

## Quality on a Budget

### Redesigned Honda HR-V is Bigger, Better, But Still Not Quick

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

If it weren't for the badging, it would be tough to identify what this vehicle is: the all-new version of Honda's smallest crossover, the HR-V.

Not only is it a whole lot bigger than the outgoing HR-V — 2.5 inches wider and nearly 10 inches longer — but it looks and feels like a totally different vehicle.

Considering it's built using a different platform, one it shares with the excellent Civic, that's no surprise. The 2023 HR-V drives with a quiet, comfortable sophistication that the old model lacked. It also looks more interesting with a mixture of soft, rounded curves and an upright, truck-like stance that's so popular on the newest crossovers.

One thing that didn't change is its attitude when you press the gas pedal.

The new HR-V's 2.0-liter, 158-horsepower engine feels reluctant to accelerate, and you have to spend a lot of time with the pedal mashed to the floor to confidently merge at freeway speeds.

A continuously variable transmission doesn't help the experience, letting the engine wind up and belt out a lingering, uncomfortable wail at high RPMs.

To be fair, everything else about the new HR-V is the opposite: very comfortable. It doesn't pretend to be a sports car, which is refresh-



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ingly honest in a segment that bafflingly tries to make every vehicle "sporty" and "aggressive," something that makes no sense for everyday driving.

The HR-V makes a lot of sense.

The new cabin is spacious for its class and cavernous compared to the old HR-V. It's also dramatically quieter

thanks to proper sound insulation, active noise cancellation, a solid design and a suspension that gently sops up bumps and vibrations. It drives like the struts are filled with soft, fluffy Wonder Bread.

The steering feels perfectly weighted in corners. It delivers enough feedback to make you feel connected to

the road, a longtime Honda hallmark.

Its newfound size makes the cargo area dramatically bigger than before, now with 24.4 cubic feet of cargo space. It's one of the largest in its class.

It also offers decent gas mileage of 32 mpg on the highway with front-wheel-drive or 30 when you opt for

all-wheel drive.

Closely connected to all those logical things is something that can't be evaluated on a test drive: the worth of the Honda name.

This brand has a reputation for bulletproof reliability and holding its value on the used-car market, and this new HR-V feels like it's built with the classic,

#### WHAT WAS TESTED?

**2023 Honda HR-V AWD EX-L (\$28,950)**

**Wheelbase:** 104.5 in.

**Length:** 179.8 in.

**Width:** 72.4 in.

**Height:** 63.8 in.

**Engine:** 2.0-liter four cylinder (158 hp, 138 lbs. ft.)

**Transmission:** Continuously variable

**Fuel Economy:** 25 city, 30 highway

#### Why buy it?

This all-new generation of the HR-V is built on the Civic platform that makes it bigger, quieter and more comfortable. The Honda name gives buyers peace of mind, too.

supremely solid Honda quality that should make that hold true once again.

I wish every crossover felt this rock-solid, right down to each switch and trim piece on its modern, minimalist dash.

Pricing reflects that Honda premium, with starting prices just a bit higher than its Korean and American competitors. It starts at \$23,650 for the LX model with front wheel drive and tops out at \$28,950 for the EX-L with all-wheel drive.

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A continuously variable transmission doesn't help the experience, letting the engine wind up and belt out a lingering, uncomfortable wail at high RPMs.



The redesigned HR-V's cabin is one of the most spacious in its class. Its dash is centered around a large touchscreen and follows contemporary trends toward a minimalist, simple design.

To be fair, everything else about the new HR-V is the opposite: very comfortable. It doesn't pretend to be a sports car, which is refreshingly honest in a segment that bafflingly tries to make every vehicle "sporty" and "aggressive," some-

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This brand has a reputation for bulletproof reliability and holding its value on the used-car market, and this new HR-V feels like it's built with the classic, supremely solid Honda quality that should make that hold true once again.

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#### A CLOSER LOOK



#### AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

**What was tested?** 2023 Honda HR-V AWD EX-L (\$28,950).

**Options:** Premium paint (\$395). Price as tested (including \$1,245 destination charge): \$30,590.

**Wheelbase:** 104.5 in.

**Length:** 179.8 in.

**Width:** 72.4 in.

**Height:** 63.8 in.

**Engine:** 2.0-liter four cylinder (158 hp, 138 lbs. ft.)

**Transmission:** Continuously variable

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#### RATINGS

Style: 9

Performance: 3

Price: 8

Handling: 6

Ride: 7

Comfort: 7

Quality: 10

Overall: 7

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