



## For fun on the run, Genesis delivers

by [James R. Healey](#), USA TODAY

Hyundai's Genesis coupe is a party animal.



*Hyundai's nicely priced Genesis coupe has quirky styling, but driving it is a blast.*

From the moment you plop into the bucket seats and hit the start button, the coupe lets you know it's ready, willing and able.

The seats cosset but don't cramp. The engine — V-6 or turbocharged four-cylinder — yelps to life. Either one seems happy charging hard, yet both are steady performers at lower speeds, too. The turbo-four makes all its torque at a mere 2,000 rpm, good for slog-along traffic — and unusual among turbocharged engines, which usually require some horsewhipping to build steam. Still, the V-6 is an easier partner in sluggish going.

The V-6 is good for an eager 306 horsepower. The turbocharged four-cylinder has 210 hp that can be made to feel like more if you work the gears to best advantage.

Hyundai says it's a low-pressure turbo. That means it sacrifices ultimate horsepower for smoothness. In the test car, in fact, there was none of the slam-bang personality of some turbos. Instead, the engine delivered sufficient, solid power at low speed as well as high. Worthwhile tradeoff.

The handling, ah. Spend a moment giving thanks that there still are rear-wheel-drive cars in this front-drive world. Turn the wheel and the rear-drive coupe turns. Just that much. Eagerly, precisely. Corners that you've found a bit intimidating become simply corners.

Perhaps you've seen those ads showing a Genesis coupe power-sliding, some guy driving it like he stole it. Well, it really is that kind of car. Happily for your driver's license, you don't need to boot the coupe like that to know and appreciate its underlying personality. The right-now way the car does about anything you ask is plenty convincing.

The main pieces of the optional Track package — stiffer suspension and tires — made the Track-equipped test car's ride just short of harsh. Be sure you can live with it day-in, day-out before you choose it. The suspension on the Grand Touring test car was a better blend of crisp handling and agreeable ride.

Big dollars for such fun? Hey, it's a Hyundai. Mid- to high-\$20,000 prices are a soft touch for all this.

And you're not just buying a snappy, responsive buggy. You get a useful array of standard features and nice touches, such as the iPod hookup that charges the device and lets you control it through the car's stereo.

Disappointments that come with the package:

- Tight fit, as in all sporty cars this size. A modest trunk with foolishly small opening that restricts what you can get in it. A tight back seat that'll do for elementary-school kids. Only two slots back there; Hyundai eschews the three-across fantasy that deludes some makers of tight-fitting coupes.
- Imprecise body-panel and trim gaps. Not many, but any is too many nowadays.
- Styling quirks that aren't necessarily pleasing. Examples: a snoutish grille and a visually jarring dip in the window-sill line. It's meant to accent a styling crease along the body, but looks like a mistake instead.
- Harsh sounds when you rev the four-cylinder — which is most of the time — to keep it in the fun zone.
- Hard-to-see LCD in the lower middle of the instrument panel. Had it been legible in the daytime, you could have found readouts of miles, gear position, fuel economy and other matters of reasonable importance.

Little of this seems to matter, though, when you wind the Genesis coupe into a tight, fast bend accompanied by the engine's song and smooth-as-silk automatic up- or downshifts — or your own snappy gear changes by manipulating the automatic gear lever or slapping the manual shifter.

The relief when you realize the yippee coupe also behaves well in public is palpable. It doesn't demand your racer game face to be a deeply satisfying way to go.

You can argue in favor of your Mustangs, Camaros, Altima coupes and the like. They can be rewarding to drive and, in the case of Mustang and Camaro, bring a cachet and legacy to the sporty car experience that this newcomer coupe can't match.

Even so, Genesis coupe doesn't have a sweet spot — it is a sweet spot.

## 2010 Hyundai Genesis coupe

•**What?** Front-engine, rear-drive, sports coupe, available with a V-6 or a turbocharged four-cylinder engine.

•**When?** On sale since February.

•**Where?** Built in South Korea.

•**Why?** Continue Hyundai's trek toward a hip, sporty image, which can lure more buyers and support higher prices (profits).

•**How?** Modify the chassis developed for the Genesis sedan.

•**How much?** The base four-cylinder, manual-transmission model starts at \$22,750, including shipping. High-end V-6 with automatic and Track package (high-performance suspension, brakes, tires, other accessories) starts at \$31,750. Test cars: V-6 Grand Touring, automatic, \$29,875; four-cylinder Track, manual, \$27,625.

•**How powerful?** 2-liter, turbocharged, four-cylinder rated 210 horsepower at 6,000 rpm, 233 pounds-feet of torque at 2,000 rpm. Optional 3.8-liter V-6 rated 306 hp at 6,300 rpm, 266 pounds-feet at 4,700 rpm. Six-speed manual transmission standard. Optional: Five-speed automatic (four-cylinder) or six-speed automatic (V-6).

•**How big?** Slightly smaller outside, bigger inside than Ford Mustang. Length is 182.3 inches, width 73.4 inches, height 54.5 inches on a 111-inch wheelbase. Weighs 3,294 to 3,397 pounds by model. Passenger space: 88.8 cubic feet. Trunk: 10 cubic feet.

Turning circle diameter: 37.4 feet.

•**How thirsty?** Four-cylinder rated 21 (manual) or 20 (automatic) miles per gallon in town, 30 mpg highway, 24 (manual) or 23 (automatic) combined. V-6: 17 mpg city, 26 (manual) or 27 (automatic) highway, 20 (manual) or 21 (automatic) combined.

Trip computers in test cars showed: V-6, 18.2 mpg in city/suburban mix; four-cylinder, 17.2 mpg in enthusiastic suburban driving.

Uses regular, holds 17.2 gallons.

•**Overall:** A sweetheart.