

Echo of a Murano

By Joe Sage

Smaller, less expensive, less powerful, less distinctive

The Nissan Rogue followed its big brother Murano into the marketplace by five years. Murano was ahead of its time, with curvaceous styling and its continuously variable transmission (CVT). Initially not appealing to everybody, it was nonetheless a big hit. It has been a segment leader, riding the crest of several waves. We had hoped for a baby Murano in the Rogue, but this was only partly so. Rogue is a competent driver of high utility, but never gave us that same cutting edge aura.

The 2014 Nissan Rogue received a comprehensive rework, with updated sheetmetal and new safety and technological inclusions. For 2015, the Murano receives its own restyling. Early images show the new Murano breaks new ground, even picking up style points from the 370Z. The Rogue's 2014 restyling, not particularly (see below).

The Rogue overlaps Murano in various ways, but also does so with Pathfinder and Quest minivan, to degrees. Rogue is the least costly of the four and gets the best fuel mileage. Now that Pathfinder is also a unibody and Rogue can be a 7-seater, Rogue stands out as the only 170-hp four-cylinder in the group. The others have a 260-hp V6. It speaks well for Rogue that it so often

prevails—Rogue is Nissan's second-best-selling vehicle in the US, after its Altima midsize sedan.

Nissan generally provides great value, has proven dependable, and offers pure and simple features, without tech overkill. Our Rogue SV FWD totaled \$28,135, with third row and other options (for \$1350 more we would add AWD). Quest, Murano or Pathfinder start some \$6000-9000 higher. The base Rogue starts at \$22,790—or you can still buy the 2013 model, known as a 2014 Rogue Select, for just \$20,040.

Numbers do have a lot to do with the Rogue's success. Buyers will like the fact that the 2014 Rogue is bigger inside, but an inch shorter outside (though on a smooth half-inch longer wheelbase), adds enough features to increase weight over 100 pounds, yet improves fuel mileage by 5 MPG; increases headroom about an inch; and increases rear legroom by over 2.5". It retains the same relatively ponderous 37.4-foot turning circle.

The 2014 Rogue is a high achiever, already ranking in the Top 10, Top 12 and similar family or value listings from *Kelley Blue Book*, *Kiplinger's*, *Edmunds*, *AutoTrader.com* and *Parents* magazine, and it's an IIHS "Top Safety Pick Plus." ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	2.5L DOHC I-4
POWER/TORQUE	170 hp / 175 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	Xtronic CVT w sport mode
DRIVETRAIN	front-wheel drive
MPG	26/33/28 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED:	4-wheel discs, 17" wheels, temp spare, electronic safety and monitor systems, power driver's seat, 40/20/40 folding/reclining and 60/40 sliding 2nd row seats, 6-speaker AM-FM-CD audio, NissanConnect 5" display, device interfaces, rear camera, dual-zone automatic climate with 2nd row vents, divide-n-hide cargo system, power locks, driver's side only auto-up/down window, keyless entry-start, LED DRLs, halogen headlights.
SEATING	(opt.) 3 rows, 7 passengers
ASSEMBLY PLANT	Smyrna, Tennessee
BASE PRICE	\$24,490
ROOF RAIL CROSS BARS:	290
FLOOR MATS:	135
SV PREMIUM PACKAGE:	NissanConnect apps w nav, 7" touchscreen, voice recognition for nav/audio, SiriusXM traffic and travel link, AroundView monitor, power liftgate, heated mirrors, electronic safety and monitor systems
	1420
SV FAMILY PACKAGE:	3rd row seating, run-flat tires (delete spare)
	940
DESTINATION CHARGE:	860
TOTAL	\$28,135

Below: Nissan Rogue, 2013 and restyled 2014; Nissan Murano, 2014 and restyled 2015.



LOGBOOK NOTES

The Rogue's CVT mimics at least one shift point, which does help its feel overall.

The liftgate unlocked and opened itself overnight once, our most disturbing experience.

The touchscreen can be hard to read, with key information in dark blue against black.

The start/stop button often did not shut off when punched, without a disquieting delay.

Lane departure warnings were inconsistent and somewhat random, seldom of use.

Audio was ordinary, inspiring us to try its settings multiple times, with same results.

The screen interface often launched with information we didn't request or prioritize and required deep digging for info we did.

