

Ford Maverick, Bronco win truck, utility of the year awards

11 January 2022, by Tom Krisher



This photo provided by Ford shows the 2022 Ford Maverick, a compact pickup truck with a choice of a hybrid or turbocharged engine. Credit: Courtesy of Ford Motor Co. via AP

For the second year in a row, vehicles from Ford Motor Co. took two of the three North American Car, Truck and Utility of the Year awards.

The company's Maverick compact pickup won truck of the year, while its Bronco off-road SUV earned the utility of the year. Honda's redesigned Civic compact car won the car of the year.

Fifty automotive journalists from the U.S. and Canada are judges for the three awards, which are announced every January. They're chosen from dozens of candidates and must be new or substantially changed for the current model year. Automakers often use the awards in advertising.

The judges evaluate finalists on value, innovation, design, performance, safety, technology and driver satisfaction. The selection process started last summer.

In addition to the Bronco, Utility of the Year finalists included the GV70 from Hyundai's Genesis luxury brand, and the Hyundai Ioniq 5 electric SUV.

Truck finalists included the Maverick as well as its main small pickup competitor, the Hyundai Santa Cruz. Also included was the Rivian R1T pickup from the electric vehicle startup.

In addition to the Civic, car finalists included the Lucid Air electric sedan, and the Volkswagen Golf GTI and R sports cars.



In this April 25, 2021 file photograph, the blue oval logo of Ford Motor Company is shown in east Denver. For the second year in a row, vehicles from Ford Motor Co. took two of the three North American Car, Truck and Utility of the Year awards. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski, File

Fully electric vehicles were finalists in all three categories this year, but judges picked gas-powered or gas-electric hybrid vehicles.

Guidehouse Insights E-Mobility Principal Analyst Sam Abuelsamid, who is not among the jurors, said it's likely the more affordable prices of the Civic and Maverick appealed to the group.

The Maverick, with a hybrid powertrain, starts at \$19,995, while the Civic's base price is \$22,350.

Lucid's Air Dream starts at \$169,000, but lower-priced versions are coming. Rivian's R1T has a starting price of \$67,500. Neither price includes federal or state tax credits for electric vehicles.

Last year Ford's Mustang Mach-E electric SUV won the utility award. Abuelsamid sees electric vehicles winning more of the awards in future years as more models are rolled out at lower prices and in more popular segments.



Kumar Galhotra, Ford President of the Americas and International markets group poses next to the Bronco off-road SUV, Tuesday, Jan. 11 2022 in Detroit. For the second year in a row, vehicles from Ford Motor Co. took two of the three North American Car, Truck and Utility of the Year awards. The company's Maverick compact pickup won truck of the year, while its Bronco off-road SUV earned the utility of the year. Honda's redesigned Civic compact car won the car of the year. Credit: AP Photo/Carlos Osorio

Kumar Galhotra, Ford President of the Americas and International markets group poses next to the Maverick compact pickup, Tuesday, Jan. 11 2022 in Detroit. For the second year in a row, vehicles from Ford Motor Co. took two of the three North American Car, Truck and Utility of the Year awards. The company's Maverick compact pickup won truck of the year, while its Bronco off-road SUV earned the utility of the year. Honda's redesigned Civic compact car won the car of the year. Credit: AP Photo/Carlos Osorio

Toward the end of last year, there were about 20 electric vehicles on sale in the U.S., and this year manufacturers will start selling about 20 more, Abuelsamid said. Many are coming in popular market segments such as full-size pickups and compact crossover SUVs, he said.

The awards, he said, are becoming more important as new automakers enter the market. "There's a real opportunity to create consumer awareness for these brands," Abuelsamid said.

Also at the announcement event in Detroit Tuesday put on by the Automotive Press Association, organizers of the big Detroit auto show announced that it will return to the city in September for the first time since 2019.

North American International Auto Show Executive Director Rod Alberts said the show would be both indoors and outdoors in and around the downtown Detroit Huntington Place convention center. It will take place from Sept. 14 through 25.

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