

NEWSWHEEL

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Mike's Corner—

Are Hybrids the Answer?

By Mike Solito

The new Toyota Prius is racking up long lines of buyers as we all try to answer these questions: Will it save me gas money? And will it help the environment?

These questions and their answers have set the car market in somewhat of a tailspin. With higher prices at the pump looking more and more like one of those reality shows on T.V., it is obvious that both American and foreign car manufactures think that it may be smart and politically correct to have a hybrid in their stables.

Danny Hakim of the *New York Times* wrote an article about hybrids, and he described hybrid technology perfectly: "Hybrids use electric power to save gas. Toyota and Ford have systems where an electric motor actually takes over for the internal combustion engine and powers the car at slow speeds and stops. By shutting down the gas engine you save fuel. The Honda's hybrids have an electric motor that helps the internal combustion engine but does not actually power the vehicle fully." Hakim learned through his research that "The Honda, Toyota, and Ford hybrids increase fuel economy by 40% or more."

The technology has changed from the time where we had to "plug in" cars in order to make sure they didn't stop abruptly along the highway. These new hybrids have internal charging systems that self charge the car while it is running. Battery packs for these cars (like the Prius) have a shelf life of about 150,000 miles. For more on sealed Nickel-Metal Hydride (Ni-MH) batteries visit this site: <http://www.toyota.com/vehicles/2005/prius/specs.html>.

The Toyota Prius and the Honda Civic have been out for a few years. They are being joined by other cars and SUVs that automotive manufacturers are releasing this December and at the beginning of 2005. At the writing of this article, Honda, Toyota, Ford, and Lexus all will have new hybrids:

Honda Accord ExL
Toyota Highlander
Lexus RX400h
Ford Escape



Every 2005 Prius sold in the U.S. is mechanically equipped to meet the California SULEV emission standard. However, since gasoline available outside of California is not as clean burning, Prius is certified to the Tier 2-Bin 3 standard for federal emissions compliance. What does this mean to you? It means that the Prius is 71% cleaner than the average for all cars rated federally for emissions.

Santa Claus has something for you if you buy a hybrid for Xmas. Oh, I meant Uncle Sam: the Federal Government has a \$2000 tax write-off for purchasing a hybrid. This is a way the government can help make it affordable for everyone. Hybrids are on average about \$3000. more than their gas-guzzling cousins.

P.S. I have 5 clients who are purchasing hybrids through my service. Because of the clout I have in the Pittsburgh market, I can get them a little quicker than the average buyer who only buys 1 car every 3 years. 🚗



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I want to personally thank everyone who helped with this year's great success. People who adorn this newsletter have made Auto Buyers' Consultants what it is and hopefully what it can be in the future. Happy holidays! And may you have a great and prosperous New Year.

*Mike Solito
President
Auto Buyers' Consultants*

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Our top referral partner of the year was **Pittsburgh Financial Consultants**, led by President **Wayne A. Russo**, CFP (412-288-0178). Wayne Russo's mission is to bring financial order to the lives of his clients. He understands that everyone wants a financial smooth ride through life and a long carefree retirement. He knows that this can be accomplished through patience, perseverance, and having a financial consultant who understands and relates to the client. Wayne's goal is to lead the premier financial consultant group in his client's eyes, and he always goes the extra steps in putting their goals ahead of everything else.

Because of Wayne's genuine desire to help his clients, Pittsburgh Financial Consultants referred 27 clients, and we saved them \$135,000 on their car purchases (not including money saved on trade-ins). 🚗

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*Best wishes for a
peaceful holiday
season and a
happy New Year!*



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