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TEST DRIVE

Bridge Improvements

2017 Kia Cadenza Limited

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Cadenza is slotted just north of Optima (the front-wheel-drive midsize and company best seller) and just south of K900 (the rear-drive company flagship) in Kia's lineup.

A member of the Large Car class, Cadenza lives in a segment where even the highest sellers (like Impala, Charger and Maxima) maintain relatively low profiles compared to other models in their lineup.

The footprint of the new, second generation Kia is very similar to the previous version. Cadenza 2.0 is

2017 Kia Cadenza Limited
Estimated at \$32,000 (base) to \$44,000 (Limited)

slightly wider and lower than the former, and while both cars are virtually the same length, the wheelbase of the 2017 edition has been stretched .4 inches.

A fresh front fascia frames the latest variation of Kia's tiger nose grille; now hexagonal, with a concave curve towards the engine. The Z-shaped lighting signature of the headlights is matched by new, "piano key" LED taillights. The lower (Premium) trim Cadenza is distinguished visually from higher (Technology, Limited) trim models by a unique grille insert.

For 2017, torsional rigidity has been boosted by 35 percent, and increased use of aluminum (rather than steel) contributes to the car's lighter chassis. The suspension (MacPherson strut front, multilink rear) has been reworked with an eye towards improving driving dynamics.

Even so, Cadenza drives with more float than fast twitch muscles. It's not to be confused with a sport



For 2017, the second generation Cadenza sports Kia's signature Z-shaped headlights and a fresh front fascia marked by an inward concave curve. The sole available engine is the 3.3L V6 (left) with eight-speed automatic transmission.

sedan — and it's not trying to be. Comfort is the key word here. The Kia is stable going down the road and possesses a cushy ride befitting a luxury-leaning big car.

Four selectable drive modes (Eco, Sport, Smart, Comfort) are accessed on the center console. You can feel a slight difference in shift points in Sport mode, and throttle response is damped in Eco, but there's little else detectably different between the settings. Brake and brake rotor size has increased for the model year, which promises improved stopping power.

A quiet interior is always a desirable trait in a luxury or near luxury class car. Kia's made some changes towards that end in the 2017 Cadenza. More acoustic absorbing laminate has been added in the windshield and front windows, along with a full floorpan undercover. A-pillar insulation levels have also been boosted. Collectively, the result is less

NVH (Noise Vibration Harshness) in the cabin. The shape is a skosh slipperier as well. New, front-wheel air curtains positioned just ahead of the tires (along with the undercover) chipped the car's coefficient of drag down from .029 to .028.

The sole powertrain links a 3.3L V-6 with an eight-speed automatic transmission. The engine was tweaked for 2017 with the intent of improving fuel economy. Last year's EPA estimates were 19/28. This year, it's 20/28, although procedural changes in the EPA assessment process for 2017 models make an apples

to apples comparison difficult. Cadenza's 290 horsepower and 253 lb.-ft. of torque are off slightly from last year's ratings (293/255), but the engine doesn't lack for power. There's sufficient resources on tap for all driving situations, with a

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