Honda HR-V Advance Style Plus – Road Test

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A quarter of a century after introducing the Insight as Britain’s first petrol-electric hybrid, the latest Honda HR-V is probably more relevant today, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).

While rival hybrids have grown in size compared to the Insight of 25 years ago, there is not that much difference in the footprint of the HR-V.

It is now in its third generation and sharing a Honda portfolio with the smaller Jazz and larger CRV SUVs, the HR-V neatly sits between them.

It is arguably one of the most eye-catching family cars both externally and internally and our range topping MY25 example had a very good equipment list to satisfy users as well.

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There are five versions in the MY25 range, Elegance, Advance, Advance Plus, Advance Style and Advance Style Plus, from £31,495 to £37,995 on the road.

The top model tested comes with wireless charging, premium 10-speaker sound system, 18-inch alloys, multi-view cameras, two-tone paint and a big sunroof.

The HR-V has been produced between 1998 and 2006 and then from 2013 to the present day as a mid-size, five-door SUV, five-seater.

Don’t be put off by the comparatively small 1.5 litre engine because the electric motor gives it a useful boost when needed.


HONDA

The system is very smooth, works seamlessly, and comes with a simple lever controlled automatic box to select direction or parking. You have econ, normal and sport modes to bring out the best in the powertrain and the console button brings about immediate change as desired.

Performance is good and it can be encouraged along or left to its own devices as a driver wishes, with a mechanically quiet motorway cruise or more frantic sound in sport mode through the countryside.

What's so pleasing is that the powertrain can return over 50 mpg without any effort as we discovered. The driver can also determine the amount of regenerative electricity is put back into the system when easing off or braking, which all helps reduce fuel consumption.

We started our test with an indicated 340 miles showing, over 80% battery charge and a full fuel tank, so it's a car you might be able to fuel up once a month and use for running about.

We said the engine noise does rise with throttle pressure and in a sportier mode and there was a constant road rumble from the 18-inch tyres but transmission and wind noises were low.

There was very good assistance and feedback through the steering and a reasonable turning circle when parking and the brakes were nicely balanced between power and precision.

Handing was safe and roadholding surefooted, the seats were big but maybe a bit firm for some tastes but had good adjustment range for reach and rake infront with those behind able to comfortably sit without too much compromise for legroom or any headroom.

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Honda developed their 'magic seats' in the back which need a single release to fold flat or flip up and that's very useful for a stressed parent with a lot of shopping or children. Luggage capacity can be gradually raised from a modest starting point and is reasonable in

total behind a wide, long, flat floor.


HR-V

The hidden handle to open the back doors gives the HR-V a coupe like profile and they have tight access but the front pair are better.



The seat height has been raised in the new HR-V and visibility is very good over the bonnet, around the sides and even over the shoulder but the back window has a high bodyline and you rely on the reversing sensors and camera when parking.

All controls come immediately to hand and foot around the wheel, across the fascia or on the console and the instruments are very clearly grouped infront of the steering wheel with the infotainment panel above the console carrying the social media, comms and navigation displays.

It’s fully compatible with mobile phones and apps and the links uploaded immediately with very good sound quality output. Our test model, however, required a determined push rather than a light touch to change displays on the infotainment panel.


12V
180W
MAX
P
R
N
D
DRIVE MODE
BRAKE
HOLD

Heating and ventilation was straightforward, worked well and the system provided good control, output and direction throughout the cabin and backed up with powered windows all round.

Oddments room was fair unless you needed space for larger items.

VERDICT

It is a good-sized car for users, easy to manoeuvre, comfortable, well equipped for safety and sound tastes and the overall economy is satisfying.

Hybrids have come a long way in 25 years, asking nothing of a driver but giving a lot in return.

For: Striking design inside and out, economical, good handling, reasonable equipment, fair performance.

Against: Expensive to insure, average warranty, some restricted rear legroom, road noise noticeable, average bootspace.

FAST FACTS

Model: Honda HR-V Advance Style Plus

Price: £37,995

Mechanical: 238 PS 4 cyl 1500cc petrol-electric power, three-mode CVT

Max Speed: 105 mph

0 – 62 mph: 10.7 secs

Combined MPG: 52

Insurance Group: 31

C02 emissions: 122 g/km

Bik rating: 29%, £210FY, £180SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 90,000 miles

Rating: 4

Size: L 4.36 m (14.30 ft), W 1.79 m (5.87 ft), H 1.59 m (5.22 ft)

Bootspace: 319 to 1,305 litres (11.27 to 46.09 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,401 kg (3,089 lb)

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