

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2023 Buick Enclave

MSRP: \$46,195 (Essence FWD) As Tested: \$60,040 (Avenir AWD)



Enclave sits atop Buick's trio of Crossover SUV's. The midsize is available in three trim levels: Essence (MSRP: \$46,195), Premium (\$53,430) and Avenir (\$58,865). Those prices are for FWD models. You can switch to AWD for \$2,000 on any model. Redesigned last year, Enclave returns for 2023 with minor changes.

Sized for family traveling, Enclave is roomy, with three row seating. Rows one and two hold adults comfortably. The seat travel for the second row is adjustable, so average size adults can fit in the third row as well - if only for shorter stints. System switchgear is straight forward, with redundant controls built into the steering wheel. Avenir's interior has premium content, as you would expect, but Essence trim includes some features often not found as standard equipment on base models (e.g., wireless phone charger, heated seats and steering wheel, V6 engine...). All models get Buick's standard complement of driver safety gear, which includes lane keep assist, lane departure warning, automatic emergency braking, auto high beams, park assist, front and rear park assist, front pedestrian braking, alert systems for lane change, side blind zone, following distance, forward collision and rear crossing traffic.

An 8" color touch-screen provides access to the infotainment system on Essence, and the top two trims add onboard navigation to the infotainment system, which is compatible in all cases with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto (wireless connection). A 10-speaker Bose sound system is standard on Premium and Avenir, and optional on Essence. Surround Vision gives you a bird's-eye view of your vehicle, making



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer



light work of backing and parking. It's standard on Premium and Avenir, optional on Essence. Enclave is big on storage space. Cargo capacity measures 23.6 cu.-ft. behind the third row, 57.7 behind the second row and 97.4 aft of the first row. In addition, there's 3.1 cu.-ft. of hidden stowage space available beneath the load floor. Lifter height in back is comfortably low, and a hands-free, power lift gate is standard across the board.

All trim levels share the same engine/transmission combination: a 3.0L V-6, linked to a 9-speed automatic. The pairing is nicely suited to the platform. The six makes 310 horsepower and 266 lb.-ft. of torque, and the trip from 0-60 takes about 6½ seconds. That's quick enough to comfortably handle high demand situations, like short ramp highway merges. EPA says you can expect 17 mpg's city, 25 highway and 20 combined; I averaged 19 in my week behind the wheel. Enclave can be equipped to tow a maximum of 5,000 lb. It handles easily for its size. Ride quality is first rate, and Active Noise Cancellation helps make for a quiet cabin.

The range-topping Avenir is easy to like, but the price point of an Enclave so equipped puts the premium Buick up against some tough competition from luxury imports. I think that the other end of the model range is where the best value can be found. The base, Enclave Essence (\$46,195) is a roomy, smooth midsize. Options to consider include the Technology package (\$1,450) (Rear camera mirror with washer, adaptive cruise control, surround vision, rear pedestrian alert, enhanced emergency braking); something for the eyes - Touring (\$2,925) or Sport Touring (\$1,695) packages (upgraded wheels and tires) - and the ears - Sounds and Sites package (\$1,555) (Bose sound system and onboard navigation).

A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.