

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2024 Ford Maverick Hybrid

Base price: \$23,815 (XL) As Tested: \$34,115



Now in its third year, Maverick's three model lineup - XL, XLT and Lariat - carries over for 2024 with prices starting at an MSRP of \$23,815. I tested a gas powered, turbo four with AWD when Maverick made its debut in 2022. This week, we drive a mid-trim XLT, with the hybrid, four cylinder engine and Front Wheel Drive.

Updates for 2024 include a revised, motor menu. The 2.5L hybrid four cylinder engine – formerly standard – is now optional (\$1,500). The 2.5L EcoBoost turbo four – formerly optional - is now standard. So too is Front Wheel Drive, which can be replaced with All Wheel Drive (\$2,220) – but only with the EcoBoost engine. That

motor makes 250 horsepower, 277 lb.-ft. of torque, with fuel economy estimated at 23/30/26 (FWD), 22/29/25 (AWD). The 2.5L hybrid I drove checks in with 191 h.p and 155 lb.-ft. of torque (42/33/37). I logged 39 mpg's in my week behind the wheel. So, the turbo EcoBoost is quicker, the hybrid is more fuel efficient, but both engines feel well suited to this platform. Both are linked to an 8-speed automatic transmission, and have the same (2,000 lb.) towing capability, unless you opt for the EcoBoost/AWD combo, in which case your max tow doubles to 4,000 lb.

Maverick's cabin design features a traditional, truck strong point – controls that are easy to use and easy to reach. And, while input for the infotainment system is via touchscreen (at 8", it's modestly sized, but easily read), the menus aren't overly elaborate. The amount of hard plastic in the dash and door panels is consistent with the under \$20K starting sticker price in base level Mavericks, but it's less convincing in upper trim versions nearing \$35,000.



Photos are courtesy of the manufacturer.



Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility is standard on all trim levels. Six footers fit easily up front. Like size folks can (just) squeeze in behind them, provided that those up front don't get too laid back with their seatbacks. Hybrid models have one inch less rear seat legroom than EcoBoost models. The second row, bench seat lifts and pins easily to the back wall of the cab, revealing a full length of usable floor space in the EcoBoost. Hybrids lose half of that space.

Maverick has a short, deep box, measuring 4½ ft. / 6 ft. (tailgate up / down), with a multi-position tailgate, and a payload capacity of 1,500 lb. According to Ford, the bed can hold up to 18, standard plywood sheets. A wide variety of options for customizing the storage space are offered. The dealer installed list includes bed extenders, mats, liners, caps, tool boxes and storage bins. A 400w/110v inverter with outlets in the bed and the cab is also optional.

Maverick is based on the same platform as Escape, and that model is offered with both hybrid power and All Wheel Drive. So, it's a safe bet that at some point, Maverick will do likewise. For the time being, though, if you want AWD and/or need to tow more than a ton, the EcoBoost engine is the way to go. If Front Wheel Drive works for you, the hybrid powertrain in Maverick is a nice combination. The hybrid system operates smoothly, and offers fine mileage and impressive, estimated range (511 miles), on a tank of gas. Either way, Maverick is a likeable little truck, blending fun and functionality in a compact package.

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