

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2022 Hyundai Sonata Hybrid

Base MSRP: \$ 27,350 (Blue) As Tested: \$36,790 (Limited)



In the early 70's, I was a high school kid, pumping gas at a Mobil station, during the Arab Oil embargo. That event - among other things - pushed the pedal to the metal for American automakers, to develop more fuel efficient cars. At the time, the market for such cars was already well established in other countries. So, while American manufacturers geared up, a stream of small, import models poured into the U.S. market:

supply meeting demand, for mpg-minded cars. Readers with a few miles on their odometers may recall that the 1984 Honda CRX-HF was the first car to achieve a rating of over 50 mpg's from the EPA\*. Lest we wax too poetic about that number, consider that these cars were pint-sized (under 1,900 lb.) and anemic (their 0-60 time of 13.2 seconds was better measured with a sundial than a stopwatch). (\* Remember too that the EPA changed to a less optimistic fuel economy estimating formula soon thereafter).

Fast forward to the present day. Yes, our gas prices are as bad as they've ever been. But hybrid power technology has progressed to the point that drivers can once again attain 50 mpg's, and do so in the comfort of a midsize sedan. Case in point, this week's test car - the Hyundai Sonata Hybrid. The EPA says that you can expect 45/51/47 miles per gallon, and I posted 45, during my latest test drive. Power is supplied by a 2.0 liter four cylinder gas engine (150 h.p.) paired with an electric motor (51 h.p.), and a 270-volt, Li-ion battery pack. Acceleration isn't the strong suit of most hybrids (Posted 0-60 times for the Sonata Hybrid are in the low to mid 8 second range). But, that's sufficient power for normal driving needs, with the caveat that high demand situations (like passing, on-ramp merges) take planning.



*Photos courtesy of the manufacturer*

Sonata is a family sedan, with a cushioned ride. It doesn't invite twisty roads, but corners confidently. As is typical of many hybrids, the brakes can be a bit grabby at first touch, but drivers quickly adjust to the feel.

The dashboard has a clean look, and features a 12.3" color LCD instrument cluster straight ahead, with a 10.25" center touchscreen in Limited models (8" on Blue and SEL). The infotainment system includes compatibility with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The presence of a volume knob is a plus; the absence of a tuning knob is a minus. The bank of HVAC controls has a straight forward design. Sonata's trunk (16 cu.-ft.), ranks near the top of its segment. The rear seatbacks fold to a split level floor, allowing longer items to be loaded through a wide, pass-through. Front seats easily accommodate adults of most any size. The rear seats will hold a pair of six footers - provided that those in front aren't too laid back with their seat rake.

This is the third year of Sonata's eighth generation. Fully redesigned in 2020, the sleek looking, '22 editions carry over from last year virtually unchanged. (Remote Smart Parking Assist and Dynamic Voice Recognition are now available on Limited models). Hybrid versions of the front wheel drive, four door sedan are offered in Blue, SEL or Limited trim levels. Optioned with carpeted floor mats, my Sonata Hybrid had an as-tested price of \$36,790.



*A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons has been reviewing new cars for publications for over 30 years. He is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.*