

# NAUGHTY AND NICE

BY JOE SAGE

The Hyundai N brand is growing, as both a Kona N and Elantra N are new this year in the US (as well as i20 and i30 N cars, globally). The Veloster N was first, in 2019 (see our Nov/Dec 2018 issue for our track-based first drive). N stands for the Namyang, South Korea, research and development facility where Veloster N was conceived, giving a nod also to the famed Nürburgring course in Germany, where its capabilities were honed.

Hyundai chose the low-slung Veloster for their first N in our market due to strong roll, pitch and yaw metrics—delivered by the low profile itself and by the reduced glass and steel of that profile.

Rather than creating a top-dollar halo car to introduce a high performance line to Hyundai, the Veloster N brought top performance to the entry price end of the scale. It's about twice the price of a base Veloster, with about twice the power and torque (and a lot more to distinguish it). The price has gone up, folding in former options—notably a performance package that boosts horsepower to 275, already chosen by the majority of buyers and still a great value for this hot performer.

Our 2018 feature (available online) has detailed info on upgrades in the N—body and chassis stiffness, suspension, transmission, steering, tires, brakes, proprietary ESC and torque vectoring, aerodynamics, exhaust, cabin details and much more.

We visualize Veloster N in Performance Blue, a soft but distinctive hue used on their international i20 and i30 rally cars, though at launch we also had samples in other colors (it also comes in Racing Red, Ultra Black and Chalk White), and it's one of those cars that looks great in any. The black unit here is a real eye-catcher, showing off its contours and red highlights. A spoiler on some vehicles looks like an add-on, but this looks fully integrated and buttons up an already tight and potent stance.

We'd been having a week of light dust and rain, so we took the Veloster N for a brushless car wash late in our week, where the cashier asked whether we were trying to make it rain. Yes, sort of. We were heading north up I-17, where radar showed some serious weather afoot. We might not be responsible for creating it by washing the car, but we'd definitely be chasing storms already forming.

We're happy to note the option of either a 6-

speed manual (with model-specific short-throw shift) or new 8-speed wet dual clutch transmission (N DCT) with paddles. This sample had the latter. Though we're big fans of manuals, the DCT, from shifter to output, is a very strong powertrain detail we enjoyed greatly. We didn't use its manumatic feature in town much—ratios and performance are great, and we didn't need to. On our storm-chasing run up I-17, we did (using the shift lever at times, paddles at others), happily burning through the challenging curves and climbs of Black Canyon. It makes you want to take it to the track, but we had done that at launch. We did everything else with it that you can do on public pavement.

Veloster N's purpose-built suspension tracks supremely accurately—and belying its front-drive build, as we had already learned at the track earlier. You'd even be forgiven for thinking it had rear-biased AWD, but forgoing that keeps weight and cost down (and probably helped enable this magical car's development at all).

Some details: the build also equates to a turning circle almost three feet larger than Elantra, though the Veloster is some 16 inches shorter and its wheelbase about three inches shorter. Reaction to speedbumps is harsh in the rear. Brakes are su-

perb, unusually tight and responsive. You'll want to enjoy its engineered handling by turning off aggressive lane-keeping if you want to hug the painted lines (very easy via a switch on the instrument panel, rather than the typical deep screen dive). Weight and cost are also kept down via such build decisions as manual seats. N instrumentation includes lap timer, g-force indicator and other performance goodies.

Beneath the N characteristics, the core Veloster itself is a very cool little rig. One standout feature is its three-door setup—unusual, useful, proprietary with only a couple of fairly obscure exceptions.

Our drive time was top notch.

We've long noticed that a hot car is likely to bring out aggressive behavior from two sets of fellow travelers: triggered boy racers; and minivans or the like (perhaps offended but more likely jealous). The Veloster N brought out a few boy racers, but surprised us by generating aggressive moves from a number of sedate midsize sedans. The latter probably fit our standard minivan mold: maybe offended, probably jealous. Or maybe they thought we were a boy racer and needed to be put in our place. (Spoiler: none of them put us in our place.)

We generally don't dwell upon fuel mileage, other than in vehicles where it's the main purpose, but the Veloster N gave us a ready readout, and its EPA rating proved accurate. We even beat it with-



out trying: after a week mostly around town, with a day at enthusiastic Interstate highway speeds, it stated 23.6 MPG overall.

A couple of weeks earlier, we had had the new Elantra (also in this issue), which had given us the impression that if the world had only one car, that could be it. Here to promptly make a counterclaim is the Veloster N, solid evidence that the world always welcomes something more.

The Veloster N is a great road warrior and great town car. Surprisingly, the Veloster lineup is not a big seller. So go grab one and be distinctive.

The storms never did quite catch us on that run up I-17. Or perhaps we were the storm. ■

## NEW FOR 2021: VELOSTER AND VELOSTER N

### VELOSTER N:

- Previously optional Performance Package (among other things boosting engine from 250 to 275 hp) is now standard.
- N DCT 8-speed wet dual-clutch transmission (with the prior-only-choice 6-spd manual still available).
- Adds standard SmartSense forward collision-avoidance assist, lane keep assistance and driver attention warning.
- AVN 5.0 multimedia navigation system (standard with updated N menus).
- New light sport bucket seats.
- Expect 2022 to be a carryover model.

### BASE VELOSTER:

- Carryover model.



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY PLANT	Ulsan, South Korea
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION	Korea / Korea
ENGINE	Theta 2.0 Turbo GDI 4-cyl alum/alum, DOHC, E-CVVT
HP/TORQUE	275 hp / 260 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.5:1
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
	electronically controlled hydraulic torque vectoring control
TRANSMISSION	N 8-spd Wet Dual Clutch Transmission (N DCT) w paddle shifters
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut, coils, electronically controlled twin tube gas shocks, 21mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link, electronically controlled twin tube hydraulic shocks, 12mm stblzr bar
STEERING	motor-driven power, rack-mounted rack & pinion, sport-tuned
BRAKES	F: 13.6x1.2" vented, 2-piston; R: 12.4x0.8" vented, 1-piston
WHEELS	19x8.0J alloy
TIRES	.235/35 R19 Pirelli P Zero summer perf
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	167.9 / 104.3 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.12 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.1 / 35.9 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.6 / 34.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	19.9 / 44.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4079 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem unl / 13.2 gal
MPG	20/27/22 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE (Veloster N)	\$33,750
DESTINATION CHARGE	995
TOTAL	\$34,745

## 2021 HYUNDAI VELOSTER LINEUP

2.0L	147 hp / 132 lb-ft	
2.0	6 MT	\$18,900
	6 auto	19,900
2.0 Premium	6 auto	23,100
1.6L TURBO	201 hp / 195 lb-ft	
Turbo R-Spec	6 MT	\$23,450
Turbo	7 Eco DCT	25,750
Turbo Ultimate	7 Eco DCT	28,450
2.0L TURBO	275 hp / 260 lb-ft	
Veloster N	6 MT	\$32,250
	8 Wet DCT	33,750