

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2023 Honda Accord Hybrid

MSRP: \$27,295 (LX) As Tested: \$38,985 (Touring)



The first Accord reached American showrooms in 1976. The 11th generation 2023 Accord is the subject of this week's test drive. The sedans are sleekly styled: long, rising hood, short tail, capped by a curvy roofline. The trim level lineup goes six wide, and prices start at an MSRP of \$27,295. My Touring tester stickered for \$38,985.

LX and EX are powered by a 1.5L four cylinder gas engine (192 h.p./192 lb.-ft.), while Sport, EX-L, Sport-L and Touring have an updated hybrid powertrain, that combines a 2.0L four cylinder gas engine with two, electric motors. Total system power is up from last year. Horsepower is now 204 (formerly 202), and max torque is 247 lb.-ft. (was 232). Noteworthy is the ability to drive the hybrid one pedal style. By 'downshifting' on the steering wheel paddles, drivers can slow the car, sans brake pedal. Honda has increased the number of deceleration levels from four to six, so you've got more "gears" to choose from. I've always felt that shifting a car yourself adds to your involvement, and so the fun factor of driving. Clearly, that's a minority opinion. Automatics are everywhere, and three pedal cars have become rarer than positivity on social media. But, with the advent of hybrids, I've found that there's some fun to be had with one pedal driving.

The combined power of Honda's hybrid system is a good match for the platform. Zero to sixty times in the mid-six to seven second range are possible, which is fine for any kind of driving. Electric power is your friend in that regard. The peak torque from the combined system is available from 1,700-5,000 rpm, so Accord



*Photos courtesy of the manufacturer*

Hybrid is quick off the dime, and it cruises easily at highway speed. EPA estimates for fuel economy are 29/37/32 for the 1.5L turbo, 51/44/48 for EX-L hybrid, and 46/41/44 for Sport, Sport-L and Touring hybrids. I recorded 39 mpg's during my week behind the wheel. Accord is front wheel drive only. The absence of an AWD option is something of a surprise, as availability would incentivize those Snowbelt drivers who would otherwise prefer a sedan to a crossover or SUV. Ride quality is comfortable with the 19" wheels (with some impact firmness noted); likely even better with the 17's (LX, EX, EX-L). Accord isn't a sport sedan, but it handles confidently and enjoys a curvy road when it finds one.

Honda's new, interior design theme wears well on Accord. It's a clean layout, visually and functionally. The main element is a metal, honeycomb strip, that runs the width of the dashboard, housing the vents, and splitting the dash visually, north and south. Above at center dash is the touchscreen (7" on LX and EX, 12.3" on all other trims). Below the beltline, the HVAC controls are laid out in a straight ahead fashion, with knobs and buttons. Models with the bigger screen have a mix of actual and virtual switchgear, and an upgraded sound system. The infotainment system is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto (the connection is wireless on trims with the larger touchscreen). Seating front and back is suitable for six footers, though passengers that size in row two may brush up against the headliner, owing to the curving roofline. Trunk capacity is 16.7 cu.-ft. A loaded Accord Touring is enjoyably well appointed, but if you want a lower price point, the EX-L is a nice option. You get the hybrid powertrain, leather trimmed seats (heated in front), 17" wheels, wireless Apple CarPlay and available blind spot monitoring.



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