Toyota Prius Crowned the 2026 WheelsTV Pre-Owned Vehicle of the Year

At the 17th Annual WheelsTV Pre-Owned Vehicle of the Year Awards Judging, the Toyota Prius took the Platinum Wheel with the 2016-2022 Toyota Prius.



2016 WheelsTV POV of the Year, 4th Gen. Toyota Prius

GROTON, MA, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At the 17th Annual WheelsTV Pre-Owned Vehicle of the Year Awards Judging, the 2016-2022, 4th generation Toyota Prius took the Platinum Wheel when it was voted the 2026 WheelsTV POV of the Year.

When informed of the Prius's award, Toyota's Cam Taborda stated, "We are truly honored that the 2016-2022 Toyota Prius has been named the 2026 WheelsTV Pre-Owned Vehicle of the Year! For more than 25 years, the Prius has defined what a hybrid can be, and the fourth generation is built on that legacy, reflecting Toyota's journey and commitment to creating a positive impact for future generations."

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>
> *Toyota's Cam Taborda*

The WheelsTV Pre-Owned Vehicle of the Year, or POVY, provides consumers with motor vehicle purchasing guidance from leading members of the automotive press. With new vehicles now averaging $50,000 and pre-owned vehicles costing half that, pre-owned vehicles are outselling new cars by more than two to one. Over 38 million pre-owned cars were purchased in the U.S. over the past year.

To select the WheelsTV POV of the Year, automotive professionals from across the U.S. gathered via Google Meet, sharing their automotive wisdom and hands-on driving experience. Industry leaders from Washington State, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Southern California and Connecticut were the judges providing a national perspective.

This year's distinguished judging panel included:

- Laura Byrd: Automotive Facilitator/CX Coach/Product Specialist
- Wayne Carini: Host of Chasing Classic Cars, Owner, F40 Motorsports
- John Dinkel: Former editor of Road and Track and author of books on Mazda and Toyota
- Craig Fitzgerald: Award-winning Automotive Editor
- Zane Merva: President of New England Motor Press Association
- John Paul: AAA's "Car Doctor" radio host and auto writer for The Boston Globe, The Providence Journal, and NY Newsday
- John Zangari: Producer and Host of Drive-through Radio



WheelsTV POV of the Year, 4th Gen. Toyota Prius Interior



WheelsTV POV of the Year, 4th Gen. Toyota Prius

Toyota's Cam Taborda went on to say, "Earning this recognition from such a distinguished panel of automotive experts reinforces our commitment to delivering exceptional reliability, value, and peace of mind to pre-owned buyers nationwide. Thank you to WheelsTV and the judging panel for this meaningful honor."

Peter Ciani, Senior Writer at WheelsTV, provided voting documentation. The judging was moderated by Jim Barisano, President of WheelsTV and creator of the prime-time Discovery Channel series Wild About Wheels.

Stated Judge John Paul: "The WheelsTV POV of the Year award is an important tool for used car shoppers. Bottom line from me - The fourth-generation Toyota Prius represents the ideal previously owned vehicle by combining exceptional reliability, great fuel economy, advanced safety features, low ownership costs, and long-term value. Very few cars today can offer this combination for budget conscious buyers or plain old Yankee thriftiness."

Judge John Zangari observed that: "Not surprisingly, the 4th generation 2016 thru 2022 Prius won in WheelsTV's 17th annual POV of the Year judging. What would you expect with its incredible gas

mileage, easy to access front and rear seats and generous head room all topped off with Toyota's reputation for bullet-proof reliability?"

Judge John Dinkel looked back on his involvement in the Prius's development: "I had the distinct honor and pleasure of having worked with Toyota during the intro of the first gen Prius way back in the 2001 model year. It was a big risk. Nobody knew what a hybrid was! And why would you want one? Enter Dave Hermance, often referred to as the "American father of the Prius." Hermance had a unique ability to translate highly complicated electrical and mechanical systems into plain, accessible language. Sadly, we lost Dave way too early. But the Prius has gone from strength to strength, and Toyota's win in this year's POVY with the 4th generation (2016-2022) Prius is just additional proof of that."
The judging panel also cited the Prius's five-star NHTSA safety rating, exceptional consumer feedback, and unmatched long-term dependability with some exceeding 200,000 trouble-free miles.

Here are the nine POVY Category Winners, indicated by vehicle generation, followed by the WheelsTV 2026 Classic Ride recipient:

Hybrid: Toyota Prius 2016-2022 - Gas or diesel/electric that has earned exceptional MPG / MPGe ratings and/or is designated a low emissions vehicle.
EV: Hyundai IONIQ 5 (2022-2O23) - Pure battery powered electric or hydrogen fuel-cell vehicle (HFCV) that has achieved exceptional mileage range between charges and has high reliability and safety ratings.
SUV: Toyota 4Runner (2014-2023) - Heavy-duty off-road or truck-based utility vehicle with go-anywhere credentials and an option for low-range gearing.
Crossover: Mazda CX-5 (2017-2023) - Compact, medium or large family utility vehicle with light off-road capabilities and/or more car-like handling.
Sporty Car: Chevrolet Corvette C8 2020-2023 - Performance & handling-oriented two-seaters, coupes, or convertibles.
Small Car: Toyota Corolla Sedan 2020-2023 - Compact, subcompact & micro cars, any power source.
Family Car: Toyota Sienna 2021-2023 - A sedan, wagon or minivan typically purchased as an everyday family vehicle.
Light Truck: Toyota Tacoma 2016-2023 - Mid & full-size pickup trucks weighing less than 8500 pounds.
Luxury Vehicle: Genesis GV80 2021-2023 - Any premium luxury automobile.
2026 WheelsTV Classic Ride: 1996 Corvette Grand Sport.

Congratulations to the Toyota North America team on the fourth-generation 2016-2022 Prius being crowned the 2026 WheelsTV POV of the Year!

About WheelsTV
WheelsTV (http://www.WheelsTV.net) is the auto industry's standard of excellence in on-the-road

video test drives, with the world's largest library of over 8,000 independently produced video research tools covering 9% of the North American new and pre-owned light vehicle market. WheelsTV's video test drives and vertical shorts provide deeper engagement, greater excitement, and quicker answers to millions of car shoppers across North America.
The WheelsTV production team's lineage extends to popular prime-time automotive television series seen on the Discovery Network, PBS, Amazon Prime, the Family Channel, Roku, Tubi and in 104 countries worldwide. Programming includes prime-time series Wild About Wheels, Motor Trend Television, the documentary series WHEELS, and the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance 50th Anniversary Special.
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