



## Kia Stinger GT Sport Line – ‘Motoring For Fun’ Road Test in Scotland

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Guy Loveridge describes a whistle-stop tour of the north of Scotland in Kia's Stinger GT Sport Line...

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Guy Loveridge and George Loveridge).

That Kia introduced a big engined “GT” car attracted my attention instantly. That they allowed it to reach a second generation and to maintain its place in their model range, with compulsory extinction for “ice” powered motor vehicles a short 8 years away, really impressed me. The Stinger is a statement vehicle and I, after having a few half hour drives at media, press and “drive it days” determined that I would get my hands on one for an extended period. My mind latched onto the Scottish “North Coast 500” as the ideal trip to take the Stinger on. A quick chat with Dan Sayles at the bar on a Northern Group of Motoring Writers “Drive it” day and the arrangements were in place: I would have the loan of a press fleet Stinger for a week and needed to get to Scotland – do the NC500 and be back home again for its collection.





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It quickly became clear that we needed to do the trip over a weekend, and the first available weekend that opened up was that of Le Mans Classic, as a story I was supposed to be writing up on that failed to work out when the Porsche's gear box failed at a pre-event shake down test at Donington Park. So, the dates now set and approved by KIA, I sat down with navigator and fellow adventurer for this trip (and fellow contributor to Wheels Alive) George to plan.

Route was easy, we decided to go clock-wise, and guessing how many miles we could achieve each day decided where we would pre-book our overnights. A few emails and a phone call later and we were set for action.

The Stinger was delivered to base by 10:30 on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June. A quick drive to the nearest railway station to drop off the delivery driver and George and I quickly packed, then started the engine to set off for our first overnight which scheduled for Pitlochry, a gentle opening day of 308 miles.





Photograph copyright Guy Loveridge.

We chose to run up the A1M as far as Scotch Corner and then dive across country to get our kick on the A66. From there it was M6 up to Scotland and the motorways around Glasgow and passing Stirling to the A9 and a run through amazing scenery to Pitlochry and our bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Kia comes with adaptive cruise control so, once set for the legal limit on the motorway, it literally kept pace with the ebbs and flows of traffic quite effortlessly. When you need to overtake, the blind spot cameras turn a quadrant of the instrument panel into a TV screen, showing you who is behind and the Stinger automatically accelerates back to the pre-set top speed for you. (Full honesty here means I have to note that, as its actual top speed is over 170 mph, you have to be careful in setting the cruise control - loss of licence could ever so



easily follow otherwise!).



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Our Friday saw us heading northwards on the A9 again to reach Muir of Ord, where we had chosen to make our start and finish on this stupendous lap of Scotland's highlands. Heading out this way seemed logical to me and gave us the twisty, scenic section with much single track running in the early miles of the trip. We ran easily and smoothly West and then South West wards to Locharron and then before Applecross we really got into the true reason for doing this trip - the passing place equipped single track roads that wend their way along the coast line. From just outside Kishorn for over forty miles is an astonishing switch-back of a road. It tested every single facet of the Stinger's abilities: ride, handling, power; comfort; equipment were all utilised to the full. The views were astonishing and the roads rivalled those in the Italian Alps and pictures were captured that could well have been on The Futa





Pass during an Alpine Rally.

When we reached two lane road again, we felt completely confident and relaxed that the Stinger was the machine to have – a genuine “weapon of choice” for this Grand Tour trip. We also realised that we had another 50+ miles to go to reach our first “en-route” overnight in Poolewe. These were dispatched with ease and we were checked in and taking an on foot look around.

What we had forgotten is that it does not really get dark in Scotland at this time of year. As we enjoyed the tranquillity of the southern end of Loch Ewe, some locals recommended that we head up the peninsular for a visit to Rubha nan Sasan where many of the Second World War structures built to service the Russian Convoys still stand, along with a number of moving memorials and tributes.





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It was still broad daylight but well after 10pm when we tumbled gratefully into bed in our cosy air b and b.

The next two days saw us growing accustomed to the Stinger as the weather varied from broad sunshine through driving rain and high winds as we reached the northern most tips of the United Kingdom and took the obligatory pictures at first Dunnet Head and then John O'Groats. Our resting place on our second and last night was just next to Wick airport and was as comfortable as the night before. This evening, however there was no extended walk and sightseeing. Driving a motor car with over 300 horses striving to be given their head through the back wheels on rain swept and slippery roads had taken it out of me and I was gratefully fed and in bed for 8pm, fast asleep for 8:05!

Our final day saw us taking the extremely picturesque A9 southwards again, this section running right next to the Eastern coast and affording wonderful sea scape views, including by far the largest offshore wind farm I have ever seen. Our North Coast 500 trip ended just after lunch time and we had recorded 528 miles in our two and a half days. It is a bit mad to try to do the trip that quickly, but we were on the clock! The rest of the trip involved visiting a cousin in Dundee and staying in Glasgow with the daughter of a 1950s Le Mans winning Ecurie Ecosse driver.

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## VERDICT

We covered a total of 1,643 miles over our five day trip. We averaged 32.3 miles per gallon and paid between £1:78.8 and £2:05.9 per litre! That this Grand Tourer was the perfect car for the NC500 Grand Tour I would not question. The plusses massively outweigh the few small issues - I personally think it is slightly too long in the wheel base, which produced a couple of "moments", especially in the wet, but this is the price you have to pay in the



“trade off” to allow a decent amount of rear seat leg room. The luggage area swallowed all of our kit with room for plenty more and thus, thanks Stinger. I may be tempted to make a purchase when my trusty X-Type Jaguar finally cries “enough”. Thanks so much to Dan, Chloe and Niamh at KIA UK for making this happen.



Photograph copyright Guy Loveridge.

Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:





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## 2022 Kia Stinger GT S ISG Auto

Body style: Five door Sports Saloon

Fuel Type: Petrol

Price: £45,835

Insurance Group: 42

Engine: Twin turbocharged 3342cc 6 -cylinder

Transmission: Eight speed automatic, Rear wheel drive



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Max power & torque: 361 BHP, 510 Nm (376 lb.ft)

Fuel Consumption: 29 mpg combined. (Although we saw 32mpg across a long run)

Performance: 0 – 62 mph: 4.7 secs/ top speed: 167.8 mph

Dimensions: Height: 1,400 mm (4.59 ft); Length: 4,830 mm (14.85 ft); Width: 1,870 mm (6.14 ft).