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**TEST DRIVE**

## Covering the Bases 2018 Hyundai Ioniq Hybrid SEL

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
*Special to the Times Union*

**I**oniq was introduced in 2017. With the addition of a new model this year, Ioniq's lineup now includes hybrid (MSRP: \$21,799), plug-in hybrid (\$24,950) and electric (\$29,500) versions.

Our test drive this week is in the hybrid, which is available in three trim levels: Blue, SEL and Limited. If

economy is your priority, then Blue is the trim for you. Though relatively Spartan inside, the base model is the lowest priced Ioniq, and the one with the highest fuel economy. EPA says you can expect 57 miles per gallon in the city, 59 on the highway and 58 combined. Both SEL and Premium (my test car was the former) are predicted to return 55/54/55. By way of competitive comparison, these numbers are nearly identical to the Toyota Prius Prime (55/53/54), and better on highway driving than the Honda Insight (55/49/52).

### 2018 Hyundai Ioniq Hybrid SEL

MSRP: \$24,000 · As Tested: \$26,010

Propulsion for the hybrid comes from a combination of a 1.6L Atkinson cycle four-cylinder gas engine along with an electric motor. The engine offers 104 horsepower and 109 lb.-ft. of torque. The motor chips in 43 horsepower and 125 lb.-ft. of torque.

This powertrain is matched to a six-speed dual clutch transmission. Acceleration is leisurely (about nine seconds from 0-60 mph), so drivers learn to plan well in advance for passes and use caution when merging with traffic on a highway on ramp. The absence of a CVT means no engine drone — a near staple among hybrids,



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**THE IONIQ** is Hyundai's compact, five-door liftback, now available in hybrid, plug-in hybrid and all-electric versions. The SEL hybrid (above) gets its power from a 1.6L Atkinson cycle four-cylinder (left) that yields 104 horsepower.

and not missed here. All models are front-wheel-drive. Ioniq corners confidently and has a good quality ride. Handling and steering feel aren't sporty, but then again they aren't designed to be — the goal here being economical travel.

Ioniq seats five. Six-footers can fit (snugly) behind like size front row passengers. In this regard, Prius Prime has a slight edge over Ioniq and Insight in front leg room.

The Honda tops the trio in back seat leg room, with 37.4 inches, compared to 35.7 inches in Ioniq and 33.4 inches in the Toyota.

Cargo capacity in Ioniq is (at 26.5 cubic feet), notably more than Prius Prime (20) or Insight (15.1). The split, rear seatbacks fold to a mostly flat forward position, though the result is a split-level load floor for long

items. Thick c-pillars hinder  $\frac{3}{4}$  rear visibility, making the blind spot detection in SEL and Premium trims worthwhile. Split glass in the hatchback backlight enhances your straight back view. Dash materials have an economy car look and feel.

For this price, you have an unassuming, practical and very economical hatchback.

The sole flaw with the 7-inch center touchscreen is that you'll need to de-glove during winter to get it to accept input. HVAC controls in mid center stack are straight forward in operation. The infotainment system supports

Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, so drivers can access compatible, smartphone functions through the display. Like a navigation app, for example, which is otherwise only available in Ioniq's Premium trim model, as part

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