

# Honda CR-Z

*This two-plus-two coupé is the latest sports hybrid offering from Honda. And if you're a keen driver, one that fancies a bit of style with your ecology saving, it is a most interesting offer.*



*June 2010 marks a significant milestone for hybrid technology. The concept of combining an efficient petrol engine with a small electric motor, which is powered by a set of highly efficient batteries, which in turn are recharged by a normal cycle of driving seemed revolutionary in 1999, when Honda launched the world's first hybrid vehicle, the original Insight.*

**S**o it's fitting that Honda is behind the world's first sporty hybrid, the stunningly designed CR-Z coupé. The sloping roofline and chopped-off rear mean it's inevitably being labelled a successor to the 1980's CR-X.

From the very start Honda wanted the CR-Z to have a sporty feel and it doesn't disappoint. The handling is surprisingly nimble, with excellent steering response and brake feel, while the ride is sporty yet comfortable. The combination of the 1.5 i-VTEC engine and electric motor produces a very torquey drive which is accompanied by a throaty exhaust note when pressing on.

There are three driving modes and buttons to the right of the steering wheel allow you to swap between them on the go. Normal is the default setting, while Sport alters the behaviour of the powertrain, sharpens the throttle response so you don't have to push the pedal so far to get maximum acceleration, and increases the weight

of the steering. Eco is for around town when you want to prioritise fuel economy. Officially the combined figure is 56.5mpg, a very respectable total for a car of this size and type. But the most impressive element of the CR-Z is its CO2 emissions, an amazing 117g/km.

In around-town traffic or on the motorway, the car feels assured and very refined. The sporty ride and dynamic handling are as good as the best of its rivals, and the futuristic cabin is a comfortable place to spend time. But the car comes alive when you lose the crowds and find a quieter stretch of road. The CR-Z is most rewarding to drive and makes a lovely noise when you push it that bit harder. It's supple through the corners, the sort of car that makes you want to smile and just keep going past your destination. After a while you forget you're driving one of the most technically advanced vehicles on the road today. It's only at junctions when the fuel-saving start-stop system kicks

in that you remember. Hybrids used to be seen as worthy but dull. With the Honda CR-Z, a new chapter in their history can be written.



*Advertorial*

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- Max speed: 124 mph
- 0-62 mph 9.9 seconds
- Fuel consumption: 56.5 mpg
- Engine: 1497cc 4 cylinders with integrated electric motor
- Power: 122 bhp @ 6100 rpm
- Transmission: 6 speed manual
- Price: £16,999 (at time of writing)