

Dressed for success

BY JOE SAGE

It's been a few years now since Genesis broke off from parent brand Hyundai, a slow-going evolution till recently. Sedans—three now—had existed under Hyundai, badged solely as Genesis. The new dealer network has been slow to form, the lineup limited, and volume has been low.

That is all changing, one of the most prominent signs being a simultaneously subtle and dramatic restyling, followed by the emergence of an SUV lineup. Both have been well executed, and both are embodied in the GV80 utility we are driving here.

The "crest" grille is a stunner, building upon the character of its predecessor, highly distinctive, signaling luxury without being ostentatious, complemented by high-style LED quad headlights echoed in active light bars along the front fender flanks.

The powerful, silky smooth ride of their G70, G80 and flagship G90 sedans translates immediately to the SUV format. GV80 offers two powertrains, mirroring the G80 sedan: a 300-hp 2.5-liter four-cylinder turbo and the 375-hp 3.5-liter V6 twin-turbo in our top-trim model. As with the sedans, GV80 is

rear-drive-based, with inherent advantages in acceleration, handling and braking. The smaller engine comes with AWD or rear-drive; more powerful 3.5T trims are AWD-only, which suits us fine.

There are basically three trim levels: a nameless base model, Prestige and Advanced. With the larger 3.5T AWD, there is also Advanced+, which we are driving here, the only trim with a third row.

We fell for the GV80's driver experience within the first block. The cabin is top notch, full of pleasing feature and comfort design points. Infotainment and other functions are built into a very wide, not very tall screen interface with useful information at all levels (some of which we used to tamp down

ambitious driver assist). Shifting is via a rotary dial, one of the few alternative types we do generally like. Knurled cylindrical dials for audio and other functions are stylish and ergonomically friendly. (Downside: right where peripheral vision might expect the shifter is instead a feature controller, a circular pad with a prominent, bejeweled surround.)

The GV80 also passes the handsome beast test, in which you can't resist looking back one more time after parking, all the moreso with lights on.

All that, and it still tows 6000 pounds and is rated 23 mpg highway.

The GV80 lineup shows great value, starting under \$50 grand, the 3.5T under \$60, with another \$5 grand or so for that third row. (It will be interesting to see the upcoming GV70, due as a 2022 model and starting just over \$40 grand.)

We had an enjoyable week with this machine around town, not even thinking about drive modes, which we usually have to seek out pretty quickly to conquer any deficits. When we finally did try sport mode, the changes were subtle, which is how we prefer them—not because we don't want to be sporty, but because we prefer performance to al-

(cont'd)

SPECIFICATIONS

ROWS / SEATS	Advanced+ : three/seven
ASSEMBLY PLANT	Ulsan, S Korea
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION	S Korea
ENGINE	3.5L twin-turbo GDI 24v V6
HP/TORQUE	375 hp / 391 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
TRANSMISSION	8-spd automatic rotary dial / paddles
SUSPENSION	F/R: multi-link, gas shocks; electronically controlled w/ road preview; (opt not on ours: electronic limslip diff)
STEERING	elec rack-mounted motor-driven variable gear ratio steering rack
BRAKES	4-wheel vented disc
WHEELS	20x8.5J aluminum alloy
TIRES	P265/50R20 Michelin Primacy Tour all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	194.7 / 116.3 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	not stated
TURNING CIRCLE	39.3 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	not stated
LEGROOM (F/R)	not stated
CARGO CAPACITY	not stated
WEIGHT	(7-passenger) 4907-5104 lb
TOW CAPACITY	6000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	premium / 21.1 gal
MPG	18/23/20 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$65,050
3.5T ADVANCED+ AWD INCL	AWD Advanced features incl 20-in machine-finished metallic grey wheels, leather, 16-way power driver's seat w adjustable bolsters & cushion extension & 4-way power lumbar, heated 2nd row seats, and more—plus third row with 50/50 power split.
ADRIATIC BLUE PAINT	400
DESTINATION CHARGE	1025
TOTAL	\$66,475

2021² GENESIS LINEUP

SEDANS

G70	2.0T...252hp...RWD	\$36,500
	AWD	38,500
	3.3T...365hp...RWD	46,700
	AWD	48,700
G80	2.5T...300hp...RWD	\$47,700
	AWD	50,850
	3.5T...375hp...RWD	59,100
	AWD	62,250
Electrified G80 ²		thd
G90	3.3T...365hp...RWD	\$72,950
	AWD	75,450
	5.0...420hp...RWD	76,700
	AWD	79,200

SUVS

GV70 ²	2.5T...300hp...AWD	\$41,000
	3.5T...375hp...AWD	52,600
GV80	2.5T...300hp...RWD	\$48,900
	AWD	54,650
	3.5T...375hp...AWD	59,650

²2022 model

A wide contoured chrome band along the door sills, echoing front and rear, is an ongoing treat, reflecting the sky and trees even as the GV80 slips into evening light.



ready be complete, straight out of the box. Shift points are no doubt tightened up in sport, and the engine note grows to a light, satisfying growl.

