

Last fall, we had a 2026 Hyundai Palisade XRT Pro AWD, just above midprice in the pack and the only one that's AWD-only, which touches on its light off-road leanings per 18-inch wheels and all-terrain tires, with an inch more ground clearance.

This summer, we had the top trim Calligraphy. Both have the V6, as distinguished from the Hybrid Blue set, which have a more powerful turbo-4 and are slightly pricier. (Last fall's XRT Pro is also distinguished by not being available as a hybrid.)

Palisade, while officially a midsize, occupies the position of a full-size in Hyundai's SUV lineup, and it sells almost as many as the smaller, also officially midsize Santa Fe. (The compact Tucson is their biggest seller by almost 100,000 more units per year in the US.) While keeping strong family identity, Hyundai does a great job of distinguishing its models by style, not just size, moreso than many brands. Palisade has a handsome presence, with a notably flush fit of lights, fascia and such that convey a feel of quality engineering and assembly.

That said, we had a world of trouble with the door locks, a point of extreme frustration (and po-

tential personal risk) that dominated our week—a bigger issue than it may sound and the topic of more than half of our extensive notes. (It's not the only issue we had this summer making us wonder whether hot weather testing of certain details is maybe now done by simulation, not in the field.)

Along similar lines, we were mildly frustrated with dark-grey-on-black labels for many controls, both in the display and on physical buttons. We wondered whether these are designed on-screen but never reviewed in glaring daylight such as here.

On both, we do not know the answer, but can vouch for the frustration and distraction.

The V6 Palisade has generally good power and responsiveness, its moderate horsepower (for its size) offset by relatively tame weight (for its size). We did not try it with its up-to-5,000-lb towing.

Where power seems to fall short is in the transmission, which exhibits old-school lag from stop-lights or in turns, and could hunt for its preferred gear on even moderate straight inclines.

Anecdotally (we don't measure, but do watch the gauge drop), it also seems thirsty, although its

2026 HYUNDAI PALISADE LINEUP

V6: 287-hp 3.5L V6, 8-auto	FWD	AWD
SE	\$39,435	\$41,435
SEL 7p/8p	41,940	43,940
SEL Convenience	43,370	45,370
SEL Premium 7p/8p	45,300	47,300
XRT Pro	--	49,870
Limited	49,770	51,770
Calligraphy	54,560	56,560

Hybrid Blue: 329-hp 2.5L Turbo-4 hybrid, 6-auto	FWD	AWD
Hybrid SEL 7p/8p	\$44,160	\$46,160
Hybrid SEL Premium 7p/8p	47,520	49,520
Hybrid Limited	51,990	53,990
Hybrid Calligraphy	56,780	58,780

MPG ratings are a little higher than the XRT Pro. Last year, we had also noted some drivetrain uncertainties. This makes two times we've had this powertrain and speculated that the hybrids might be worth a look. Though not available as XRT Pro, for most of the others it is. You'd get higher horsepower and far higher MPG (30s) for not that much higher a price. And we're more than a little curious about its different (6-speed) transmission.

Of course the door handles will be the same. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Ulsan, South Korea
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	SKorea / SKorea
PARTS CONTENT	US/Can 1% / SKorea 90%
ROWS / SEATS	three / seven
ENGINE	3.5L V6, MPI+GDI DOHC 24v, alum
HP/TORQUE	287 hp / 260 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.3:1
TRANSMISSION	8-speed auto
DRIVETRAIN	HTRAC AWD active on-demand
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w coils, stblzr bar, R: multilink indep, separated springs & shocks, stblzr bar, self-leveling
STEERING	rack & pinion, motor-driv, col-mt
BRAKES	F: 345 x 30mm vented; R: 325 x 20mm solid
WHEELS	21x8.5J alloy
TIRES	265/45 R21 108V XL
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	199.2 / 116.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.4 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	18.6 / 21.1 / 16.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	39.2 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	(sunrfl) 40.1 / 40.0 / 37.7 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	44.2 / 43.0 / 32.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	19.1 / 46.3 / 86.7 cu.ft
ROOF RAILS LOAD CAPACITY	220 lb
WEIGHT	4420-4872 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(w brakes) 5000 lb (w/o brakes) 1650 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 19.0 gal
MPG	18/24/20 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$56,060
CARPETED FLOOR MATS	245
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$57,800

Note: sticker price above; new pricing at left.

Trim comparison
begs drivetrain
comparison

BY JOE SAGE

