

# Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2023 Honda CR-V Hybrid AWD

**MSRP: \$28,410 (LX FWD) As Tested: \$40,395 (Sport Touring AWD)**



The future, for cars, looks all electric. But for the here and now, hybrids make more sense for many people. The combination of gas/electric power allows you to benefit from better fuel economy, without worrying about charging. The 6th generation of Honda's CR-V debuts for 2023. Three of CR-V's six models are hybrid powered – Sport, Sport-L and Sport Touring. All Wheel Drive is standard on top trim models like my test vehicle, and optional on the other two.

As noted here before, car models tend to expand in size over the years. So, "Compacts" become less compact, as they evolve. The latest CR-V, for example, is longer (2.7"), and slightly wider (.4") than was the Gen five edition. It's also 8" longer than the first CR-V (1996), and 4.6" wider. It's all to the good, here, as the '23 CR-V has a little more room inside, but is still quite manageably sized. Rear seat legroom totals 41" inches, which is enough to comfortably accommodate six footers, with like size folks up front. Cargo capacity in the hybrid CR-V ranges from 36.3 – 76.5 cu.-ft., depending on how you arrange the seats, with a split level load floor. Non-hybrid CR-V's tack on an additional 3 cu. ft. of space (39.3 cu.-ft. in seat-up mode), and can lower their load floors. The difference is due to the fact that the hybrids store their battery packs below deck. I found the cargo bay to be spacious for this class, and the low liftover height in back eases loading. Sport Touring models enjoy a standard, hand's-free tailgate, which you'll appreciate the first time you approach the Honda with your arms full.

Slide into the driver's seat, and your outlook improves - literally. Honda repositioned the windshield pillars, increasing the angle and expanding the width, for better visibility



*Photos courtesy of the manufacturer*

- and a sleeker profile. I like Honda's latest dashboard design. As it translates in CR-V, the honeycomb mesh beltline provides cover for the HVAC vents, and serves as a border, with infotainment screen above, and HVAC controls below. CR-V's top trims (EX-L on the gas engine side, Sport Touring on the hybrids) get a larger center touchscreen (9-inch rather than 7-inch). There's an actual, non-virtual knob for on/off/volume (Bravo!), and the menus aren't hard to figure out. Below the borderline, heating and cooling adjustments are made with a combination of knurled knobs and buttons. They're simple to use, in easy reach, and non-distracting for the driver. A one touch, power moonroof is standard on all hybrid CR-V's. For many people, driving is the only time that they really have a chance to listen to music. If that sounds familiar, the Bose Premium Centerpoint setup (12 speakers, standard on Sport Touring) will be appreciated.

Honda's hybrid-electric powertrain is new for '23. The 4th-generation, two motor hybrid system combines a 2.0-liter Atkinson cycle 4-cylinder gas engine with a pair of electric motors (one to drive the wheels, one to supply power to the generator) and a lithium-ion battery pack. Combined system horsepower is 204, with 247 lb.-ft. of torque. Zero to sixty times are in the high seven second/low eight second range – sufficient power for 'round town or highway driving. EPA's mileage estimates are 40/34/37, and I tallied 35 mpg's. CR-V corners easily, and its ride quality suggests a fine travel car.

The hybrid's added economy and overall drivability make it an appealing choice for CR-V. Honda expects that fully half of all CR-V buyers in 2023 will go hybrid.

*A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.*