



Fact File

- Toyota Yaris Hybrid
- Engine: 1.5 litre petrol plus electric
- Power: 73hp/55KW
- 0-62mph: 11.8 secs
- Top speed: 103mph
- Transmission: CVT
- Combined MPG: 78.5
- CO2 g/km: 75

Leading the Way

Ian Lamming drives a taste of the future

MOTORING has reached and past a technological watershed.

It used to be that new cars offered evolution and basically more of the same. But in the past two years things have most definitely moved on apace.

My car is coming up two years old and jumping from it to the new Toyota Yaris Hybrid shows how much automotive technology has changed.

Yaris bristles with the stuff and is all the better for it. In smartphone fashion many of the functions are touchscreen swipe and dab.

There is also connectivity beyond your wildest dreams, like you were in the home office near the hub.

Yaris boasts an incredible blend of combustion engine honed for maximum efficiency and the latest in battery technology.

A 1.5 litre petrol motor calls in support from a powerful electric power-plant and the result is a hybrid dream.

Driver does very little beyond climbing inside, pressing the start button and depressing the

accelerator. The petrol engine may or may not kick in, it depends how it feels.

Generally, the Yaris moves forward on EV without any noise, which is gloriously creepy.

When they work together there is little extra noise, vibration or harshness to tell you what is actually happening under the skin in order to propel you forward.

It's only when you need more power that you get the hairdryer sound of a motor right in the middle of its power zone while the CVT gearbox decides how fast to shove you on.

It makes for staggeringly relaxing motoring. At the end of the day few of us relish the commute but no matter how tired or niggly you feel, climbing into the Yaris and getting under way makes everything feel right with the world.

The 'big car' ride also helps. My little hatchback lets you feel every lump, bump and undulation. Yaris travels the same pockmarked asphalt in much greater comfort yet the suspension is never soft enough to affect handling, which is sharp and

well-mannered. Yaris has also grown into a vehicle happy to accommodate passengers and their paraphernalia.

It swallows a whole lot more than you could imagine for the modest proportions of its sector.

Cleverly the battery pack makes no difference to the amount of space available.

Attention to detail is incredible; did you know that the wing mirrors are asymmetrical to compensate for the effect operating the single wiper has on aerodynamics to prevent turbulence and wind noise. How's that for pernickety? The bicolour black and white livery looks fabulous.

Toyota is leading the way in the world of hybrids and with all the controversy surrounding diesels motors, the combination of petrol and electric most certainly looks the way to go. If this much progress has been made in such a short space of time it is hard to imagine what will be next – but I look forward to that very much.