

# Win-win-win

BY JOE SAGE  
PRICE-POWERTRAIN-PREMIUM CABIN IN ONE PACKAGE

There's one hybrid brand that seems to remain the go-to selection for a lot of people we guess aren't really car people, or just haven't noticed that over the few years, some great alternatives have come to life. The Hyundai Sonata Hybrid is a case in point.

Its spacious full-size cabin lives inside an agile midsize sedan with no compromise and plenty of benefits, delivering 43 MPG highway, 39 city, and all for just \$30 grand.

And quality? JD Power announced its highly regarded Initial Quality Study now ranks Korean Hyundai and Kia tops, surpassing the former top-dog Japanese brands.

The Sonata Hybrid has had styling noticeably different from the regular Sonata, but for 2016, it has caught up, still slightly different, but now as bold and stylish as the rest.

Push the start button, and the Sonata Hybrid springs to silent electric life and stays pure electric until about 3 mph—good for a stealthy but not particularly hasty getaway.

The car has three drive modes (eco, nor-

mal and sport) and two HVAC modes, econ (when in eco drive mode) or normal. When you restart, it will have defaulted to eco and econ. On a blistering Arizona summer day, you will wait for AC unless you turn econ off and AC on, which we did. Detrimental to efficiency, perhaps, but here it's essential.

Coming straight to this from a fuel-thirsty performance car, this felt a little sluggish—not aggressively competitive, though able to pick its lane in traffic. Despite a wheelbase a foot longer than that of a Mini, its turning circle is amazingly tight, only 2.4 inches more. That and its long wheelbase add up to great handling. It won't win a drag race, but as the week went on, we found it achieved smooth cruising power easily once in motion.

Whether shopping hybrids or midsize sedans, the Sonata Hybrid competes with everything else it might go up against, point by point. Against midsize sedans overall, it has that 43 MPG trick up its sleeve. Against common hybrids, Sonata Hybrid provides a

large, comfortable, highly outfitted, technically proficient cabin, dramatic styling and a generally conventional driving experience.

If there is a downside in this combination of attributes, we're not seeing it. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L 4-cyl GDI hybrid engine
MOTOR	.....permanent magnet synchronous 38kW
BATTERY	..56kW lithium polymer w hybrid starter gen
POWER	.....combined 193 hp
TORQUE	...gasoline engine 140 / elec motor 151 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd auto w Shiftronic
DRIVETRAIN	.....front-wheel drive
TURNING CIRCLE	.....35.6 ft
TRUNK CAPACITY	.....13.3 cu ft
WEIGHT	.....3560 lb
MPG	.....39/43/41 (city/hwy/comb)

**BASE PRICE** .....**\$30,100**

**ULTIMATE PACKAGE:** Pano slide/tilt sunroof, gloss window surround, lane departure & forward collision warning, auto high beam, rear park assist, smart cruise w stop/start, electronic parking brake w vehicle hold, nav w 8" touchscreen, 400w Infinity audio w subwoofer, HD radio, SiriusXM Travel Link, LED interior lights.....4500

CARPETED FLOOR MATS, CARGO MAT & NET	.....125
FIRST AID KIT	.....30
ALL-WEATHER FLOOR MATS	.....130
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....825

**TOTAL** .....**\$35,765**



*High fuel mileage and a full-size cabin in a nimble midsize car with dramatic styling, all for \$30 grand, is a hard combo to top.*

