

SIMPLY EQUUS

BY JOE SAGE

Equus, the premium luxury Hyundai flagship, bears only the Equus name (though also an oval “H” badge). The car is sold only at 400 dealerships with a separate Equus showroom and a “dedicated Equus premium ownership champion” where a salesperson might otherwise be.

This specialized dealer will come to you with a demonstration drive, and during your ownership to pick up and deliver for service. Premium credentials depend upon a much higher than average dealer and service experience, and Hyundai goes all out. The result? In 2013 JD Power Customer Service Index rankings, Equus is in first place, beating its nearest competitors Lexus, Cadillac and BMW by several percentage points.

Equus comes in two configurations: Signature and Ultimate, at \$61,000 and \$68,000, respectively, and both very fully featured as is. For \$7,000, Ultimate adds such features as a 12.3” TFT LCD display screen, rear seat dual 9.2” monitors, haptic dial steering wheel controls, power door closure, power rear lumbar, a multi-view camera system and a heads-up display. The Ultimate model used to account for 10-15 percent of Equus sales,

but they expect this to rise to 30 percent.

Here, we drive the volume selling Signature—in the same Satin White Pearl as the one on our September/October cover, from its Miami launch. The car greeted us on our first evening with nice, low-key, valet-caliber lighting. A class act.

Equus is extremely quiet and smooth. It felt a little floaty on our first tight turns, so we changed from comfort to sport mode (there is also a snow mode). The modes are more distinct than is typical, and this gave us the ride we wanted—though we would have to reengage that every time we got in. We glided over some heavy sand and gravel, and it was impossible to hear or feel it.

On the road, the Equus is polished and powerful. Its value premium luxury price and 429 horses equate to \$142 per pony, calculating from information we assembled six months ago, at launch. Competitors include the Mercedes-Benz S Class with the same horsepower, at \$221 per pony, the Audi A8 at \$200, BMW 7 Series at \$196, \$187 for a standard Lexus LS or a whopping \$274 for an LS 600h L with more comparable long wheelbase. Brand consciousness is, of course, huge. Make a conscious effort to add the Equus to your list. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	5.0L GDI 32-valve Tau® V8
POWER	429 hp, 376 lb-ft torque (or on regular gas: 421 hp, 365 lb-ft)
TRANSMISSION	8-spd SHIFTRONIC auto
DRIVETRAIN	rear-wheel drive
MPG	15/23/18 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED:	Drive mode select (normal, sport, snow), 19" turbine blade wheels, continuous-damping electronic air suspension, 3-zone climate, card-type proximity key, vehicle stability w/ pre-collision warning, 9 airbags, active front headrests w/ power control ESC/traction/brake assist, blind spot detection with rear cross-traffic alert, smart cruise control, 9.2" standard nav w/ Lexicon discrete surround-sound 17-speaker audio, premium DIS navigation w/ Gracenote art, voice recognition, junction art, 30GB of music/image storage, Blue Link telematics w/ SOS assistance, automatic collision notification, stolen vehicle recovery, remote engine start, power tilt/slide sunroof, power rear sunshade, acoustic laminated windshield, advanced wipers and de-icers, adaptive front lighting with auto-cornering and leveling, HID headlights, LED signals.
BASE PRICE	\$61,000
OPTIONS:	none: everything is included.
DESTINATION CHARGE:	920
TOTAL	\$61,920



We never completely made friends with the Equus' button-controlled screen interface, but the cabin is still a great place to spend your time, and once we pushed the Sport button, we became fast friends with its driving experience.

