

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2022 Mercedes-Benz GLE SUV

MSRP: \$56,150 (GLE 350) \$58,650 (GLE 350 4MATIC) \$63,950 (GLE 450 4MATIC) \$74,150 (AMG GLE 53 4MATIC)



The GLE-SUV is Mercedes entry in the midsize luxury SUV segment. Prices range from \$56,150 - \$74,150. Two years removed from its last redesign, the 2022 editions are largely unchanged from 2021. Automatic high beam headlights are newly standard, as are a few upholstery options. All models are equipped with Mercedes' 4MATIC all-wheel drive system except the entry level GLE, where it's a \$2,500 option.

Since the lineup is distinguished mainly by motor, let's start there. The GLE 350 is equipped with 2.0L inline, turbo four. It's rated at 255 horsepower and 273 lb.-ft. of torque; EPA fuel economy estimates are 19/27/22 (RWD), 19/26/22 (AWD). Next up is the GLE 450. The 3.0L inline, turbo six with mild hybrid drive makes 362 h.p. and 369 lb.-ft. of torque. EPA numbers are: 20/26/22. Finally, the AMG GLE 53's version of the 3.0L inline turbo six with mild hybrid checks in with 429 h.p. and 384 lb.-ft. of torque, and EPA numbers of 18/22/19. The GLE 350's turbo four takes about 7 seconds to go from 0-60, which compares with 5.5 in the GLE 450, and 5.2 seconds for the AMG 53. All engines are linked to a 9-speed automatic transmission. While the bottomless gas pedal of the AMG is fun, to me, the mid-level engine choice offers the best balance of performance, price and fuel economy.

Sophisticated air suspension options and some trick looking



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer



wheels beckon from the option sheet. But, unless you're planning some serious off-roading, or just gotta have those 22" rims, the standard suspension and 19" wheels work well, cornering flat and riding easily.

The interior has a suitably upscale look and feel. My tester was a two row model. A third row option is available (\$2,100), and the numbers suggest it would be sufficiently sized for a couple of kids. The rear seatbacks fold mostly flat, and cargo space is usably large: 33.3 – 74.9 cubic feet. Loading liftover height in back is comfortably low. The GLE has the SUV typical, ¾ rear blind spots, and a mirror-based, blind spot assist system is standard on all trims.

Luxury vehicles have a lot of bells and whistles, and the Mercedes gives you a lot of ways to access system controls. This is appreciated, because some avenues are faster than others. For example, touchpads are placed on the center console and the steering wheel. Touchpads require finesse moves that are easy on a laptop or tablet, but can be tricky or distracting while driving. Voice commands work well here, as do the center touch screen, and buttons, where found.

Smartphone integration with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto is standard, as is a hookup for a 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot, and there are five USB ports sprinkled about the cabin for device input. Like many luxury brands, the available sound systems are better than many of us have in our homes. The Burmester surround sound setup (9 channel, 13 speakers, 590 watts) is one such example. Its impressive sound quality comes with an impressive sticker price (\$4,550). If indulging here requires a temporary loan from the kid's college fund, rest assured. Your secret is safe with me.

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.