Genesis Range – First Impressions/Brief Road Tests

Published: December 21, 2021

Author: Kim Henson

Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/genesis-range-first-impressions-brief-road-tests/



Kim Henson reports on his brief test drives in a selection of current Genesis models…

(Words and photographs by, and copyright, Kim).

It is difficult to keep up with the Genesis premium brand story in the U.K, so rapid has been its development from a ‘standing start’ just a few months ago to a range that today offers a variety of ‘luxury’ models, all providing a buying proposition that is rather different to the norm…

In fact the Korean firm of Genesis was established in 2015 and the company's vehicles have been selling, and gaining respect in, global markets, against rivals including the likes of Audi, BMW, Jaguar, Lexus and Mercedes-Benz.

However it was not until very recently, since the summer of 2021, that British buyers could get behind the wheel of any of the vehicles from the firm.

So, what is this newcomer offering, and what lies beneath the sleek and distinctive bodywork of its models? Genesis is linked to Hyundai and Kia, and unsurprisingly there are some similarities in (notably) engine and drivetrain aspects, between cars produced by these three firms. However, as an engineer from the company explained to me during a press driving day in Wiltshire last week, Genesis models are designed, developed and produced independently, and incorporate many unique features, including their luxurious interiors.

At the moment, Genesis cars on sale in Britain – all aimed at the 'quality' end of the market – are deliberately either petrol or diesel powered, with no hybrid nor fully-electric variants. However, there are some fascinating new electrically propelled new models due to come on stream here in 2022.

For now the deliberate policy is to offer just petrol or diesel power, while the brand becomes established in Britain.

The current range comprises… The G70 saloon (with prices starting at around £33,400), the GV70 SUV (priced from £39,450), the G80 saloon (£37,460 upwards) and the GV80 SUV (from £56,715), plus, since November this year, the company's latest vehicle to arrive in the U.K, the G70 Shooting Brake (costing from £35,250). The prices are fixed (i.e. non-negotiable) and so at the outset the customer knows what he or she will be paying.

For each model, buyers can choose petrol or diesel engines. In each case drive to the rear wheels (or all four wheels, depending on model) is via an eight-speed automatic transmission, developed by Genesis.

For those interested in buying a Genesis, the process is rather different to established procedures. The company explains that they aim to make ownership as hassle-free as possible, and to build a long-term relationship with the customer. They say, “The Genesis ethos of care stems from our Korean heritage and the philosophy of Son-Nim □□, meaning we treat our customers as guests. This philosophy comes to life with Genesis as we set the benchmark in levels of service. We strive to make owning a luxury car hassle-free, so all you need to do is enjoy driving.”

Lovely, but what does this actually mean in practice? Well, for a start there is no U.K. dealer network, but a single ‘Genesis Studio’ in Westfield shopping centre in London, and online sales. Further Studios are expected to follow, based on major conurbations and expanding geographical coverage.

Potential customers will be assigned a Personal Assistant, who will start by explaining the details of the various models, and test drives can be arranged to be carried out from home.

Once a car is purchased, when servicing is required it will be collected and delivered back to the customer, by the Personal Assistant, who is said to be on hand to help the buyer through their journey with Genesis.

A five year/unlimited mileage warranty (restricted to 130,000 miles for taxi use etc.) and a five year/50,000 miles Care Plan is included in the buying package. The Care Plan covers scheduled servicing, roadside assistance, digital updates and a courtesy car.

Sophisticated safety systems abound within all the Genesis models, and it is notable that they have all secured a five-star Euro NCAP safety rating.

In the New Year, Covid situation permitting I hope to be road-testing some of the Genesis models in more detail, over the course of a week for each model. For now here are my initial impressions, based on the four cars that I drove briefly during a recent motoring press driving day event held in north Wiltshire… and starting with my first, and main, drive of the day, in the new G70 Shooting Brake.

G70 Shooting Brake



My first drive of the day in the north Wiltshire/south Gloucestershire area was in the recently-introduced (November 2021) G70 Shooting Brake.

Designed and developed specifically for Europe, this is the fifth Genesis model to arrive at our shores within the space of just a few months.

