

Road beat: 'Genesis is now a world-class automobile'



Hyundai redefines its luxury car. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

When Hyundai introduced its first upscale luxury sedan in 2008 as a 2009 model, the Hyundai Genesis, it took a few months before the public realized that a car company that started selling cars in the U.S. with the \$4,995 Hyundai Excel in 1986, could build a luxury car. The original Genesis turned out to be an incredible value. While sales for the first six months were slow, it soon became a huge success.

With the 2015 second generation Hyundai Genesis, Hyundai demonstrates that it can build some of the best cars in the world. The 2015 Genesis is now a world-class automobile, one

of the best cars the Road Beat has ever tested. When you consider its relatively low price, it may be the best.

From its all new long 118.5-inch wheelbase (up three inches) and wide track chassis, to its new beautifully flowing sculptured body with no resemblance to the first generation Genesis, this new Genesis makes a muscular statement to those European brands that Hyundai can do it better. It is a rather simple shape that starts with an aggressive snout of a grille. A single character line along its flanks defines its sleekness along with a beautiful window line that ends in a distinctive rear quarter window. There are no wasted curves or unnecessary clutter to otherwise mar this elegant design.



Specs and Techs

Price \$39,450 to about \$55,000

Engines

3.8L DOHC 24 valve V-6 311 hp@ 6,000rpm

293 lb.-ft. of torque @ 5,000 rpm

5.0L DOHC 32 valve V-8 420 hp @ 6,000 rpm

383 lb.-ft. of torque @ 5,000 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed automatic

Configuration

Longitudinal front
engine/Rear Wheel Drive/All
Wheel Drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 118.5 inches

Length 196.5 inches

Width 74.4 inches

Height 58.3 inches

Track (f/r) 64.1/65.3 inches

Ground clearance 5.3 inches

Weight (RWD/AWD/5.0L)

4,138/4,295/4,541 pounds

Trunk capacity 15.3 cubic
feet

Fuel Capacity 20.3 gallons

Steering lock to lock 2.55
turns

Turning circle 36.2 feet

Wheels (3.8/5.0)

18X8/19X8.5f; 19X9r inches

Tires (3.8/5.0)

245/45X18/245/40X19f;

275/35X19r

Cabin volume 107.7 cubic
feet

Coefficient of drag 0.26

Performance

0-60 mph 5.89 seconds

50-70 mph level 2.97
seconds, uphill 3.86 seconds

Top speed electronically
limited to 149 mph

Fuel economy EPA rated at
18/29/22 mpg combined.

Expect 22-25 mpg in
suburban/rural driving.

32-33 mpg on a level highway

at 70 mph.

Its coefficient of drag of 0.26 is a testament to its cleanliness. Kudos to Hyundai.

It is a small full-size ride with a length of 196 inches and width of 74 inches while standing 58 inches tall. However, inside are a voluminous interior of 108-cubic-feet and a 15-cubic-foot trunk.

Powering the Genesis rear wheels is one of two engines, a 3.8L DOHC, 24 valve V-6 producing 311 hp at 6,000 rpm along with a peak torque value of 293 pounds at 5,000 rpm or a 5.0L, DOHC, 32 valve V-8 cranking out 420 hp at 6,000 rpm and peak torque of 383 pounds at 5,000 rpm. Unless you need to hear the sound of a wonderful V-8 engine go with the V-6 as was my test vehicle for reasons which I will explain later.

Performance for the V-6 is world-class with a 0-60 mph time of 5.89 seconds. Passing times also reflect world-class numbers of 2.97 seconds and 3.86 seconds in passing tests from 50-70 mph on level ground and up a 6 percent grade. While the V-8 may be a half a second or so quicker, it is hardly worth the loss in fuel economy or the extra cost of acquisition.

Hyundai's new eight-speed automatic is also worth mentioning with intuitive, silky shifts. Its ratios are perfectly spaced, allowing the engine to feel even more powerful than the numbers would indicate. And there are handy paddle shifters that can accommodate those enthusiasts who prefer the longer windy way home. This Genesis seriously rocks.

