

This is our first week in the Pilot in ten years. During that time, it has followed suit with platform-sharing and general overall sibling Honda Ridgeline, which evolved the two from prior more automotive styling to a more trucklike look. The full Pilot lineup spans just over \$10 grand, with the dirt-oriented TrailSport about in the middle, a win-win spot for off-roaders.

Our Pilot Elite AWD is basically the top trim of five—although this year there is a sixth, the Black Edition (an Elite with differences in styling details). Styling up front suits even the more townlike Elite trim and carries the brand, while from rear 3/4, it's quite handsome, long and lean—refreshing, as a distinctive rear view is fairly rare in this era.

Handling is generally tight and clean, hitting a competitive freeway S-curve (full of sudden lane-changers) nearly flawlessly, precision only down a point due to the slightest front-drive torque feel. We noted some drivetrain growling at parking lot speeds, the 10-speed shift-by-wire transmission perhaps overworked there.

We did not make best of friends with the interface, from its allocation of functions and less intuitive flow than we would seek, to memory functions that required long holds of multiple buttons, distracting, but also a long time to keep fingers-on-red-hot-screen in 115-degree summer temps, and unlike many, gloves made it totally unresponsive. It was also easy to think we were out of gas, as a prominent red zone at that end visually overpower a faint dashed line for actual supply.

But number one for us is the shifter. The more intuitive and uniform this interface is, the better, and it is indeed an era of many deviant forms—designers freed by electronics. But this one really requires eyes-off-the-road, always inconvenient, potentially downright dangerous when, for example, backing from a parking space into cross traffic.

Honda keeps the buying process simple—pick a trim level, and you know what you get, without the option deluge common to most. No need to figure out how a higher trim with fewer options compares with a lower trim with more (although of

2026 HONDA PILOT LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Sport	\$42,395	\$44,495
EX-L	44,695	46,795
TrailSport		50,595
Touring		51,295
Elite		53,695
Black Edition		55,195



course there are some). Our sample (see specs at right) has no options at all. Straight and simple.

As for our various nitpicks? Check all the details when you test drive and see what you think. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Lincoln, Alabama
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	USA / USA
PARTS CONTENT	US/Canada 65%
ENGINE	3.5L V6, 24v DOHC dual VTC, var cyl mgmt
HP/TORQUE	285 hp / 262 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	11.5:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd auto, shift-by-wire
DRIVETRAIN	AWD: 2nd-gen i-VTM4™
DRIVE MODES	normal, econ, sport, snow, tow, trail, sand
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut, 25.0x4.5 tubular stblzr bar; R: multi-link, 25.4x4.5 tubular stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr-asst rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.8 vented; R: 13.0 solid
WHEELS/TIRES	20-in gray machined face w 255/50 R20 A/S tires
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	200.1 / 113.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.3 in
APPR/DEPART	18.3 / 20.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	37.8 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.1 / 39.2 / 39.3 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.0 / 40.8 / 32.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY	18.6 / 48.5 / 87.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4658 lb
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION (F/R)	55.8 / 44.2 %
TOW CAPACITY	5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 18.5 gal
MPG	19/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$53,495
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$54,990

Sticker price above; current pricing at left.

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BY JOE SAGE

