTOS © DAN LYONS, 2017 — ALL RIGHTS RESERVED