Honda CR-V Hybrid – Road Test

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The Honda CR-V 2.0i MMD AWD hybrid large SUV…

…put through its paces by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Honda tends to hide its qualities very well, which probably explains why it may not be the first go-to brand for an SUV, and that would be a mistake for any motorist to make.

Korean, German and British brands tend to hog the limelight and sales in this section of the market but the reality is the Honda CR-V can hold its own against some better-known names and is not only superior in certain respects but also significantly less expensive.

The CR-V is Honda's most popular SUV and available with 2WD or 4WD depending on which of the S, SE, Sport Line, SR or EX models are chosen. All share a 2.0 petrol and mild-hybrid powertrain including electronic CVT.

The top specification EX tested comes with heated steering wheel and rear seats, powered tailgate, electric driver's seat adjustment, panoramic glass roof, head up display and inductive phone charger.

Developed from the Civic platform since 1995 but with a taller body and more room, the Compact Recreational Vehicle is a good five-seater with plenty of room for a family's luggage and it becomes truly enormous when only the two front seats are occupied.

Up front, the highly developed and refined petrol engine with its electric motor assistance has been honed over two decades of development and tuning experience and its brain chooses the best mode unless the driver decides for a job in hand.


EARTH DREAMS
MAINTENANCE

The petrol and electric power sources work side by side to maximise economy or power and always have an eye on reducing emissions.

I found the power delivery was very smooth and remarkably quiet from rest to the motorway maximum with the CVT system delivering the best performance possible and during our test we bettered the official WLTP indicated average of 39.2mpg by a significant distance.

Acceleration was very useful but it’s not a slingshot SUV and the driver has to anticipate overtaking opportunities and ensure the best performance mode is chosen but, having said that, the same is true of many similarly taller style family cars.



The Honda CR-V can easily keep up with fast flowing traffic and the wrap-around seating

infront was particularly comfortable for longer trips while the offset split rear bench-type seating was thick and supportive if not as well shaped. Front seat is powered for the driver, manual for the passenger, and their movement range is good.

There is plenty of room infront and it’s also good behind even for a gangly teenager while headroom is generous throughout and seemed even bigger thanks to the standard full length glass roof in the EX specification.

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The powertrain’s responsiveness was matched by that of the brakes and steering. It could be wiggled very easily into a tight parking space while it showed excellent feedback on country roads and under modest pedal pressure it rapidly slowed down.

Secondary controls and buttons were close to hand on the console, fascia and wheel-spokes and operated with a satisfying action.

I liked the big clear instruments, selectable head-up display on the screen and the convenient inductive charger for a phone, which all make long journeys much more relaxing. It comes with cruise control to take away some concerns about speed limits.



The infotainment display was a reasonable size, clear and easy to use if a bit slow in operating but the heating and ventilation was straightforward and efficient.

Oddments room for a family car was not particularly generous, less so for those in the back. but it was very easy to fill the bootspace and drop down the seatbacks to dramatically raise capacity even if the extended floor was not completely flat. Access to the cabin was good.



The Honda CR-V really coped well on any surface with little body roll, pitching or dipping to disturb progress and the EX standard four-wheel-drive with petrol and electric power made it feel surefooted through quicker corners.

This confidence with the chassis and the high riding position with good sight-lines all round, decent wash/ wipers and very bright headlights made up for any lack of outright power, which was more noticeable the heavier the loading inside, and all our journeys were accomplished with ease.

There was some noticeable engine and road noises over particular surfaces because it was generally a quiet car to cover distances but kept within its limits on smoother roads it was very quiet indeed.

VERDICT

There is a wide price range for the CR-V series and maybe the entry level modes represent better value and certainly are cheaper to tax but against its direct competitors, the EX derivative is still a very good buy.

So it may not be the first choice for everyone but for many it would be the best choice.

For: Very comfortable, refined, economical, roomy, excellent controls, good all wheel drive traction.

Against: Some road and engine noises, expensive to tax, few oddments spaces, some blindspots.

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FAST FACTS

Honda CR-V 2.0i MMD AWD Hybrid EX large SUV



Price: £41,155

Mechanical: 4 cyl, 2.0 litre 184 ps petrol-electric, CVT, 4WD

Max Speed: 112 mph

0 – 62mph: 9.2 sec

Combined MPG: 42

Insurance Group: 24E

CO2 emissions: 163 g/km

Tax costs: BiK rate 37%, VED First Year £575, VED Standard rate £510 annually for 5-years

Warranty: 3 years/ 62,000 miles

Size: L 4.60 m (15.09 ft), W 2.12 m (6.96 ft), H 1.69 m (5.54 ft)

Bootspace: 497 to 1,638 litres (17.55 to 57.85 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,797 kg (3,962 lb)