



The 2010 Ford Fusion Hybrid combines second-generation hybrid technology, class-leading styling and features, along with the class-exclusive SmartGauge with EcoGuide instrument panel to help customers achieve maximum fuel economy in a sporty package.

# The Best of Both Worlds

When gas topped \$4 a gallon, interest in hybrid and fuel-efficient cars soared. The path to acceptance had already been paved by the Honda Insight in 1999—the first hybrid to hit the mass market in the United States—and the four-door Toyota Prius in 2000.

Despite a recent drop in oil prices, hybrid vehicles—like organic foods and green-friendly building materials—show staying power. “People are more environmentally conscious,” says Steve Boyd, general manager of Sheridan Ford in Wilmington. “But when gas spiked, it got everybody’s attention. They know gas will go up again.” Tax credits also helped snag consumer interest.

A hybrid uses two or more forms of power, usually a traditional internal combustion engine and fuel tank, along with one or more electric motors and a battery pack. Most are gasoline-burning machines that collect and reuse electrical energy wasted in standard cars. The vehicles switch power sources depending on the demand. When sitting at a red light, for instance, they conserve fuel by shutting off the engine power. “There’s dead silence,” Boyd says.

The first Honda Insight, sold in the United States until 2006, received an EPA mileage rating of 61 miles per gallon in the city and 70 mpg on the highway. The 2010 model, with a \$19,800 base manufacturer’s suggested retail price, gets 40 mpg in the city and 43 on the highway. Why the drop? Consumers don’t want to do without amenities, such as air-conditioning, which require more power.

Hybrid and new diesel technologies have spawned a wider variety of high-mileage vehicles—even SUVs.

BY PAM GEORGE

The ability to combine all the extras with energy savings has sparked activity in the upscale end of the market, especially in the SUV segment. Credit in part goes to the collaboration between Daimler, General Motors, BMW and the former Chrysler, which in 2006 pooled resources to develop the two-mode hybrid transmission. GM and Chrysler built hybrid Escalades, Tahoes and a few Durangos before bowing out, while Mercedes and BMW soldiered on. The Cadillac Escalade hybrid, an SUV, debuted this year.

“Everyone we’ve sold it to is amazed by the ride, the handling and the quietness of the vehicle, especially when you’re driving around town and it’s running on battery power,” says Ronnie Hux, general manager of Auto Team Delaware in Wilmington, which represents Cadillac, Subaru, Saab and Kia.

The Escalade hybrid’s two-mode system includes an electrically variable engine and 300-volt battery. Under the hood: a 6-liter V8 engine. The car can rely on both the electric motors and the combustion engine simultaneously.

The non-hybrid version of the Cadillac Escalade gets 12 mpg



The 2010 Honda Insight gets 40 mpg in the city and 43 on the highway.

7 uses a 120-volt battery pack. The hybrid drive should bump the fuel efficiency to 20 mpg while reaching 60 mph in 4.8 seconds.

On the domestic front, Chevrolet's Tahoe Hybrid, with a \$50,455 MSRP, is GM's version of the two-mode hybrid technology. Mileage estimates weigh in at 21 mpg for the city and 22 for the highway for the two-wheel-drive version and 20/20 for the all-wheel-drive version. Chevrolet also offers the Silverado, which starts at \$38,020 MSRP, another two-mode system, and the Malibu, which starts at \$25,555 MSRP.

Ford, meanwhile, has hit with the Escape and Fusion hybrids. The five-seat Escape, which ranges from \$32,260 to \$34,010 MSRP, has a fuel efficiency of 29 mpg in the city and 34 mpg on the highway.

The hybrid Fusion, a four-door sedan, is getting the most attention. "It gets the best gas mileage in its class," Boyd says. The car gets 41 mpg in the city and 36 on the highway.

The 2010 model has a 156-horsepower 2.5-liter lean-burning, Atkinson cycle gas engine and a 106-horsepower AC electric motor. The Fusion Hybrid can run under pure electric (EV) power, gasoline power or a blend. Ford claims the Fusion can maintain EV mode up to 47 mph. The hybrid starts at \$27,000 MSRP, compared to the non-hybrid

in the city and 19 mpg on the highway. The hybrid version gets 20 and 21, respectively.

Non-hybrid Escalades range from \$62,205 to \$84,905 MSRP. These models include the longer ESV and the EXT pickup. The hybrid only comes in the shorter length. The price is between \$73,135 and \$87,510 MSRP.

The Escalade now has some competition in the luxury end with the expected debut of the long-awaited Mercedes ML450 hybrid, an SUV with a fuel-efficient V6 and two electric motors integrated into the transmission. The economy rating is 24 mpg highway and 21 in the city.

