

Refreshing BY JOE SAGE

There are basically two scenarios in the automotive new model year realm: the midcycle refresh or the all-new vehicle. The 2016 Kia Sorento is all new. Thus there is linguistic irony in the fact we find it refreshing, literally and figuratively. Kia has developed a fine lineup, and they are masters at not throwing out the baby with the bath water when they redesign a top seller. Everything that made the prior generation Sorento a huge success is immediately recognizable in the new version, yet every detail has been tweaked and refined. Highly refined.

Kia Sorento has a broad lineup, with three engines (a four, a turbo four and a V6), five- or seven-passenger configurations (V6 models are seven-passenger, as is one four-cylinder), and eight engine/trim level combinations. All are available with FWD or full-time AWD. Towing capacity is 3500 pounds for most, 5000 pounds for the AWD V6 models, or 2000 pounds for two entry models with naturally aspirated four. It works out to 15 starting prices, from \$24,900 to \$43,100.

Our example is a turbo four in top SXL trim, with AWD. (There is some overlap: an SXL V6 AWD costs \$1300 more, or with FWD is \$400 less, while the V6 drops MPG 2-3 points, raises HP by 50 though drops torque by eight,

adds about 100 pounds of weight and offers that 5000-lb tow capacity). The V6 also adds features, such as rear seat climate control.

This is one lineup where all these choices make things easier, not harder. The 2.0L turbo proved itself a perfect balance of power and economy, as we were neither double-dating nor towing a big boat up I-17 this week.

We did have Kia's typically wonderful Infinity 10-speaker sound system. Our notes about interior and exterior fit and finish were extensive during our week, summed up by finding a great many delights and truly nothing lacking. Storage solutions abound, as do connectivity options. Controls are accessible, thorough and never in conflict. The rear camera and surround view are top notch.

Styling overall is so cohesive, you can take it in at a glance, yet there are individual details you'll discover and appreciate over time.

Suspension on bumps, troughs and other urban hazards was solid and smooth. The V6 may rate a comparison drive, but the 2-liter turbo felt plenty potent whether in normal, sport or eco drive modes. We dare say the Kia Sorento in this top trim level compares favorably with vehicles at ten or twenty thousand dollars higher. And you can enter the model for a lot less, too, if so inclined. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....	2.0L 4-cyl GDI turbo
HP/TORQUE.....	240 hp / 260 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION.....	6-spd auto w Sportmatic
DRIVETRAIN.....	full-time AWD, lockable center diff
SEATING CAPACITY.....	5-passenger
TURNING CIRCLE.....	36.4 ft
APPROACH/DEPARTURE ANGLES.....	16.9 / 21 degrees
TOW CAPACITY.....	3500 lb
CARGO CAPACITY.....	11.3 / 38.0 / 73.0 cu ft
WEIGHT.....	4004 lb
MPG.....	19/25/22 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE.....	\$41,700
MERLOT NAPPA LEATHER SEATS:.....	n/c
SXL TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Xenon HID heads, lane departure warning, forward collision warning, electronic parking brake, surround view monitor, adaptive cruise control.....	2500
DESTINATION CHARGE:.....	895
TOTAL.....	\$45,095



Our logbook contained great detail, but may be summed up by this: "This is just a remarkable vehicle...damn hard to beat. If you were assigned to find a flaw in this thing, good luck."