Highlights (among many) of this stylish newcomer include… a spacious load compartment (total capacity 1,535 litres or 54.21 cu.ft) plus 40:20:40 split folding rear seats, unique

chassis and steering set-ups (developed in Germany) for a sporty drive, soft leather upholstery in a roomy interior brimming with luxury features, the ‘Genesis Connected Services’ app, and state-of-the art instrumentation and control features (including a large and very clear central display screen, plus equally clear instrumentation ahead of the driver).

There is insufficient space here to list all the car’s attributes, but to suffice to say that they are many and comprehensive, including a raft of high-tech safety systems.

Based on the G70 saloon, the elegant Shooting Brake incorporates a coupé style appearance, including tailgate glass that extends into the car’s roof, and a ‘floating’ rear spoiler.


GENESIS
OU71 AUM



This was the first Genesis model that I had driven, and on entering the vehicle I was at once impressed by the logically laid out controls, the ultra-clear large display screen, the superbly comfortable seats and, in all aspects, the attention to detail. Wherever I looked, it seemed to me that the interior had been designed and put together with care, with quality in mind and, importantly, with careful thought regarding how the driver would be able to interact with the vehicle. It really was intuitive, so that the car could be enjoyed at once on first acquaintance, and safely.



Each switch and control knob seemed well-made, and I was pleased to find that many of the car's everyday controls were designed so that they could be operated without the need to resort to delving into screen menus – a boon for safety, I feel.



A close look around the car impressed me with the high standard of fit and finish ‘everywhere’, including the beautifully crafted seats, door trim panels and facia. I also found it was very easy to set the driver’s seat to the most comfortable position for me, using the electric seat controls.



Under the bonnet of my test car (2.0T plus version) was a four cylinder 2.0 litre petrol engine, developing 241 bhp and 353 Nm (260 lb.ft) of torque – delivered all the way between 1,450 and 3,500 rpm.



During my test drive this translated into very eager performance both from rest and on the move. For the record, the car will accelerate from standstill to 62 mph in 6.9 seconds, from 31 to 62 mph in 5.1 seconds, and has a top speed of 146 mph. All these are impressive figures and underline the sporty nature of this G70.

Yet it’s practical too. There’s room for five adults to travel in comfort, with good head room and reasonable leg room for those in the rear as well as the front seat occupants. Load space is reasonably commodious even with the rear seats occupied (465 litres or 16.42 cu.ft, including 403 litres or 14.23 cu.ft below the rear window), but with the seats folded, the available space becomes cavernous (1535 litres or 54.21 cu.ft, as already mentioned).

Beneath the boot floor are additional small compartments; all very useful.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

To me the car felt agile and well-behaved on a variety of roads ranging from twisting country lanes to main ‘A’ roads, and dodgy tarmac sections left the car unruffled as it glided along. The compliant ride comfort was enjoyed by myself and my passenger, but I also found the handling/roadholding characteristics were good, as were the brakes – effective and powerful.

Was there anything I didn’t like? Well the main point I noted was that to me the steering felt a little over-sensitive or ‘over-assisted’ at higher speeds.

The car was quiet as it motored along, smooth-running and refined, and in this respect the silky-smooth automatic transmission should be mentioned for I thought it was excellent. With eight available ratios the car always seemed to be in the right gear for any situation, and coupled with the delightfully torquey engine, that pulled strongly even from low rpm, the set-up was impressive.

What about emissions and fuel consumption, I hear you asking? Well the WLTP figures show CO2 figures of between 212.4 and 217.4 g/km, which are quite high, and a ‘Combined’ petrol consumption of between 29.5 and 30.2 miles per gallon. Actually I feel that this is reasonable, considering the performance potential and size of the vehicle.

The basic price of the test car ‘luxury LINE’ model is £40,700, but extras fitted included the ‘Innovation’ pack (£3,250), ‘COMFORT’ seat pack (£1,850), Nappa leather seat trim (£2,470), Lexicon Audio (£790) and an electrically-operated sun roof (£960). The ‘Bond Silver’ paintwork added another £750. This brought the total figure for the car as tested to over £50,000.

VERDICT

To my mind this is an attractive package, very worthy of consideration. The car looks terrific, seems to be meticulously designed, engineered and built, is intuitive to operate, fun to drive and – importantly for an ‘estate’, is versatile in terms of passenger and luggage carrying options.

