

We drove the new Kia EV6 last summer, as it was new to market and knocking down key awards on many fronts—styling, user experience, interior, charging times. Our sample then was a mid-trim (Wind) rear-driver, second up out of five, but priced closer to the top GT-Line than the base RWD-only Light. It was worth it, for almost 35 percent more power—225 vs 167 hp on the Light.

We drove that one in town and on the freeways and took it for a long drive up Apache Trail, an enjoyable spin in its one-pedal mode (i-pedal). That would have been a great road for all-wheel drive, but between electronic handling and general balance and performance, the rear-driver was in no way lacking. A bigger difference in the all-wheel-driver, though, is that its second motor for the other

axle also adds over 42 percent again more power—320 vs 225 hp on ours, now almost double the base Light version.

It's the faster versions that identified the model, and for 2023, the lower-powered, rear-drive-only Light model departs the lineup, Wind and GT-Line remain, either RWD or AWD, and an even more powerful AWD-only GT enters at the top. (The presence of both GT-Line and GT might be equal parts confusing and clarifying.)

The new GT delivers a whopping 576 hp—80 percent more than the other AWDs. Aimed squarely at the performance market, the EV6 GT boasts a

zero-to-60 time of just 3.4 seconds, a top speed of 161 mph, and recorded acceleration wins over Ferrari Roma and Lamborghini Huracán Evo.

This will sound thrilling to some, perhaps off-putting to others, but out of the box, the car provides a very normal experience. Its special powers are accessible through several somewhat parallel sets of options. Drive modes include eco, normal and sport. A MyDriveMode customized combination of attributes is available via one button. One-pedal mode is activated via the paddle shifters. And on top of all that, GT Mode is available via a neon green button on the wheel (style-coordinated with the GT's neon brake calipers).

As with many drive mode setups, you may wonder why its maximum (GT) attributes are a special setup rather than default, but, as with many other setups, they've chosen to put that in a special path—not a bad decision here, as it's more for a thrill factor than constant use, for most daily drivers. If you live where traffic has a high thrill factor on a daily basis, you'll find it always immediately accessible. You can drive quite normally one minute

and respond to a supercar challenge the next.

All our positive notes for the week were about performance; any negatives were about features. We had issues with seat positions (surprisingly a manual setup), never successfully comfortable, and with the complexity of changing our climate control temperature, among others. And as much as we love road connectedness, we found the ride to be quite harsh in multiple ways.

Despite all its added juice, the EV6 GT is still well faster than most when it's time to recharge.

All in all, the Kia EV6 GT's reputation precedes it, and its differences are clearly defined. Best of all, the purchase price differential for this massive uptick in power and performance is irresistible. And it's extremely reasonable for a vehicle inhabiting supercar performance territory. ■

A new level of woo-hooo!

BY JOE SAGE

Kia EV6 GT won 2023 WORLD PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR at the World Car Awards, announced the same day we received ours.

Kia EV6 GT also just won 2023 E-VEHICLE OF THE YEAR in the Rocky Mountain Automotive Press (RMAP) Vehicle of the Year Awards.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Hwasung, South Korea
ENGINE / TRANS	.....SKorea / SKorea
CONTENT	.....SKorea 95% / US-Canada 1%
MOTOR	.....AC Synch Perm Magnet
HP/TORQUE	.....576 hp (430 kW) / 545 lb-ft
BATTERY PACK	.....high voltage lithium ion
BATTERY WEIGHT	.....1073 lb
TRANSMISSION	.....gear reduction unit
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
FINAL GEAR RATIO	.....10.65:1
MAX SPEED / 0-TO-60 MPH	.....161 mph / 3.4 sec
BRAKING 62.1-TO-0 MPH	.....141.0 ft
SUSPENSION	.....ECS (electronically controlled susp); F: MacPherson type w inclined strut bearing, strut ring, multi (dual) lower arm type; R: 5 multi-link
STEERING	.....rack-mounted elec pwr
BRAKES	.....regenerative: F: 15.0 vented; R: 14.2 vented - regen
WHEELS / TIRES	.....8.5Jx21 alloy / 255/40R201
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....184.8 / 114.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.2 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....w sunroof 36.8 / 38.0 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.4 / 39.6 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....24.4 / 50.2 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4795 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....(with brake) 2300 lb
CHARGING:	.....max input power: DC Fast Charge 240 kW AC normal w ICCB (230V/12A) 68 hrs AC normal w 11kW EVSE (EV supply equip) 7h 10m DC Fast Charge w 50kW EVSE (max 125A) 73 min DC Fast Charge w 350kW EVSE (max 200A) 18 min
RANGE	.....206 miles
MPG	.....85/74/79 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$61,400
CARPETED FLOOR MATS, GT	.....170
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1295
TOTAL	.....\$62,865

2023 KIA EV6 LINEUP

Wind	.....225 hp 258 lb-ft RWD	.....\$48,500
	.....320 hp 446 lb-ft AWD	.....52,400
GT-Line	.....225 hp 258 lb-ft RWD	.....52,700
	.....320 hp 446 lb-ft AWD	.....57,400
GT	.....576 hp 545 lb-ft AWD	.....\$61,400