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Value Over History

Genesis G80 Priced Lower, Equipped As Well As Luxury Competitors

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A few weeks ago I reviewed the Genesis G90, the flagship car for Hyundai's brand-new luxury marque.

This week I'm driving its little sister, the G80, a car that will introduce the Genesis brand to a bigger audience thanks to its more attainable starting price of \$41,400.

The differences between the two models are striking, but I'm more impressed with the similarities. While the smaller G80 has a sportier, livelier and more engaging feel over the road, it does nearly as good a job as the G90 at pampering you.

It's a car without any weak points to be found, a compliment I've often applied to Lexus but rarely to cars from Korean brands — although that's been changing in recent years.

In fact, if this car has a weakness, it's not in the product itself. It's in your head. It just doesn't carry the same panache as brands



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GENESIS G80

The G80 is the smaller of two cars Genesis is selling in its inaugural year as a standalone brand. It's designed to compete with mid-size luxury cars including the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, BMW 5-Series, Lexus GS and Cadillac CTS.

that have been building and marketing luxury cars for decades.

For now, "I drive a Genesis" doesn't carry the same weight or have the same ring as "I drive a

Mercedes-Benz." It says you prefer logic over emotion instead, which is the more appealing message for people who don't want to appear snobbish anyway.

If Genesis keeps building products like this, though, that could change. It's a car that, purely from the driving perspective, anyone should take pride in owning.

The G80 is refined, powerful, rewarding and tastefully beautiful. That makes it as competent a luxury car as any from the long tenured brands.

It also checks all the right boxes every contemporary, sporty luxury car should.

It comes standard with active safety features such as lane keep assist, blind spot detection and automatic emergency braking.

A sensor to automatically open your trunk, a heads-up display for the driver and a beautifully executed touchscreen interface exemplify what Genesis calls

"human-centered innovation."

And its 900-watt Lexicon audio system with 64 GB of multimedia storage should satisfy both audiophiles and technophiles.

Performance from the 311-horsepower, 3.8-liter V6 in my test car was impressive, and I'm sure the 5.0-liter V8 would be even more so. With a suspension tuned about halfway between supple and engaging, it's a good mix of feeling connected to the road without being overly harsh.

Still, I wouldn't go so far as to call it a great sports sedan in the vein of BMW. The 2018 G80 Sport may come closer to filling that role when it hits the market soon with a suite of performance-oriented tweaks.

The G80 also comes with the "Genesis Experience" concierge service like the pricier G90, letting you get valet service appointments at no extra charge. Not having to see the inside of a service center is

one of the best perks of buying this car, in my view, as a driver will pick it up and drop it off for you for three years or 36,000 miles.

As for pricing, the G80 undercuts most of its competitors. It starts about \$10 grand less than the BMW 5-Series and Mercedes-Benz E-Class, and a few thousand less than the Cadillac CTS, Audi A6 and Lexus GS.

For people who want to pay for the product itself, not cachet or history, it's a real bargain.

What was tested?

2017 Genesis G80 RWD 3.8 (\$41,400). Options: Premium package (\$4,750), ultimate package (\$4,200). Price as tested (including \$950 destination charge): \$51,300

Wheelbase: 118.5 in.

Length: 196.5 in.

Width: 74.4 in.

Height: 58.3 in.

Engine: 3.8-liter V6 (311 hp, 293 ft.-lbs. torque)

Transmission: Eight-speed automatic

Fuel economy: 18 city, 28 highway

RATINGS

Style: 8

Performance: 9

Price: 10

Handling: 9

Ride: 8

Comfort: 7

Quality: 8

Overall: 9

Why buy it?

It looks, drives and feels as refined as well-established luxury sedans but comes from a fresh brand. It's got a very appealing price for this class of car.



First-rate materials and a focus on "human-centered innovation" make the Genesis G80 feel as sumptuous as cars from the established luxury brands.