Eight speeds also mean good fuel economy. EPA says that you should expect 18/29/22 mpg city/highway/combined. In actual testing the Genesis returned on a level highway with the Smart cruise control set at 70 mph 32 mpg. During a 50-mile trip through Sacramento with 5 o'clock freeway traffic, which included 10 percent stop and go, the Genesis returned 31.4

mpg. Overall the Genesis averaged between 22-25 mpg, which is excellent for a 4,100-pound, 300 plus hp luxury car. No guilt here.

If there is a rub, some enthusiasts may say the new Genesis is too soft. That could be true if your intended purpose was to spend lots of time doing laps at Sonoma Raceway, Thunderhill or Laguna Seca. Sure you could have more fun in a Mini Cooper Turbo or a Golf R type or even an M series BMW, but that's not the reason most people buy a luxury ride, to do laps at the race track. But after tracking the Genesis in the tight twisties this Genesis acquitted itself quite well.

Genesis suspenders are state of the art Independent 5 link system at all four corners that include high performance gas shocks and coils. It also has solid stabilizer bars at both ends. The steering is an electric variable ratio power rack that is exceedingly quick at 2.55 turns lock-to-lock. Also adding to its handling credentials are 18 x 8 inch alloys plus 245/45 series rubber and a very wide track of 64 and 65 inches front and rear. By the numbers the Genesis should do corners like water in a hose. It almost does except for a bit of body roll and steering numbness. But the cornering power is there, it just takes a bit of driver concentration. Consequently it doesn't give you the feel of a true sports sedan. However, after spending a fair amount of time in the twisties, this Genesis would surprise most enthusiast drivers at the track because of its creds. Genesis performs.



Plenty of leg room no matter
where one sits.

But there are huge positives because of the Genesis advance suspension and those can be found in its near perfect ride quality. First the Genesis rides like it was built out of the amour plate from a battleship. It is that solid. It is one of the finest riding automobiles ever encountered by the Road Beat. It is extremely smooth, it absorbs road imperfections like a giant sponge and yet it has no float or wallow. It just simply levels any road. And finally Genesis is quiet, so quiet you have to think in a whisper.

Four big disc brakes with all the acronyms arrest the Genesis forward progress from 40 mph in a benchmark 40 feet. Besides every safety acronym and electronic intervention ever thought of by humankind, like blind spot warning and a super smart cruise control, Genesis adds one more, Lane Keep Assist. It's almost scary in what it can do. When activated it will actually vibrate the steering wheel and put slight pressure in the opposite direction of your drift if you leave a lane.

But wait there is more and this is the scary part. If you take your hands off the steering wheel while going down a freeway, after literally bumping off lane markers a couple of times as the system nudges the Genesis back into its lane, a warning light came on in the heads up display and in the TFT display between the tach and speedo saying "Keep hands on the steering wheel." What a great safety feature especially for texters or inattentive drivers. Genesis also has an auto emergency braking system. What a car!

Inside is a luxurious leather interior and soft touch materials everywhere. The one package I recommend, the \$3,500 Tech Package, (it has the lane departure warning and lane keep system) you get the upgraded leather seats with power side bolsters and seat cushion extender. They are comfortable. But the standard equipment list is so long with features like

standard heated front power seats, you might be overwhelmed with its standard features. Rear seating with the new longer wheelbase is massive and sublime as well. The trunk is well shaped and huge.

Hyundai has outdone itself. Genesis starts at \$38,000, plus a \$950 boat ride from Asan, Korea, for the base loaded V-6. Maybe using the word "base" is a misnomer, luxury is more appropriate. But wait, maybe I have saved the best for last. Genesis at \$40,500 becomes an all-wheel drive vehicle with extra standard features like heated rear seats, heated steering wheel and headlamp washers. If you want the V-8, it is still a bargain at \$51,500 considering its even more expansive standard equipment list. This is a vehicle that I am considering owning (in AWD).

There are two other option packages for the V-6, the Signature package (\$4,000) and Ultimate Package (\$3,500). Anyway you consider this new luxury ride; it is the new industry luxury value leader. You need to experience this car. It is so very impressive.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.