



**Does anyone know how fast this Bugatti really is?**

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**Name game**

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TEST DRIVE

## Sporty Forte

### 2017 Kia Forte5 SX

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
*Special to the Times Union*

**K**ia's compact Forte is offered in sedan (LX, S, EX) and hatchback (LX, EX, SX) models. In top SX trim, the five-door hatch — known as Forte5 — is offered with either a six-speed manual or (new this year) a seven-speed dual clutch transmission.



Here, Kia flips the script. The price difference between the two is \$2,200. But, the upcharge is for the stick shift rather than the automatic.

Sedan and hatchback Fortes share the same engine, with one exception. All sedans (as well as Forte5 LX and EX) run Kia's 164-horsepower 2.0-liter four-cylinder. Exclusive to the SX is a 1.6L four. This turbo-powered mill makes 201 horsepower and 195 lb.-ft. of torque. The power boost vs. the 2.0L makes the Forte5 SX lively. I'm sorry that I didn't have the op-

**2017 Kia Forte5 SX**

MSRP: \$23,800 · As tested: \$28,420

portunity to sample the six-speed stick, but the engine is well matched to the DCT's gearing, and feels quick. Snapping through the shifts on the steering wheel paddles in manumatic mode is fun, and fuel economy is respectable. EPA estimates of 25/30/27 compare with 23/29/25 with manual transmission, and 25/33/28 in 2.0L models.



**KIA'S COMPACT FORTE** is offered in sedan (LX, S, EX) and hatchback (LX, EX, SX) models. Most share the same 2.0L, 164-hp engine, while this Forte5 SX offers the lively 201-hp 1.6L turbocharged power plant with 195 lb.-ft. of torque.

Forte5 SX models have a sport-tuned suspension; handling is sharpened and ride quality stiffened — but only by degrees. The car has a definite fun-to-drive nature, and is happy to tackle twisty roads. However, Kia stops short of tuning the car as an out-and-out hot hatch, targeting instead a spot as the sportier alternative to the standard Forte. Ride quality remains comfortable, even with the SX's tall (18-inch) alloy rims.

Exterior changes for 2017 on Forte5 SX include a wider grille and redesigned headlights that curl around the front corners.

Front and rear fascias are new, accented in red and fitted with LED DRLs and taillights. Dual exhaust tip finishers round out the model-specific, exterior details. Kia sprinkles in a couple of premium paint options to what is otherwise a surprisingly small number of color

choices on Forte5 SX. Standard red, blue and gray hues are joined by a black or white pearl finishes. Either of the latter two add \$295 to the bottom line.

Interior color selections in the SX are basic black. Upholstery color choices are black leather or black sport leather. Those wishing to jazz up the cabin can opt for the Orange Color Pack, which is happily not as extreme as the name might suggest. Part of the Premium Technology Package (\$3,600), this option adds thin, orange color inserts along the edges of the leather trimmed buckets, along with contrast stitching on

seats and shifter. It brightens the otherwise well-finished but Goth leaning vibe on the inside. Other pieces of the Premium package cover everything from visibility (Xenon HID headlights, auto-dimming rear view mirror,

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**Kia stops short of tuning the car as an out-and-out hot hatch.**



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