

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2022 Kia Stinger

MSRP: \$36,590 (GT-Line, RWD) As Tested:\$55,955 (GT2 AWD V6)



The last time I drove the Kia Stinger was the first time; at the model's press introduction event, in 2017. The car traces its roots to the GT Concept, which first appeared on the show circuit in 2011. Stinger is a Grand Touring car, and its arrival was a departure for Kia, which had heretofore been known mainly for their small cars.

GT cars are premium vehicles, built to cover ground quickly and comfortably. Stinger arrived looking the part. The five door liftback has a long hood and short, fastback roofline. Both the windshield and backlight are steeply raked, and wheels are pulled to the corners. Five years removed from its arrival, the low slung shape has aged well.

The biggest news for 2022 is the introduction of a new, base engine. Stinger's entry GT-Line trim gets a turbocharged, 2.5L four cylinder making 300 horsepower and 311 lb.-ft. of torque. That compares to 255 h.p. and 260 lb.-ft. in the outgoing four, and it plays out to a 0-60 time of 5.3 seconds; vs. 5.9 in the previous Stinger. The added oomph carries no mileage penalty. EPA says you can expect to make 22/32/25 (RWD) and 21/29/24 (AWD) – same as last year. The step-up engine (standard on top trim GT2) also carries over. The 3.3L twin-turbo V-6 is rated at 368 h.p., and 376 lb.-ft. of torque. Kia says it will reach 60 mpg from a standstill in 4.7 seconds, and EPA says it will return mileage of 18/25/20 (RWD), and 17/24/20 (AWD). My recent test drive was in a GT2 AWD, and the six felt suitably strong in the Kia. The 8-speed automatic transmission offers paddle shifting, but the response time in manumatic mode isn't quick, so full automatic mode is the key to best performance. A new for '22, electronic variable exhaust system improves the V-6 soundtrack.

Rear wheel drive is standard across the trim range; AWD (torque-vectoring



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

on GT2) is optional with either engine. Brembo brakes (stout) are standard on GT2. The standard suspension is passive: MacPherson struts, 5-link rear. GT2 models employ a continuously damping electronically controlled suspension. Five Drive modes can be selected in GT2 trim Stingers – Comfort, Custom, Eco, Smart and Sport – accessible via center console knob. I drove the original Stinger on road and track, and the latest version here in upstate New York. The active suspension can be adjusted for more grip for track days, and more comfort elsewhere.

Stinger's front cabin is comfortable and well appointed. All Stingers get a 10- $\frac{1}{4}$ " infotainment touchscreen this year, with onboard navigation. The system is Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatible. The available, Harmon Kardon sound system (15 speakers, 720 watts, Quantum Logic surround) is standard on GT2 models, optional elsewhere. A surround view (bird's-eye) monitor is standard on GT2.

Stinger's rear cabin is surprising in two regards. Given the car's size, there's less rear seat legroom than you'd expect, but also more cargo capacity. Six footers have just enough room to squeeze in behind like-size passengers in front. And, the liftback design in back (with flat-folding rear seat backs) translates into more carrying space – 23.3 cubic feet – than you'll find in conventional sedan trunks, with a wider opening, for oversize cargo. Straight back visibility is limited, owing to the shallow backlight. Blind spot collision avoidance assist is standard on all trims; blind spot monitoring is standard on GT2.

Two trim lines are offered: GT-Line (MSRP: \$36,590) and GT2 (\$51,790). Owing to it's newly upgraded engine, an AWD-equipped GT-Line would be my value pick amongst Stingers.



A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons has been reviewing new cars for publications for over 30 years. He is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.