

Smarts. by Joe Sage

Nissan offers six crossovers or SUVs, from the funky little Kicks (which has just replaced the funky little Juke) on up to the big eight-passenger Armada. Rogue Sport is the second-smallest, and although it may sound like a version of Rogue (like, say, a Camaro SS), it is a distinct vehicle, smaller than Rogue—an admittedly confusing naming approach also used by a few other brands on certain pairs of semi-completely different models.

Rogue Sport has looks, especially handsome in our sample's gunmetal metallic over black leather, all the moreso with the bold stance of the SL trim's 19-inch alloy wheels (S and SV trims have just 16- or 17-inchers). It drew a lot of admirers (all saying, "I like this Rogue," at which point we would have to explain the difference—and the badge, in which "Sport" is just a small tack-on, doesn't help).

It also has smarts. This is a 2018-point-5 model, with its midyear designation applied due to adding auto emergency braking, blind spot warning and rear cross traffic alert as standard, along with intelligent cruise control on the top-trim SL. Its driver assist systems seem to

COMPARISON	KICKS	ROGUE SPORT	ROGUE
ENGINE	1.6L	2.0L	2.5L
HP/TORQUE	125/115	141/147	170/175
WEIGHT (LB)	2639-2672	3232-3424	3454-3659
LENGTH (IN)	169.1	172.4	184.5
MAX CARGO (CF)	53.1	53.3	70.0
STARTING PRICE	\$17,990	\$22,110	\$24,800

be more intelligent than most, doing their magic without our noticing, not hounding us with the beeps, jerks and wiggles common to so many.

What we did notice was its power. Rogue Sport weighs 22 to 28 percent more than Kicks, but its 141 hp is just 12.8 percent more; and it weighs just six percent less than Rogue, while power is 17 percent less. But Rogue Sport also starts at about an 11 percent lower cost than Rogue, a key attraction.

We put many miles on our Rogue Sport, tackling the high-speed climb to Sedona, a spirited loop to Saguaro Lake and several longer than average Valley errands, and its output is certainly sufficient most of the time. In a challenging situation such as a freeway on-ramp (which you can see coming), use of the manumatic makes up the difference. At less predictable times, such as wanting to grab a better freeway lane, you might have to wait.

Our top trim SL AWD is the heaviest Rogue Sport. We'd give at least this trim the bigger engine from

2018.5 NISSAN ROGUE SPORT SL AWD

ENGINE	2.0L 4-cyl
HP/TORQUE	141 hp / 147 lb-ft
TRANS / DRIVETRAIN	Xtronic (CVT) w Eco Mode / AWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep strut w coils, 23mm stblzr bar R: indep multi-link, 19.1mm stblzr bar
STEERING	speed-dep electric pwr-ast rack-and-pinion
BRAKES	F/R: vented discs / F: 11.65x1.02 / R: 11.5x0.63
WHEELS/TIRES	7.0Jx19 / 225/45R19
LENGTH/WHEELBASE	172.4 / 104.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE / GRND CLEARANCE	36.9 ft / 7.4 in
CARGO VOLUME	19.9 / 53.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(3232-3424) 3424 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	14.5 gal
MPG	24/30/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE SL AWD	\$28,540
PREMIUM PKG:	Pwr sliding moonroof, LED low-high heads, high beam assist, lane depart warn, intelligent lane intervention, auto emerg brake w pedestrian detection...1990
(OPTS):	Carpeted cargo area, floor mats, first aid kit...275
DESTINATION CHARGE	975

TOTAL \$31,780

the bigger Rogue, if it fits, or perhaps a turbo. We would also wish for Rogue's Bose 9-speaker audio.

Kicks and Rogue Sport have no tow capacity. (Rogue can tow 1102 lb, Murano 1500, with Pathfinder and Armada handling more serious stuff.)

Try them on for size. You might decide based on price, horsepower, tow capacity, specific features—or just whichever one lights your fire. ■

