

Admiration tour

By Joe Sage

Midsize crossovers are the hottest segment right now, recently displacing four-door sedans as the top seller for the first time. The Hyundai Santa Fe has been a strong choice for years, for its combination of utility, features and warranty for the price.

Then in late 2012 and early 2013, the model took a giant step forward, with a total redesign (and restyling), first with the five-passenger model, rechristened the Santa Fe Sport, then with a seven-passenger Santa Fe replacing the prior Veracruz in the lineup. And they have proven more eye-catching (and customer catching) than ever.

There are four Santa Fe Sport models—two with a 190-hp normally aspirated 2.4L four-cylinder, with either front- or all-wheel drive, and two with a 264-hp 2.0L turbo four, also with either drivetrain. The FWD 2.4L starts at just \$24,950, while our test sample here is top of the line, turbo with AWD. At a price in the low \$30s, or mid-30s with the generous nav-audio-wheel upgrade listed at right, this is one very competitive vehicle. As

usual for Hyundai, not only are the base inclusions—with every kind of electronic driver convenience and safety feature you’ve heard of—very complete at no additional cost, but the audio package delivers superb sound and intuitive interface functions for a fraction of what some brands charge for these upgrades. (If you check out the BMW 3 Series wagon elsewhere in this issue, its option costs to have these features start to approach the total price of this Santa Fe Sport, or exceed the base model’s total cost. This Hyundai is faster and more powerful, too.)

We drive quite a variety of vehicles, but the Hyundai Santa Fe Sport triggered far more compliments, inquiries and statements of shopping intent than average. In Frost White Pearl paint over black leather, with its upsized alloy wheels (also part of that \$1750 nav-audio package), we can easily see why. We may triggered a few sales that week, just by showing up. ■

Many people inquired about the Santa Fe Sport during our week with it. The more they learned, the more enthused they seemed to be. Hyundai is in an envious position with this vehicle.



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	2.0L turbo GDI 4-cylinder
POWER	264 hp / 269 lb-ft torque
TRANSMISSION	6-speed auto w/Shifttronic
DRIVETRAIN	all-wheel drive
MPG	18/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED SAFETY TECH: Vehicle stability management w traction control, ABS w electronic brake force distrib and brake assist, downhill brake control, hillstart assist, blind spot detection, rear camera.	
INCLUDED COMF/CONV: 18-inch alloy wheels, fog lights, auto headlight control, wiper deicer, heated side mirrors w turn indicators, roof side rails, twin-tip exhaust, keyless entry and start, leather seat surfaces, heated front seats, power front seats w driver lumbar, split-fold reclining rear seats, selectable steering modes, rear side sunshades, dual zone auto climate w ionizer, wheel-mounted controls, 4.3-inch standard touchscreen, BlueLink telematics, HD Radio, SiriusXM, trail prep package.	
MANUFACTURED	West Point, GA
WARRANTY:	
New vehicle	5 yr / 60,000 mi
Powertrain	10 yr / 100,000 mi
Anti-perforation	7 yr / unlimited mi
Roadside assistance ...	5 yr / unlimited mi
BASE PRICE	\$32,400
NAVIGATION PACKAGE: 8-in touchscreen replaces 4.3-in, 12-speaker Infinity Logic surround sound audio, 19-inch alloy wheels	
	1750
CARPETED FLOOR MATS	110
DESTINATION CHARGE	875
TOTAL	\$35,135

