

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2023 Kia Sorento PHEV

Base MSRP: \$49,890 (SX-P) As Tested: \$49,720 (SX-Prestige)



The Sorento lineup expanded from a duo to a trio last year. A new, plug-in hybrid model joined the gas and hybrid powered versions of Kia's three-row, midsize SUV class in 2022. The 2023 model year brings with it a trimming of trim levels. Sorento PHEV will be offered in one version – SX-P. With standard, All Wheel Drive, it has a base sticker price of \$49,890.

Sorento PHEV couples a gas engine (turbocharged, 1.6L four cylinder) with an electric motor (66.9kW), for a combined output of 261 horsepower, and 258 lb.-ft. of torque. The plug-in's battery adds about 220 lb. to the vehicle's 4,500 lb. curb weight. The battery's power can be used to supplement the gas engine, or run strictly electric. In EV mode, there's an estimated 32 miles of electric-only driving available, on a full charge. That's enough range to cover a round of errands or the daily commute for many people, without touching the contents of the gas tank. Recharging is faster with a 240v line, but any regular, 110-volt wall socket will get you to a full charge in about 12 hours. With 90 h.p. under foot in electric-only mode, performance isn't stirring, but with all hands on deck (gas and electric), the trip from 0-60 mph takes about 7½ - 8 seconds, which is respectably quick. The EPA estimates are 79 MPGe, 34 MPG (combined), with an estimated total range of 460 miles. The All Wheel Drive system has a center locking differential, and a "Snow" selection in the Drive modes, to relieve stress during wintry driving conditions. Sorento handles confidently and has a trip-worthy ride quality.



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

The "P" in SX-P stands for Premium, and this Sorento's cabin is indeed classy looking and nicely appointed. The driver's view takes in a 12.3" digital dash display, and the Surround View Monitor offers a bird's-eye view, which makes short work of backing and parking. A fine sounding, 12-speaker Bose Centerpoint sound system allows you to enjoyably drown out any family disagreements in back during road trips. The system is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and a 3 month subscription to Sirius/XM radio is included. There are eight USB charging ports aboard for everyone's devices, and a smartphone charging pad up front (if you call dibs). The switchgear is a mix of virtual and physical buttons. The bank of HVAC controls is in easy reach and straight forward in operation. Access to the infotainment system is largely touch sensitive (via 10.25" center screen), and as such, is a slower go to operate than conventional controls would be. Kia's standard, driver-assist technology includes Forward Collision Avoidance, Blind Spot Collision Avoidance, Rear Cross-Traffic Collision Avoidance Assist, Lane Keep/Lane Following Assist, and Parking Distance Warning.

Kia says that Sorento's leg room in rows one and two is segment leading, and indeed, six footers fit easily in either. Row three is more suitable for kids. Rear seatbacks fold to a flat load floor, and cargo capacity is 12.6 cu.-ft. behind the third row, 38.5/45 cu.-ft. behind the second row, and 75.5 cu.-ft. behind row one. Lifter height in back is suitably low for loading.

Sorento PHEV is priced higher than its gas or HEV powered counterparts, though buyers may offset some of the cost differential by availing themselves of the federal EV tax credit, as well as various, state incentives.

