

# Diversity and overlap

BY JOE SAGE

There seem to be a few trends afoot in the world of SUVs and crossovers—one being an expansion of new products in sizes well beyond the old small-medium-large, and one being with more usage of the term SUV than crossover in describing many of them. Both have been especially notable at the smaller-than-small end, with terms like “Small SUV,” “Urban SUV,” and the one being used in this new model, “Entry SUV.”

Kia currently calls six vehicles SUVs/crossovers. Telluride, Sorento and Sportage are classic large-to-small utilities. They also put the one-of-a-kind Soul in the group. They include the alt-powertrain Niro. And number six is the new Seltos. This puts four out of six at the smaller end of the scale, where they vary considerably in some ways, overlap in others, and surely draw some of the same customers.

Echoing many Kia vehicles, Seltos comes in five models (also with some overlap)—some with a 146-hp 2.0L engine, others with a 175-hp 1.6L turbo. Turbos have a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT), while the two-liters have an IVT (intelligent variable) unit. Some trims are front-drivers, others AWD, and one offers both. Our top trim SX has the upper of each of those options: turbo, DCT and AWD. It weighs 7.5 percent more than the

base model, but has 20 percent more horsepower.

Seltos differs from Soul and Niro not only in style and shape, but also by its available all-wheel drive, plus decent ground clearance and approach/departure angles. Kia does not call Seltos an off-roader, instead just saying its ground clearance signals a “tough attitude and adventurous spirit.”

Confirming that their own promotional materials show Seltos ripping along gravel roads (and also feature two decidedly off-roadish concepts), we took it for a spin not off-road but off-pavement, a narrow gravel road with one steep, rutted climb. Its limits were easy to find, but it did quite well.

Most of our time in the Seltos was on metro freeways and streets, where we noted straight, solid tracking and a strong stance, with near-zero lag when accelerating up freeway ramps, plus two more tricks in the bag—sport mode and manual shifts. We did note instances when it could bog down on a righthand power turn in town, usually but not always solved with sport mode.

Fuel mileage is very close across the board—either 30 or 31 mpg highway with either engine and in any trim. If price allows, you’ll surely appreciate the extra power output of the turbo, and we’d go for the AWD. Figure on using sport mode—a lot—to get the most out of that power, a valuable tool even if it dings fuel your MPG a little.

Styling is all Kia, with the tiger nose grille evolving a bit more to incorporate additional air

## SPECIFICATIONS

PLANT	.....Gwangju, South Korea
ENGINE	.....1.6L four-cylinder 16v aluminum GDI turbo
HP/TORQUE	.....195 hp / 175 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
TRANSMISSION	.....7-spd Quick-Shift DCT auto
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link; F/R: gas shocks
STEERING	.....elec power-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 16" disc; R: 15" disc; single 10.5" booster
WHEELS / TIRES	.....18" alloy / P235/45R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....172.0 / 103.5 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....34.8 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....7.3 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	.....28 / 28°
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....(w/o sunroof) 40.0 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....41.4 / 38.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....26.6 / 62.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....3317 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	.....13.2 gal
MPG	.....25/30/27 (city/hwy/comb)

## BASE PRICE **\$27,890**

**SX TURBO AWD INCL:** LED heads/fogs, 7" LCD color instrument cluster, 10.25" display, UVO link w/nav, Bose premium audio, sound-connected lighting, Sofino seat trim, 10-way power driver's seat w lumbar, keyless entry/start, remote start, auto climate, illum visor mirror, LED interior lights, wireless phone charge, rear USB port, rear air vents, cargo cover, smart cruise w stop & go, highway drive assist, safe exit assist.

CLEAR WHITE / BLACK ROOF PAINT	.....345
CARPETED FLOOR MATS	.....130
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1120

## TOTAL **\$29,485**

intakes below, as well as integrated headlight clusters—clean and complex at the same time, elegant beyond its price point. ■