GV70 SUV



Staying with the ‘70’ Series, my next outing was in the GV70, described by Genesis as being ‘A premium urban SUV that is equally at home in the city as in the country’. It’s a state of the art machine, and the example I drove was fitted with a 2.5 litre turbocharged engine with a dual fuel injection system (plus an innovative cooling system), developing 300 bhp, plus a maximum of 421.7 Nm (311 lb.ft) of torque. This was delivered to all four wheels via an eight speed automatic transmission.



All the comments I made about the G70 Shooting Brake, relating to build quality and attention to detail, apply equally to the GV70. I should mention that large central screen display and its operating system differs to that in the G70, with a centre console mounted rotary control linked to the screen and providing the driver with a wide variety of easily activated functions.

The test car was superbly finished in terms of paintwork, panel fit and attention to detail. It was also very spacious for passengers and luggage, and with a large carpeted boot floor, easily extendable by folding one or more of the rear seat backs, to accommodate long loads or extra baggage. Beneath the rear section of the boot floor was a ‘real’ spare wheel. Excellent news.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Around town and at slow speeds in heavy traffic, the GV70 was docile and mild-mannered,

but given its head on the open road it felt like a sports car let loose, in the way in which it sprinted up to the U.K.'s legal speed limits. In fact it is capable of reaching 62 mph from rest in just 6.1 seconds, and an indication of its rapid overtaking potential is the figure for acceleration between 50 and 75 mph, which is just 4.4 seconds (not in this country of course, as 75 mph is above the speed limit). The top speed is a very fast 149 mph. However, more importantly this high speed potential means that at Britain's motorway speed limit of 70 mph, travel is truly effortless. At all speeds the car was quiet and progress smooth, and the eight speed auto transmission is a model of refinement.

I found that the 14.5 inch widescreen infotainment display, with split functions, was both innovative and clever in the way that it operated (by way of the 'touch controller'), and in addition it was clear to read and easy to assimilate. The touch controller, positioned on the centre console, does away with the need for complex keyboard input and repeatedly tapping the screen, enabling the infotainment system to be controlled very easily.

The 12.3 inch three dimensional instrument panel ahead of the driver was also clear to read and is designed to be seen easily from every angle.

Most impressive to me was the way I which the car handled, for a fairly tall SUV it responded instantly to the helm and cornered with very little body roll. I found that grip was excellent, even on country lanes covered with mud and wet leaves.

In slippery surface situations, with electronic limited slip differentials built into the all wheel drive system, power is fed to the wheels having least grip.

The All Wheel Drive system incorporates a 'Terrain' setting, this consisting snow, sand and mud modes, and which adjusts the engine, brakes and transmission to keep the vehicle moving. The status of the mode can be checked through the instrument panel and infotainment system.

Another innovative system that helps maintain an even keel is the 'Preview Electronically Controlled Suspension'. This uses information provided by the car's front camera and

navigation map information, to adjust the suspension's damping force to balance the movement of the vehicle. Thus it can anticipate and respond to surface irregularities to smooth the ride. Certainly during my test drive the GV70 was a very comfortable vehicle in which to travel. For the main suspension hardware it employs MacPherson struts at the front, with a multi-link set-up at the rear.

The WLTP CO2 emissions rating is 218 g/km, with Combined fuel consumption quoted as being between 27.92 and 29.72 miles per gallon, which I feel is good for a 300 bhp fast SUV.

The basic price of the car is £43,350, pushed up to £50,810 by a range of options fitted to the test vehicle.



VERDICT

The GV70 is genuinely exhilarating and rewarding to drive, inspires confidence when the going gets slippery, and is a highly practical state of the art luxurious SUV.

The car is packed with the latest technologies to improve safety and driver experience, while passengers too can benefit from the clever suspension system.

G80 Saloon (diesel)



As the afternoon sped by and time for driving was ticking away, moving up to the Genesis ‘80’ Series cars, I next took the wheel of a G80. This large, elegant and luxurious saloon is, like the other models in the line-up, bristling with high technology and yet, sophisticated though it certainly is, it is, by design, deliberately easy to operate. How sensible!

