

Kia range driving day event

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[A few of the Kia models available to sample...](#)

Kim Henson reports on a fascinating day driving contrasting models from the Kia line-up...

(All words and photographs © Kim Henson).



This year Kia is celebrating 35 years in the UK, and the ongoing rise and rise of the company is testament to the quality and variety of models produced by the firm. These days Kia offers vehicles across a multitude of market sectors and with a variety of powertrain types to suit all requirements and personal choices. This wide spread of offerings, including some 'niche' areas cleverly entered and exploited by Kia, is appreciated by buyers who have so much choice within the range.

As in previous years, Kia has recently arranged a driving event for members of the Western Group of Motoring Writers, showcasing their model range and allowing members of the Group (including me) to briefly test-drive a variety of Kias on the same day, this time in the Bath area. I was there, and this is how my day went...

Note: What follows is a brief-run down of my personal impressions of the vehicles that I drove on the day. For more detailed information about each of the models, please go to Kia's UK website: <https://www.kia.com/uk/>

EV9 GT 99.8 kWh AWD seven seater



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I first took the wheel of the acclaimed EV9, a large, all-electric family vehicle, in seven seater 'GT' form.

It features futuristic styling, a very spacious interior with a huge load compartment, a powerful drivetrain, and a claimed driving range varying from 316 miles ('Combined' figure) to 408 miles ('City' range).

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During my test drive progress was rapid and smooth, and the suspension coped admirably



with a variety of surfaces, including badly ridged and potholed sections of tarmac.

With more than 500 bhp available, acceleration from rest and on the move was rapid. Kia figures show the nought to 62 mph sprint being accomplished in just 4.6 seconds, and a top speed of 136 mph. Torque delivery is instant and prodigious, with 740 Nm (546 lb.ft) being available.

Instrumentation was clear and unmistakable, and all controls felt positive in action.

This is a large vehicle, requiring plenty of space on the road and within parking areas, and some of the narrow urban areas around Bath, encountered during my drive, underlined the considerable size of the car. To me, although agile for a large vehicle, it also felt heavy, which it is, weighing in at 3,280 kg (7,231 lb).

On the open road, where I feel it is most at home, the EV9 GT is an impressive performer, providing space and comfort for a family on the move. Progress is smooth, 'refined' and quiet. High levels of grip, good handling characteristics and accommodating ride comfort are all plus points.

Battery recharging from 10 to 80 per cent level using a DC 50 kW charger is said to take one hour 23 minutes, or with a DC 210 kW charger, just 34 minutes, while an AC 11 kW charger takes nine hours and five minutes to boost charge from 10 per cent to 100 per cent.

VERDICT

An up-to-the-minute EV packed with modern EV technology, with innovative styling, a well-thought out and practical interior, and performance levels that can surprise.

The 'On-The-Road' price of the test vehicle? £82,845.



Tech Spec in Brief:

EV9 GT 99.8 kWh AWD seven seater

Price: £82,845

Battery: 99.8 kWh Li-ion polymer

Motor: Permanent magnet synchronous

Max. power: 501 bhp



Max. torque: 740 Nm (546 lb.ft)

Top speed: 136 mph

0 - 62 mph: 4.6 seconds

Driving range: 'Combined', 316 miles; 'city', 408 miles

Length: 5.015 m (16.45 ft)

Width: 1.98 m (6.50 ft)

Height: 1.78 m (5.84 ft)

Luggage capacity: 333 to 2,318 litres (11.76 to 81.86 cu.ft), plus 52 litres (1.98 cu.ft) in the front 'boot'.

Gross vehicle weight: 3,280 kg (7,231 lb)

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles (high voltage battery, eight years/100,000 miles).

Stonic 'Pure'



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My second outing of the day was in the Stonic 'Pure', a compact five door 'urban crossover' style hatchback, powered by Kia's well-respected 998cc three cylinder T-GDi petrol engine, driving the front wheels through a six speed manual gearbox.



