

The Sorento midsize crossover has been a hot seller for Kia for its ten years. Its newer sibling, the big three-row Kia Telluride, has been a hot seller for its two years—so hot, it has quickly caught up with Sorento over the past year and has in fact passed it in sales for the past few months.

The two are now more apples-to-apples, two rows or three, as Telluride influences from styling to features are noticeable in the new fourth-generation Kia Sorento, revealed just over a year ago.

The Sorento family includes twelve models with three powertrains and varying drivetrains.

Gasoline-only models come with either of two engines: a 191-hp 2.5L normally aspirated four-cylinder, or a 281-hp 2.5T turbo-four. Each of five trim levels is available with either front- or all-wheel drive. (SX Prestige tosses in one apple-and-orange by making the AWD version an X-Line.)

The Sorento Hybrid, new to the model, offers one powertrain, front-drive only and two trim levels (which equate to the second-up and midlevel trims of the five gasoline models). Drive power in the Hybrid comes from a combination of a 177.2-hp 1.6T gasoline turbo-four and 60.1-hp electric mot-

or, together producing 227 total system horsepower and 258 lb-ft of torque. Both specs fall firmly between the two gasoline engines' specs (welcome for avoiding apples-to-oranges overlap sometimes encountered in this scenario).

Sorento Hybrid can tow—1654 lb unbraked (the same as the gasoline lineup, although those show a 2000-lb capacity when braked; Hybrid doesn't).

One more piece of big news for a popular question: yes, a PHEV should arrive later this year.

The new Sorento Hybrid was here for effectively just one drive day. We're scheduled to receive the line-topping SX Prestige X-Line for a week in late April (new to Sorento, this is along the lines of the Kia Soul X-Line seen in our pages two years ago—an edgy, high-end treatment now working its way into other models). We'll flesh out the new Sorento overall in more detail at that time.

We generally keep an eye on weather throughout the region, with adventuresome drives in mind—especially if we have a pickup or SUV coming in wintertime, when we might be able to tackle the snows of Northern Arizona. Weatherwise, we lucked out—the state was hit with a snowfall that

painted the Valley's mountains white and dumped more than two feet in about a day at higher elevations. With the hybrid a front-driver only, though—due to components of its complex motor and battery format, at least for now—a more extreme winter drive was not in the cards. Irresistible as a concept, though, we headed out the Beeline Highway to at least photograph the vehicle with deeper snows in the background—but to no avail, as the highway was completely closed several miles north of Fountain hills, due to the snowy conditions farther up.

It was enough time to learn the vehicle's basics. There are just three drive modes: eco (default in the hybrid, in lieu of normal), sport and smart (a system-calculated set of attributes for conditions and drive style). The hybrid drive experience is quite transparent. A binnacle gauge set reflects electric charge conditions, where a tach would otherwise be. (Its very aggressive auto start-stop system might reveal itself too readily on a tach, anyway).

The console-mounted rotary shifter is a spring-loaded knob—reverse or drive, return to center, with park operated via a center button. It's elegant and functional enough, but you will want to be sure not to confuse it with the infotainment controller, a smaller knob nearby with similar look and feel.

You can spot this model by its 17-inch wheels and tires, in line with rolling resistance goals of a hybrid. The gasoline Sorento lineup has 17-inchers only on the entry trim, with others bearing 18- or 20-inchers, more in line with the times. Turning circle is the same on all models, regardless of wheel

