

# A hybrid powertrain in a hybrid body type

BY JOE SAGE

Hybrid powertrain aside—something at which Toyota is a longstanding master—the clever Toyota Crown could be considered a “hybrid” in another sense, combining the best of a more traditional sedan format with the stance and attributes of a crossover or SUV. It’s a great formula, and it creates one of our favorite vehicles.

Ours is in Nightshade trim, (priced in the upper \$40s, third up of four trims from the lower \$40s to mid-\$50s, an easy range to navigate). The specs are great. As a hybrid, Crown is rated at more than 40 mpg. And it has a 14.5-gallon tank, meaning for anyone, notably in lingo suited to those who have

looked into EVs, this will achieve about 600 miles of “range” from a simple five-minute refill.

A super neat and rare factoid: ours had zero options, not a one. Yet it is very complete as is. And though built in Japan, its destination and delivery charge was just \$1135, while others have climbed considerably this year. Great! We’ll take it!

A sedan with crossover bones, or a crossover in a sedan suit, the Crown is spacious and comfortable. Instruments and controls are intuitive, many cleverly rethought by Toyota in an era where this is most welcome. The cabin has great attention to detail, such as a supremely clever and clean con-

sole bin lid, double-hinged so you can open it and pass cables through from either side, contextually and intuitively. (A fantastic piece of engineering, it reminds us of a genius child’s educational toy.)

Power is plenty for its efficient weight, applied via the engineered wisdom of a state-of-the-art hybrid powertrain. A great example would be our having to use a boulevard U-turn, somehow engineered into a fairly blind spot just short of the top of a hill. You’ll likely need a burst of power, precision steering and acceleration on tap, and it had it.

A moderately severe pair of raintroughs on a high-speed road in our normal routine—a test more comprehensive than obvious, challenging various surface responses as well as rebound rates, with two in a row—always separates the wheat from the chaff. This nimble but substantial

crossover-combo did exceptionally well. Ground clearance, 5.7 inches, is not that much for an SUV, but it’s a good example of how Crown’s stance and relative ruggedness conquer typical daily use.

As noted by the complete lack of options on our sample, this vehicle is engineered pretty much perfectly straight out of the box. If some might want more power, for that there is the Hybrid MAX, with 340 net combined horsepower and 400.4 lb-ft of torque (changing zero-to-60 time from 7.6 to 5.7 seconds), and it’s not even that much more expensive. The MAX also uses a six-speed automatic, versus an eCVT in the others. However, while some people love to hate any CVT, this one is completely transparent and smoother than most automatics, which in fact was part of the original philosophical and engineering intent of a CVT.

There is another variant as well—the Crown Signia (available with the standard powertrain only, not the MAX). This is a long-roof version, which

anyone might call a wagon, if everybody didn’t refuse to use that term these days. The body form on the Crown Signia largely closes the “hybrid” gap, bearing more crossover-like attributes inside and out, which adds utility but reduces that idea.

Some have tried to say that the sedan is dead. That does seem to be Detroit’s current approach, seen by many as not so much customer-driven, but largely, rather, for profit-per-unit reasons. But it’s not a very convincing platitude, as so many brands still clearly think otherwise. Toyota Crown—with its handsome sedan profile, crossover bones and high degree of utility all in one package—turns that whole debate on its head.

Sometimes when something tries to be multiple things—powerful while economical, different vehicle types all in one—it can end up missing them all. That’s not the case with Toyota Crown, which hits the bullseye for the full range of goals. This vehicle is a total win-win. ■

We had ours for a stretch of particularly wild weather—in which our Storm Cloud paint job was especially striking, and the cabin’s well-appointed cocoon effect was in full play. We quickly reconfirmed our past times with the Crown—there is plenty to love.



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl, 16v DOHC, VVT-iE and VVT-i
HP/TORQUE	184 hp / 163 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	14.0:1
ELEC MOTOR	perm magnet synchr
TORQUE	(F/R): 149 / 89 lb-ft
BATTERY	NiMH 230.4V / 5.0 Ah
HORSEPOWER (NET COMBINED)	236 hp
TRANSMISSION	eCVT
DRIVETRAIN	electronic on-demand AWD
0-TO-60 MPH	7.6 sec
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut w 26.5mm hollow stblzr bar; R: multi-link w 21.0mm hollow stblzr bar
STEERING	rack parallel-type elec pwr steer
BRAKES	F: 12.9 in vented; R: 12.5 in solid
WHEELS	21-in 10-spoke alloy, matte-black
TIRES	225/45/R21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	196.1 in / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.8 in
APPROACH/DEPART	13.9 / 19.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	38 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.2 / 37.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.1 / 38.9 in
WEIGHT	4013 lb
CARGO CAPACITY	(seats up) 15.2 cu.ft
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 14.5 gal
MPG	42/41/41 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$48,765
DESTINATION CHARGE	1135
TOTAL	\$49,900

## 2026 TOYOTA CROWN LINEUP

Crown XLE Hybrid AWD	\$41,440
Crown Limited Hybrid AWD	45,950
Crown Nightshade Hybrid AWD	48,765
Crown Platinum Hybrid MAX AWD	54,990

## 2026 CROWN SIGNIA LINEUP

Crown Signia XLE Hybrid AWD	\$44,390
Crown Signia Limited Hybrid AWD	48,790