

full sail

It was six months prior that we drove the all-new Kia Cadenza for the first time, from San Diego, declaring in these pages that Kia's new flagship was setting sail. The new Cadenza delivered the most presence yet for the brand, inside and out—as the company had intended, targeting customers who were loyal to Kia but were wanting to move upscale a bit, who had actually been requesting a model at a higher price point.

As we revisit this solid front-wheel-drive sedan, we are getting close to heading back to Southern California to drive Kia's next variation on a flagship, the K900 sedan—the company's first rear-wheel-drive and first V8 car—at an even higher price tag. The market success of Cadenza has surely green-lighted this next move for them.

By Joe Sage

It's a simple pleasure, to drive a comfortable, fully-featured car like the Cadenza. The full-size sedan segment is highly competitive—home to Taurus, Impala, Avalon, Chrysler 300, Maxima and others. When you're behind the wheel test-driving the Kia Cadenza, it's hard to imagine too many reasons you will need to go try the others. The Cadenza handles well and is powered well, the ergonomics are good, the interface and controls are good, the technologies at hand are top notch, and it's attractive as heck inside and out. (To clarify: you still owe it to yourself to try them all.)

Our car included all the right stuff as equipped, with just two option packages at \$3000 each. The base car includes plenty of tech (see UVO info, below), although Tech package elements might be standard on some competitors (though probably at a higher base). The Luxury package items are a good choice—all solid add-ons to an already solid package. Kia continues to be on a roll. ■



Kia found that 95 percent of GM buyers purchase OnStar, but 69 percent do not renew because of cost. So UVO eServices are included, standard—free with no subscription for 10 years or 100,000 miles—with 8-inch screen and nav, tightly integrated with your smartphone, and with Kia cloud computing and dedicated apps bringing you auto 911, remote diagnostics and more.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE293-hp 3.3L V6
TRANSMISSION6-speed auto / Sportmatic
STEERINGelectric power steering
MPG.....19/28/22 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED: Traction control, ESC, ABS, VSM, dual zone filtered climate control, AM-FM-SXM-CD-MP3 Infinity surround sound audio, heated front seats, leather seat trim, power front seats w driver lumbar, smart key, leather wrapped wheel and shifter, paddle shifters, front LED marker lights, fog lights, rain sensing wipers, LED taillights, backup warning, 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty, 5/60,000 basic warranty and roadside assistance.

BASE PRICE.....\$35,100

OPTIONS:

TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: smart cruise, blind spot, lane departure systems; electronic parking brake; 19" wheels3,000
LUXURY PACKAGE: pano roof w power sunshade, adaptive HID headlights, nappa leather, power driver's seat extension, ventilated driver's seat, heated outboard rear seats, heated steering wheel, 7" color LCD meter cluster, power tilt/telescope wheel, power rear sunshade3,000
 White interior packagen/c

DESTINATION CHARGE:.....800

TOTAL\$41,900

LOGBOOK NOTES

Playing back recordings made while driving, we notice this car has an extremely nice sound effect in the background—just a nice low-key throaty note—consistent, smooth and powerful.

We had the Cadenza in chilly November weather. Unfortunately, the heated steering wheel only works in a relatively small zone, the upholstered portion, not the bottom center inside and not the whole upper 40 percent, which therefore only seems to feel colder than it otherwise would.

There were multiple instances of wanting to turn off some of the more invasive nanny features. E.g. just driving in regular traffic, we had urgent beeping alerts that sounded about like a severe tornado warning, and we didn't even know why—in two very routine lanes of slow moving traffic.

Our investigative tour to familiarize ourselves with this vehicle's controls and features showed every sign of being short, sweet, easy, fruitful and fulfilling.