As just one example, the heating and ventilation controls incorporate excellent graphics and intuitive operation, for instant adjustment to the settings required. Brilliant! The large central display screen for the infotainment system is first class too.

The car is built around a modern platform and features Electronically Controlled Suspension

(ECS) that ‘reads the road’ ahead to adjust the set-up to provide a smooth ride.

The example I sampled was powered by the 2.2 litre diesel motor, developing 210 bhp, plus 441 Nm (325 lb.ft) of torque, delivered between 1,750 and 2,750 rpm.



This torquey diesel engine pulled strongly at all speeds, and at 60 mph required just 1,200 or so rpm, for hushed and relaxing cruising.

A rotary control on the centre console enables the driver to readily engage ‘Drive’ or ‘Reverse’ (through ‘Neutral’) via the eight speed automatic transmission. I found it

especially easy to use. I liked the way that, on my test car, engaging reverse automatically lowed the ‘mesh’ type screen that is normally suspended above the rear seat backrest.


SETUP
AUTO
OFF
SYNC
22.0
REAR
AUTO
Medium
A/C
22.0
BACK
MENU
R
N
D
AUTO HOLD
P

The car proved to be a supremely comfortable vehicle during my drive, the seats and suspension doing their job quietly and efficiently, and I thought that handling was excellent for a large saloon. Head and leg room were good throughout the vehicle, and there's a big boot too.



One safety aspect that especially liked (and that also features on other Genesis models) is the fitting of a camera system on each side of the car, set up to activate when the left or right indicators are switched on, and when the car is about to turn. This system, which projects moving images onto the instrument panel, provides the driver with a very clear view to the rear down each side of the vehicle, so that cyclists or other vehicles approaching

from behind the car can be spotted at once.



Under the WLTP system, CO2 emissions are shown as being 164 to 169 g/km, with Combined fuel consumption between 43.7 and 45.0 miles per gallon – impressive for a large car and cost-effective for long distance motoring.



VERDICT

Effective and user-friendly technology is woven into the fabric of this likeable luxurious Genesis model. The G80 saloon provides effortless and comfortable yet rapid motoring, with commendable fuel economy too. Prices start at £37,460.

GV80 SUV (petrol)



There was very little daylight left as I set off on my last test drive of the day, with equally limited available time in which to sample the GV80 SUV that I was driving, before the transporters were due to arrive to return all the Genesis models to their base.

My test car GV80 was powered by the Genesis 2.5 litre turbocharged petrol engine, fed by a twin fuel injection system and developing 304 horsepower plus 422 Nm (311 lb.ft) of torque, from 1,650 to 4,000 rpm.



This motor drives all four wheels through the Genesis-developed eight speed auto transmission and propels the GV80 to 62 mph in 7.7 seconds, from rest, and on to a top speed of 147 mph.

‘Combined’ fuel consumption, as recorded under the WLTP system, is stated as being between 30.5 to 31.4 mpg – creditable for a large and luxurious SUV.

The GV80 is certainly large, and care is needed both when parking in most of today’s car park spaces, and when driving in narrow lanes. That said, the vehicle is easy to control and is a docile machine when driving in town.

It is great to drive on the open road, where it is in its element and capable of high speed effortless motoring for hours on end; it is quiet-running, refined and smooth in operation.

During my very brief run in the GV80 I appreciated its generous interior space (the luggage compartment is huge too), its supple ride quality, commendable handling, sure-footed grip on slippery roads and the lively manner in which it performed, as well as the well-crafted interior which is as comfortable as it is good-looking.

The car is brimming with useful technology too.


NORTH
WRAXALL



GV80 models start at £56,715; not cheap, but still competitively priced in this market sector.



VERDICT

An excellent large ‘Premium’ SUV.

GENESIS DRIVING DAY – OVERALL VIEW

At the end of this useful day I had been impressed by, and enjoyed, all the high quality, well-engineered Genesis models that I had driven. Notably, by design all were intuitive to operate too – very welcome.

If pushed to select a favourite, for my personal choice it would be the recently-introduced G70 Shooting Brake, for its combination of qualities, its all-round effectiveness and value for money.

It will be interesting to more fully test examples from the line-up early in 2022, and also to assess the new electric models as they are introduced in due course from next year.