Already out is the S400, which takes aim at Lexus' LS 600h. The S400 is powered by the 3.5-liter Mercedes V6 gas engine and small battery-hybrid system, which adds 165 pounds to the car. The S400 gets 23 mpg in the city and 33 mpg on the highway. Even better, it looks good. "It's fully equipped. You don't need any options on this car," says Barry Fleischman, service director at Mercedes-Benz of Wilmington.

The MSRP starts at \$87,950. Compare that to the LS 600h's \$106,035 MSRP. Lexus offers three other hybrid models, including the HS Hybrid10, which starts at \$34,200. Amenities and price

aside, the difference is performance. The LS goes from 0-60 in 5.5 seconds. The HS takes 8.4 seconds.

The BMW X6 ActiveHybrid, a sports activity coupe expected before year's end, delivers the handling and quick response that BMW customers expect. The buzz is that the X6 Hybrid's twin electric motors and 4.4-liter V8 engine enable it to zip to 60 mph in 5.5 seconds. The car offers a 20 percent mileage improvement over the standard X6. The vehicle should cost in the mid-\$80,000s.

Next year, BMW is expected to bring its ActiveHybrid 7 to market. The big sedan series is powered by a 4.4-liter, V8 engine that boasts 440 horsepower when combined with the single electric motor. The ActiveHybrid



The 2010 Cadillac Escalade Hybrid is the first large luxury SUV with fuel-saving hybrid technology.

version, which starts at \$18,000.

You can't mention hybrids without talking about the Prius, which has been redesigned for 2010 with an MSRP of \$21,000 to \$27,270. With fresh styling, more power and higher EPA fuel-economy figures, the five-passenger vehicle teams a 4-cylinder engine with a battery-powered electric motor and a continuously variable automatic transmission. No plug-in charging is required. Five models are available.

The five-passenger 2010 Honda Insight, meanwhile, mates a 1.3-liter 4-cylinder engine with a battery-powered electric motor. Like most hybrids, the car can run on one or both of its power sources. Most of the time, however, the gas engine shuts off at a stop and restarts again when the driver releases his or her foot from the brake pedal. No plug-in charging is required. The MSRP ranges from \$19,800 to \$23,100.

Not to be outdone, diesel models have also received tweaks. With new additives and technologies, the diesel models can run cleaner than hybrids, Boyd says. Fuel-efficiency is another perk. Popular models include the BMW 335d and the Mercedes E class.

"The old Mercedes diesels were loud," says Kurt Retzlaff, a sales manager with i.g. Burton in Milford. "That's the biggest huddle we have to get over when dealing with customers. Now they're so quiet, and there is no longer black smoke. The tailpipes are clean."

Both hybrids and diesels may have to share the stage with the electric cars, including the Chevrolet Volt, which has remained on schedule for late 2010 even with GM's reorganization.

The plug-in vehicle, expected to carry a MSRP of about \$40,000, has a propulsion system based on GM's new Voltec platform, which includes lithium-ion batteries charged by a power outlet or the gasoline engine. With fully charged batteries, the Volt should zip along for up to 40 miles, satisfying the average 33-mile commute for 75 percent of American workers. After 40 miles, the 4-cylinder gasoline-drive engine kicks in, driving a generator that extends the range to more than 300 miles on a tank of gasoline.

And that's just the start of things. "We're going to see more diesels, more electric and more hybrids in the future," Hux says. □



## Scale back your SUV, not your expectations. The all-new GLK.

THE 2010 GLK STARTING AT  
**\$33,900\***

From a long line of award-winning SUVs comes the new GLK. Its compact size handles the tightest of parking spaces, while roomy cargo space and a 268-horsepower V-6 take on the grandest of road trips. Test-drive one at your authorized Mercedes-Benz dealer, and you'll discover that great engineering is great engineering at any size. [MBUSA.com](http://MBUSA.com)

Mercedes-Benz



[www.igburtonmb.com](http://www.igburtonmb.com)

GLK350 shown in Mars Red paint with optional running boards and Appearance, Lighting and Premium 1 Packages. \*MSRP for a 2010 GLK350 2-wheel drive, available in approximately April. Excludes all options, taxes, title, reg., transportation charge and dealer prep. GLK350 4-wheel drive is currently available starting at an MSRP of \$35,900. Excludes all options, taxes, title, reg., transportation charge and dealer prep. ©2009 Authorized Mercedes-Benz Dealers. For more information, call 1-800-FOR-MERCEDES, or visit MBUSA.com.

**i.g. Burton** ...Count On Us

509 Bay Road  
Milford, Delaware 19963  
**302-424-3042**

## Mercedes-Benz of Wilmington

*A Truly Exceptional Experience*



Mercedes-Benz

3801 Lancaster Pike, Wilmington, DE • 302-351-3388

[mbofwilmington.com](http://mbofwilmington.com)