

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2024 Hyundai Kona

MSRP: \$24,100 (SE FWD) As Tested: \$34,695 (Limited AWD)



Introduced in the 2018 model year, the second generation Kona makes its debut in the 2024 Hyundai lineup. This is a subcompact crossover, though slightly less so in its new configuration. The new Kona is longer (5.7"), wider (1") and taller (2.6") than the previous edition. Four trim levels are offered: SE, SEL, N Line and Limited. Prices start at \$24,100 for an SE, and all trims can upgrade from Front Wheel Drive to All Wheel Drive for an additional \$1,500. An all-electric version is also available (base MSRP: \$32,675).

Two engines are offered. A 2.0L four cylinder is standard on SE and SEL. It makes 147 horsepower @ 6,200 rpm, and 132 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,500 rpm, and the EPA estimates fuel economy at 29/34/31 (FWD) and 27/29/28 (AWD). N Line and Limited models get a 1.6L four cylinder. The turbocharged four is rated at 190 horsepower @ 6,000 rpm, and 195 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,700-4,500 rpm. MPG's are estimated to be 26/32/28 (FWD), 24/29/26 (AWD), and I clocked in with 28 in a week of mixed city/country driving. Linked to an 8-speed automatic transmission, the turbo four is in the mid-seven second range for 0-60 times. That's agreeably quick, with no on-ramp anxiety. Coupled with its compact dimensions, Kona feels agile if not out and out sporty. It rides well for its size.

Sliding inside, the driver finds twin, 12.3" color displays, for gauges and infotainment side by side (on N and Limited models). Also on upper trim levels, the shifter is mounted on a small stalk behind the right side of the steering wheel. It's partially hidden from view, and the on/off starter button is more so. This results in a bit of hide and seek for the driver every time one starts, stops or shifts. But, the tradeoff is



Photos are courtesy of the manufacturer.



additional stowage space in the center console, where a shifter would typically be found (and still is – on S and SE trims). Happily, HVAC controls have their own pad of actual controls at center dash, so there's no need to drill into a touchscreen to adjust the cabin climate. Just above, the sound system controls are split between a line of buttons, and the touchscreen one step higher. It's a workable design, with volume/on/off and tuning handled by knobs, for easy access. Limited trim Konas are very well equipped, with features like a hand's-free lift gate, ventilated seats, moon roof, Bose audio and parking distance warning, reverse parking collision avoidance assist and a bird's-eye view monitor. The latter feature is rarely found in this segment.

Kona's overall dimensions make it easy to find a parking space. But, it is a sub compact, and accordingly, rear seat room and cargo capacity are limited. This version has 3.3" more rear legroom than the previous model, and with six footers in front, like size passengers can squeeze in behind them, provided that those in front don't get too laid back with their seatbacks. Cargo space ranges from 25.5 - 63.7 cu.-ft., depending on how the split, rear seatbacks are arrayed. When folded, the resulting load floor is nearly flat, and the liftover height in back is comfortably low. When outfitted with AWD, the new Kona is a smart looking choice for an all weather commuter car.

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