

Near-luxe at a non-luxe price by Joe Sage

We encounter pretty much everything during various regional comparo and awards drives, but this is surprisingly the first Nissan Maxima we've had in our home fleet in over eight years.

Maxima has actually been around considerably longer than that, since 1981. Our last one, a 2011, fell in the middle of generation seven, while 2019 represents gen-eight, new for model year 2016 and midcycle-refreshed this year. Spotters can find evolution in the grille, front and rear fascias, LED lights front and rear, and new quad exhaust tips.

Step inside, and you'll find what we had in fact noted in 2011, a model approaching high-altitude Infiniti style and finish—what Nissan bills as “near luxury,” which is a little modest, given its rich diamond-quilted leather and stylish contrast stitching—at notably down-to-earth prices. And if that's not enough, options and packages are also Nissan-priced, including a chock-full SR Premium Package that would be at reasonable cost if just for its dual-panel panoramic moonroof *or* its intelligent around-view monitors (the latest in a series

of technologies Nissan has led the way with for years), but it includes both of those and more.

Power is smooth and plentiful from its 300-hp V6, and its CVT (a transmission some profess to dislike, though we figure most owners will never even know they have it) benefits from its efficient Xtronic build and manual mode, as well as light weight for a full-size sedan, bringing it closer in line with the promise of GT-R-derived horses-to-liters power output. We did experience a bit of front-drive torque steer, a trait not found in the rear-drive (or AWD) Infiniti Q50, its most direct cousin from the full-luxe brand.

Creature comforts are extensive—eight-way power adjustable seats for the driver (with two-way lumbar and manual thigh extension), six-way for the passenger, both heated and cooled—and extensive tech features accessed more effectively than average, often via more than one path.

Maxima's styling is distinctive; the car is solid, straightforward and does everything right—a trait that's pretty distinctive in its own right. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	3.5L DOHC 24v V6
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
HP/TORQUE	300 hp / 261 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.6:1
TRANSMISSION	Xtronic (CVT) w man mode, paddles
SUSPENSION	sport-tuned F: indep strut w coils, ZF Sachs twin-tube shocks, 26.2mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link indep, ZF Sachs mono shocks, 26.5mm stblzr bar
STEERING	hydro-electric power assist
BRAKES	F: 12.6x1.1 vented; R: 12.13x0.63 vented
WHEELS / TIRES	19" gloss black alum alloy / 245/40R19
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	192.8 / 109.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.3 in
SEATING	five
HEADROOM (F/R)	(w moonroof) 38.9 / 35.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	45.0 / 34.2 in
CARGO CAPACITY	14.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3582 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem unleaded / 18.0 gal
MPG	20/30/24 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$39,530
PREMIUM PKG: dual-panel pano moonroof, rear auto brake, auto-dim driver side mirror, reverse tilt-down mirrors, intelligent around-view monitor, driver memory seat...1820	
SPLASH GUARDS	205
MATS, TRUNK, ETC.: sport floor mats, trunk mat, trunk net, bag hooks, first aid kit	360
DESTINATION CHARGE	895
TOTAL	\$42,810



While body styling has largely toned down and smoothed out industrywide over the past few years, Maxima's sheet metal remains among the more angular and aggressive.