The well-equipped model features styling revisions and a dual-screen digital cockpit, incorporating comprehensive connectivity aspects.

I found the driving compartment comfortable and spacious, and there is also plenty of leg and head room for a front passenger seat occupant, although leg room for rear seat occupants is not generous. With rear seat passengers being carried, the boot space is adequate if not large, but capacity is easily extended if the rear seats are unoccupied, by folding the rear seats forwards.

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During my test drive the willing three cylinder unit propelled the car quickly and easily in town and on main roads. It produces 98 bhp at 6,000 rpm (and revs happily), while maximum torque of 172 Nm (127 lb.ft) is delivered at 3,500 rpm. The car pulled strongly from rest and when on the move, and I felt that mechanical noise was generally hushed.

Ride comfort was commendable, especially for a compact vehicle, and handling/roadholding aspects were impressive too, despite surface water and mud on the road at times.

I found the Stonic very easy and pleasant to drive and with its modest overall dimensions, it was also a doddle to manoeuvre and to park in tight spaces.





As usual with Kias, I found that the instrumentation was well laid-out, crystal clear and easy to assimilate.

VERDICT

I have long been a fan of the Stonic, and I found this latest version to be likeable, effective and practical, as well as relatively affordable.

The price of the car as tested? £22,195.



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Tech Spec in Brief:

Stonic 'Pure'

Price: £22,195

Engine: Three cylinder petrol T-GDi, 998cc

Max. power: 98 bhp @ 6,000 rpm

Max. torque: 172 Nm (127 lb.ft) @ 3,500 rpm



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Top speed: 111 mph

0 - 62 mph: 11 seconds

Fuel consumption: 'Combined', 49.5 mpg

Length: 4.165 m (13.67 ft)

Width: 1.76 m (5,75 ft)

Height: 1.485 m (4.87 ft)

Luggage capacity: 352 to 1,115 litres (12.43 to 39.38 cu.ft)

Gross vehicle weight: 1,650 kg (3,638 lb)

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles

Stinger 3.3 T-GDi V6 'GT S'



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Sadly the sleek and speedy Stinger, introduced in 2017, is no longer sold in the UK, but it remains a favourite among owners and drivers of this truly iconic model. Applying understatement here... over the last few years I have certainly enjoyed all my test drives in examples of the Stinger, and as a well-engineered driving machine it has always been an outstanding vehicle, in my opinion.

Therefore I couldn't resist the temptation to sample Kia's Stinger once again, and what an enjoyable drive it was.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the model, it is powered by a 3.3 litre twin



turbocharged V6 engine, driving the rear wheels (in UK spec versions; all wheel drive was offered in other markets) through an eight speed automatic transmission.



With 365 bhp available at 6,000 rpm, plus 510 Nm (376 lb.ft) of torque delivered all the way between 1,300 and 4,500 rpm, performance can be scorching when desired, with 62 mph appearing from rest in 4.7 seconds, and with a potential top speed of 168 mph.

However, it is not just the figures that impress, but also the manner in which the car drives and in which the power is delivered. By which I mean that, for example, the car is very happy to trickle along quietly and in a docile way in heavy traffic and along country lanes,



yet when traffic and road conditions allow, given its head it is a truly exhilarating car to drive.

A touch on the accelerator awakens the power and very soon sees UK's legal upper speed limits appear. The vehicle cruises effortlessly at high speeds when required, and at all times the engine emits a happy burbling sound; not loud but letting you know that the motor is a very special unit.

To me, the 'Combined' fuel consumption figure of 28.5 miles per gallon seems reasonable for a vehicle of such high performance potential.

One aspect of this car that still surprises many drivers and passengers is the excellent ride quality, yet on twisty country roads it corners with reassuring precision and little body roll. The brakes are highly effective too, and cope well with the car's performance.



