

Road Beat: Genesis G80 V-8 – simply the best



Genesis G80 V-8 is shines all other vehicles in its class.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

I have been testing cars for nearly 20 years and about 1,000 different makes and models, from every manufacturer (except for the Yugo). In testing I consider all factors from looks to performance, handling, ride, fuel economy, interior design and comfort, room, overall size, NVH (noise, vibration and harshness), safety, utility, quality, reliability, reputation and price. In considering the new (Hyundai) Genesis G80 V-8, with all the factors mentioned above (remember some factors carry more weight than others), it is simply the best car I have ever encountered.

Here's why? Two years ago, when I tested the V-6 version of the new Genesis G80, it had become a world-class automobile,

being "one of the best cars the Road Beat has ever tested and when you consider its relatively low price, it may be the best." Now with the V-8 engine it may be one of the best changes to the best car ever tested when price is a factor and for 99.9 percent of consumers, it always is. So the claim "simply the best" fits.

Genesis G80 is about 6 inches longer and 2 inches wider than your average midsize, but its wheelbase is a huge 8 inches longer. By the numbers it is 196 inches long by 74 inches wide by 58 inches tall on a long 118-inch wheelbase. Fluidic Sculpture is its design philosophy and it works. It is a beautifully proportioned automobile with a strong front and rear end dynamics in its lines to make it interesting. It is a great looking ride.

The difference between the 3.8L V-6 Genesis G80 and 5.0 L G80 V-8 is the engine and levels of standard equipment, although the base Genesis G80 is incredibly well equipped. And even the engines are not much different, both sharing the same bore and stroke, meaning that except for the V angle (V-6s are 60-degree Vs and most V-8s are 90-degree Vs because of engine balance issues), the V-8 is the V-6 with two more cylinders. Smart. The data for the V-6 is listed in the specification box, but the V-8 punches out a whopping 420 hp at 6,000 rpm and 383 pounds of twist at 5,000 rpm. It also makes muted, wonderful V-8 burbles when strong in the throttle, otherwise it is one of the smoothest and quietest engines I have ever driven behind. That is about 109 more hp and 90 more pounds of twist than the V-6.



Specs and Techs

Price \$41,000 to about \$55,660

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 (V-6 only)

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 4.92 seconds
50-70 mph level 2.44
seconds, uphill 2.99 seconds
Top speed will be mined
blowing
Fuel economy EPA rated at
15/23/18 mpg combined.
Expect 21-22 mpg in
suburban/rural driving. 31
mpg on a level highway at 70
mph.

While the V-6 was world class quick with 0-60 mph times of 5.89 seconds and 50-70 mph times of 2.97 and 3.86 seconds, respectively, The V-8 Genesis has simply shredded those numbers with a 0-60 mph of 4.92 seconds and passing times of just 2.44 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade only slowing to 2.99 times. Those are the times of a World Class super sedan. If you need to go to the moon or into Earth orbit, this is your vehicle as it has "escape velocity" type acceleration. If you need some exhilaration in your life, this G80 V-8 will provide it. If it doesn't, I would check to make sure you haven't assumed room temperature. Also, the pre-flight check list should include checking your head restraint.

Now mind you, I have tested quicker super sedans, BMW M cars, AMG Mercedes, but these are cars costing tens of thousands of dollars more with minuscule better performance (maybe half a second better). Once you cross the 5 second barrier, not much else matters. And the Genesis does it smoother.

Fuel economy is another small issue, but here is where the EPA numbers didn't jive with the real world. EPA rates the G80 V-8 at 15/23/18 mpg. Overall the G80 averaged anywhere from about 20-24 mpg and when driven reasonably in rural driving it should return 22 mpg. At a constant 70 mph on a level highway during a two-way run the G80 V-8 averaged 30.8 mpg. Interestingly the V-6 only averaged 32 mpg in the exact same run. The engine spins a low 1,750 rpm at 70 mph. In a roundtrip from Placerville to Carson City which includes climbing over the Sierra, the G80 averaged 26.5 mpg. This is astounding fuel economy especially considering that the G80 V-8 weighs in at a 400-pound weight penalty at 4,500 pounds (over the V-6). The fuel economy penalty is at most about 2 mpg.

Handling is another strong point of Genesis. It has all the creds, with a wide track of 64 and 65 inches front and rear, respectively. Steering, while lacking in some feel (as most electric power racks) is nicely weighted and very quick at 2.55 turns lock to lock and a 36-foot turning radius. Huge 19 inch wheels are wide and staggered at 8.5 inches wide in front and nine inches wide in the rear shod with 245/40 and 275/35 rubber front and rear. State of the art suspension keeps the attitude flat and it simply goes where you point it even when driven aggressively. You can even feel it rotate in hard cornering. This is one confident automobile and a real pleasure when the road bends.

Ride quality is also the best. It is a bank vault structurally and going over severe bumps you can feel a dull thud but the rest of the vehicle is almost unmoved. One of the best rides ever. And is this G80 smooth and quiet? You can take that to

the bank. Engine, wind and road noise are nonexistent. It is simply one of the most pleasurable automobile experiences ever. If you gotta' go, it would be hard to beat a Genesis.

Of course, safety is always an issue and the Genesis G80 Ultimate that I tested had everything standard. Lane departure warning, check; lane keep assist, check; automatic braking system, check; blind spot and cross traffic, check; in other words, it has it all, about every acronym and then some. And if that isn't enough, it has huge four-wheel disc brakes with the front ventilated rotors measuring over 14 inches. They are powerful. The headlights mimic the sun.

Inside is a spacious large car interior of 123 cubic feet when the trunk is included. Seats are done in soft leather, beautifully styled and sublimely comfortable with powered seat side bolsters that add to their comfort and cornering ability. With its long wheelbase, rear seating is fabulous. The front line of the Sacramento Kings could fit easily with the legroom it provides.

All materials are not just first quality, but as good as it gets. Everything you touch oozes quality. The instrument panel has all the requisite gauges, trip computer and ancillary information. The center stack is about perfect in design and ease of use both for the HVAC system and beautiful sounding sound system. NAV and such all use the big 9-inch color screen that could be read by Mr. Magoo. But the voice inside the NAV system is not Jim Backus.

Sure, this is not your average \$30,000 midsize. The sticker shows a price of \$54,550 plus my tester had two port installed options, a first aid kit for \$45 and mud guards at \$115. Delivery from Ulsan, Korea, is \$950 so the total MSRP is \$55,660. A base V-6 hits the showroom at about \$41K and is a phenomenal value, the best in the industry. Anyone you would ask would tell you that 0-60 mph in 5.89 seconds is certainly quick enough. But there is something about this V-8 as it has

an ethereal feel to it. It is about \$10,000 to \$20,000 less than any competition and I just don't see the extra value in spending more money on anything else. A Lexus LS 460 which I think the G80 V-8 competes easily with and perhaps exceeds the LS is at least \$17K more dollars. Not only would I take the G80 V-8 over the LS in a heartbeat, I would consider it the ultimate ride when you consider all the factors mentioned near the beginning of this Road Beat. Coincidentally, the exact name of this Genesis happens to be the Genesis G80 RWD 5.0 Ultimate. If you take a test ride, bring your checkbook, you will need it.

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.