

Nissan is intensifying an evolution of its entire lineup. The first thing you'll notice on the new fourth-generation Murano will likely be its styling, to us a welcome change from their previous longstanding brandwide face. Next you will notice its features, and then its all-new powertrain, which itself turns out to be a complex topic.

When new in 2003, Muran entered a new realm—or in fact played a big role in creating or solidifying it—the crossover. It brought sleek and curvy styling to the usually boxy SUV category, while to some it positioned and functioned as almost a sedan, but with an SUV's high ride and visibility.

While the original Murano stood apart significantly when new, this is a taller order today, as variety has grown in every way, from a wide range of sizes, to new cues from evolving EV styling, to a broadening of price ranges at both ends, and so on. With all those factors involved in its execution, the new Murano is successfully striking.

Nissan's own materials on the new Murano emphasize its features, with extra focus on a combination of spaciousness and creature comforts, on

connectivity via built-in Google including maps, and on a significantly new powertrain.

Our week with the Murano generated far more notes than is typical, mostly in two areas: feature oddities (more numerous and more frustrating than average); and powertrain behavior.

Features may seem like secondary things, but they included issues with climate control, locks, strong surface reflections—things that can dominate the experience. Nissan has long had some of the best cameras and mirrors in the business, although we had these overruled by system automation braking us with blunt force while backing into a parking space, though still five feet from a wall.

The new powertrain is the last thing mentioned in official introductory materials, though it seems to have been the main thing that got our attention. First is the engine, the same 241-hp 2.0-liter turbo across the full lineup, notable for its variable compression (brought over from premium sister brand Infiniti, new there a couple of years ago). This is a mechanical scheme physically reconfiguring the engine from one extreme to the other, largely aim-

ing to optimize both fuel economy and power, each in its own way. As performance could be frustrating at times, we experimented and theorized quite a bit on its potential overlap with drive modes.

Second is a 9-speed automatic on all, a notable change from years with a CVT. All levels have all-wheel drive, with the base SV also offering FWD. This is Murano's first move away from a CVT, an evolution also arriving on various other models. While many claim to hate CVTs, we've generally guessed that most people don't even know they have one. But this one seemed to have been more unpopular than average. Some elements of shifting inspired us to try the manumatic paddles, but they were often overruled by the system, anyway.

Nissan is off and running with a comprehensive makeover and update. With a rich history and now in fast-changing times, they are well positioned to take advantage of the best of both.

There is also a new CEO, Ivan Espinosa, being hailed in all quarters as a "car guy," one who will likely take great interest in further evolution and refinement we still anticipate in many areas. ■

Paradigm shift

New through and through

by Joe Sage



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Smyrna, Tennessee
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Japan / US
PARTS CONTENT	US/Canada 50%
ENGINE	2.0L inline-4 16v turbo, VTCS, DOHC, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	241 hp / 260 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	8.0:1 - 14.0:1
TRANSMISSION	9-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	Intelligent AWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep strut w coils, twin-tube struts, 29.0mm solid stblzr bar; R: indep multilink, twin-tube shocks, 28.6mm tubular stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr assist
BRAKES	F: 13.78 x1.18 vented; R: 12.99 x0.63 vented
WHEELS	21-in alum-alloy w aero cover
TIRES	255/50R21 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	192.9 / 111.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.3 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	17.4 / 23.8 / 17.4°
TURNING CIRCLE	tbd
HEADROOM (F/R)	(moonrf) 41.1 / 39.7 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	44.3 / 36.3 in
CARGO CAPACITY	32.9 / 63.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	4438 lb / 59/41
TOW CAPACITY	up to 1500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 18.7 gal
MPG	21/27/23 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$49,600
(BUNDLE): carpeted floor mats and cargo mat, seatback protector, cargo blocks	510
ILLUMINATED CARGO SCUFF PLATE	505
EXTERIOR GROUND LIGHTING	675
PANORAMIC HEADLINER ILLUMINATION	430
ILLUMINATED KICKPLATES	415
DESTINATION CHARGE	1390
TOTAL	\$53,525

2025 NISSAN MURANO LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
SV	\$40,470	\$41,470
SL		46,560
Platinum		49,600