Head and leg room inside the car is good for all occupants, although the rear roof line slopes quite sharply, requiring tall occupants to be aware of this as they enter and exit from the vehicle.

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Boot space is very generous, and the load compartment is wide, deep and long.



VERDICT

I still love this model, which from the outset I rated highly as a future classic. In fact I think it's already there!



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Tech Spec in Brief:

Stinger 3.2 T-GDi V6 'GT S'

'On The Road' Price: £41,140 (but no longer sold new)

Engine: V6 cylinder twin turbocharged petrol T-GDi, 3,342cc

Max. power: 365 bhp @ 6,000 rpm

Max. torque: 510 Nm (376 lb.ft) @ 1,300 to 4,500 rpm



Top speed: 168 mph

0 - 62 mph: 4.7 seconds

Fuel consumption: 'Combined', 28.5 mpg

Length: 4.830 m (15.85 ft)

Width: 1.97 m (6.47 ft)

Height: 1.4 m (4.60 ft)

Gross vehicle weight: 2,260 kg (4,983 lb)

**Sorento HEV 'Aspire' 1.6 litre T-GDi 6-speed automatic
(seven seater SUV)**



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The last drive of my day was in the HEV 'hybrid' seven seater version of the Sorento, in range-topping 'Aspire' form. The drivetrain features a 1.6 litre petrol engine, working in conjunction with a 64 kW electric motor powered from a 1.49 kWh Li-ion polymer battery. The car has a six speed automatic transmission and all wheel drive as standard.

The petrol engine produces 235 bhp at 6,000 rpm and maximum torque output is a very useful 380 Nm (280 lb.ft) at 4,500 rpm.



To put this model in context, Sorentos are available with an internal combustion engine only, as a plug-in hybrid or, as in this case (HEV version), with a self-charging hybrid system, that does not need to be recharged from an external source.

I found that the Sorento was a willing performer in all the road situations I encountered during my test drive, which took in a variety of conditions from fast roads to winding lanes in the country. It coped well with uneven tarmac surfaces, cornered without drama and provided a comfortable ride quality.

For the record, the top speed of this Sorento is stated as 121 mph, having passed the 62 mph mark from rest in just 9.0 seconds.



Of more interest to many family motorists, there is room aboard for seven people plus luggage; of course there is less boot space available if all seven seats are occupied.

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Although a usefully spacious car within, it did not feel like a large car in dynamic terms. It was not at all unwieldy on the road, but felt nimble and responded instantly and reassuringly to steering and braking inputs.

VERDICT

I feel that this Sorento is a great all-round family car, offering seven seats, good performance and reasonable fuel consumption. Many drivers will also appreciate the fact that while the vehicle incorporates electrical assistance for the petrol engine, there is no need to plug-in the car to recharge it, as this happens automatically during normal driving.

The price of the car as tested is £53,435.



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Tech Spec in Brief:

Sorento HEV 'Aspire' 1.6 litre T-GDi six speed auto (seven seater)

'On The Road' Price: £53,435

Engine: Four cylinder T-GDi, 1598cc

Max. power: 235 bhp @ 6,000 rpm

Max. torque: 380 Nm (280 lb.ft) @ 4,500 rpm

Top speed: 112 mph



0 - 62 mph: 9.0 seconds

Fuel consumption: 'Combined', 40.9 mpg

Length: 4.815 m (15.80 ft)

Width: 1.90 m (6.24 ft)

Height: 1.70 m (5.58 ft)

Luggage space: 179 to 1,996 litres (6.32 to 70.49 cu.ft)

Gross vehicle weight: 2,640 kg (5,820 lb)

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles

VERDICT ON MY DAY OF DRIVING

I deliberately chose a wide variety of Kia models to drive, all of them competent in their respective ways and well-built I feel, and with the added peace of mind of the company's seven year standard warranty.

My personal favourite drive of the day? Undoubtedly the Stinger, just glorious! Yes, I would love one.



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The wonderful Kia Stinger...