electrified apples and oranges

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

FACTORY	.....Hwasung, Korea
ENGINE	.....1.6L 4-cyl turbo GDI hybrid engine
HP / TORQUE	.....177.2 hp / 195.4 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.5:1
ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....permanent magnet synchronous
POWER / TORQUE (F/R)	.....60.1 hp / 194.7 lb-ft
BATTERY PACK	.....high voltage: 270 V, 6 Ah, 1.5 kWh
TOTAL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE	.....227 hp/ 258 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....FWD
TRANSMISSION	.....6-speed automatic
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	.....8.6 sec (to 100 kph) / 120 mph
BRAKING DISTANCE	.....126 ft
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link
STEERING	.....rack mounted motor-driven power
BRAKES	.....F/R: 12.8" vented disc
WHEELS / TIRES	.....7.0Jx17 alloy / 235/65R17
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....189.4 / 110.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.85 in
APPROACH / DEP / BRKOVER	.....16.8 / 21.3 / 15.1°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....37.92 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....40.3 / 39.1 / 36.8 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....41.4 / 40.7 / 29.6 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....12.6 / 38.5-45.0 / 75.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....3542 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....1654 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....na / na
MPG	.....39/35/37 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$36,590
RUNWAY RED PAINT	.....445
EX TRIM LEVEL ADDS:	Panoramic sunroof w power sunshade; smart power tailgate; wireless charge pad; front LED foglights; enhanced fwd collision (cyclist-junction); park distance warning front; smart cruise w stop & go.
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1170
TOTAL	.....\$38,205

size—almost 38 feet, not remarkable, but it feels tighter than this in real world use, a plus.

Hybrid pricing is very close to the AWD versions of corresponding trims in the gasoline lineup. The tradeoff is a generous dose of what you would expect from a hybrid—its best fuel mileage (39 mpg city) is ten points higher than the most frugal gasoline number (base 2.5L, 29 mpg highway).

Stay tuned for more info with our X-Line drive. ■

2021 KIA SORENTO LINEUP

Front-wheel-drive unless noted as AWD

Sorento 2.5	LX	.....\$29,390
	LX AWD	.....31,190
	S	.....31,890
	S AWD	.....33,690
Sorento 1.6T Hybrid	S	.....\$33,590
	EX (driven here)	.....36,590
Sorento 2.5T	EX	.....\$34,990
	EX AWD	.....36,790
	SX	.....37,990
	SX AWD	.....39,790
	SX Prestige	.....40,590
	SX Prestige X-Line AWD42,590

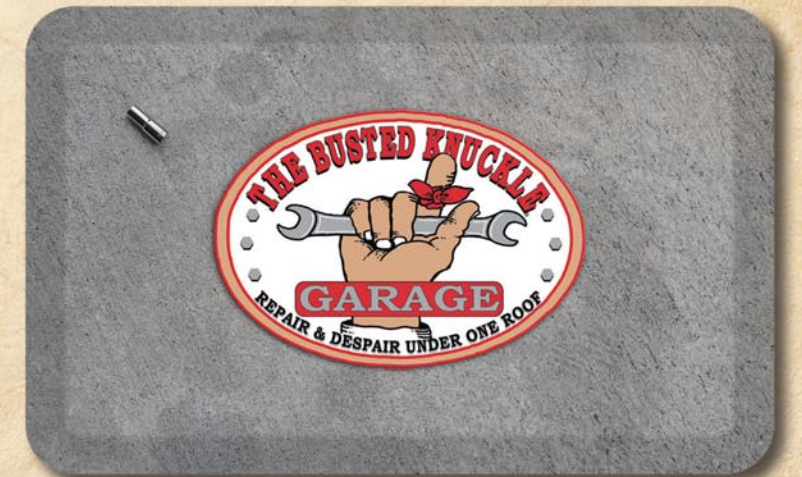
THE BUSTED KNUCKLE GARAGE AN AUTOMOTIVE GIFT SHOP

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Our Garage Comfort Mats all have a 3/4" Energy-Return foam core. Standing or kneeling on them reduces all discomfort and fatigue.

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- Stain Resistant, Waterproof Top Surface
- Beveled, Curl-Free Edges Reduce Tripping
- Won't Bottom Out or Lose Their Bounce Over Time
- Reduces Discomfort Brought On by Standing On Hard Surfaces
- And They Just Feel & Look Great!
- Must Have for Every Garage!



Lost 10mm Anti-Fatigue Garage Comfort Mat (shown) / SKU: 10-BKG-GBSK
Found it! Your 10mm socket is right on the corner of this mat. Ask your friend to pick it up and hand it to you. The background is a well used concrete that will probably blend right into your own garage floor.

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