But we had one more potential analytical point—that 23 mpg highway mileage rating. We usually don't get into hypermiling in depth, but that had us curious. After all, it weighs some 5000 pounds, as you would expect, and carries seven people.

We had received the GV80 with an average fuel mileage already in the gauges, and who knows for how long or in what kind of driving. Add a few days with us in town, and it was reading 11.3 mpg. If we really wanted to hypermile, we'd probably drive 65 mph steady for a couple of hours on I-10 in either direction. But we prefer something more real-worldy and, with 375 horses underfoot, more aggressive. So it was off to the Beeline Highway, AZ 87, for a drive up to a late breakfast in Payson.

We pulled in reading 12.2 mpg at the Chevron station opposite We-Ko-Pa Resort east of Fountain Hills—and zeroed out. Ahead would be a combination of highway speeds, light traffic, significant climbs, curves and descents—good conditions for a meaningful number. Or fairly good. We would, after all, be climbing 3500 feet en route. We also popped it back into sport while parked, discovering that this also firms up the seat bolsters. Other modes include eco and snow. Knowing we weren't likely to see snow, we popped it into eco—which we do far less than average—and headed out.

Starting to climb only slightly at highway speed, we felt no loss of power or control in eco, and our mileage was climbing, hitting 17.8 within just a couple of miles. We noted the vehicle was so comfortable, it would be easy to stay behind the wheel and drive from here to Maine, if so inclined.

One of our favorite features of the Beeline is the stretch where the two directions cross paths—preserving natural terrain, while offering an optimal drive—full of curves and climbs, basically a mountain two-lane with no oncoming traffic. We entered this stretch at 19.6, dropping to 17.2 mpg by the end of that sporty segment. We were soon back up to 19.2 and realizing we'd sure like to at least hit 20 mpg. But after the final climb to the top, we were at 17.4.

Most vehicles set drive modes back to normal when shut off, but this was still in eco after breakfast, so we stayed with that. We'd experienced no performance penalty, and it probably helped our mileage mission. But wait—on the return, we'd be descending 3500 feet. We could reset at the top, read both directions and average those—or not reset and, knowing the uphill mileage and the total at the end, calculate the downhill leg based on that. Same diff, as we all learned in algebra.

Back at the Fountain Hills turnoff, even with a photo stop at Bush Highway, we were at exactly 20 mpg. Nice! As for the average: 17.4 uphill plus “x” downhill, divided by two, equals our known 20 mpg overall. This resolves to 22.6 mpg on the drive back, which rounds off to 23, their stated highway mileage. Given all our spirited driving and the varied terrain, that's admirable.

Starting with a strong foundation, the Genesis GV80 covers a lot of bases: it's their first SUV; it's a superb execution of the brand's style evolution; it provides a generous experience for the price; it delivers 375 well-trained horses in any mode; it touts 6000 pounds; and it gets over 20 mpg.

First impressions are important. Lasting impressions are, too. This is a beauty inside and out. ■



THE LATEST FROM GENESIS

THE LATEST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT:

The Dubai Police General Command has added the Genesis GV80 to its fleet of luxury patrol cars, sourced from exclusive UAE Genesis distributor Juma Al Majid EST.

THE LATEST IN GENESIS SUVs:

Down one size from our GV80 is the upcoming 2022 Genesis GV70, which will be offered in the US with a 2.5L turbo four and 3.5L twin-turbo V6. (And we'll be watching for a GV90.)

THE LATEST IN GENESIS POWERTRAINS:

Genesis revealed its first-ever EV model, the Electrified G80, to the global market at Auto Shanghai 2021 (the Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition). Estimated maximum range is more than 500 km (311 miles) based on the Korean EV certification system or 427 km (265 miles) per the company's estimates. 350 kW rapid charging goes from 10 to 80 percent in 22 minutes. The Electrified G80 has standard AWD and 0-to-60 time of 4.9 seconds in sport mode.

