

# Hyundai Genesis Outscores Competitors, Becomes Consumer Reports' top-rated "Upscale Sedan"

## Genesis narrowly outpoints Lexus ES 350 to take top spot

YONKERS, NY — The Hyundai Genesis outscored four competitors to become Consumer Reports top-rated vehicle in the competitive "Upscale Sedan" category. The Genesis, which achieved an "Excellent" overall road test score, now outranks 12 vehicles from Lexus, Acura, Lincoln and others including the Lexus ES 350.

The Genesis' performance in CR's battery of tests solidifies the automaker's reputation as a builder of high-quality vehicles in several diverse automotive segments. Previously, Consumer Reports named two Hyundais, the Elantra and Santa Fe, as "Top Pick" vehicles in the small sedan and midsize SUV categories respectively.

"The Hyundai Genesis rivals high-end luxury sedans but costs considerably less," said David Champion, senior director of Consumer Reports' Auto Test Center in East Haddam, Connecticut. "Its luxurious and spacious interior and quietness far transcend its relatively modest price."

The Genesis was tested against four other new or redesigned upscale sedans—the Acura TL, Nissan Maxima, Pontiac G8 and Lincoln MKS—for the February issue of Consumer Reports. Prices ranged from \$33,660 for the Pontiac to \$40,880 for the Lincoln.

Two other vehicles in the test group also earned Excellent overall road test scores, the TL and Maxima. The G8 and MKS achieved Very Good overall scores.

The eight other vehicles in the Upscale Sedans category including the ES 350, Toyota Avalon, Buick Lucerne and Saab 9-5, were all tested previously.

In addition to the five upscale sedans tested, CR also purchased and tested the Jaguar XF luxury sedan. Though it obtained a Very Good overall score, it still ranked near the bottom of the group of 12 luxury sedans that Consumer Reports has rated.

[Full tests and ratings of all six sedans](#) appear in the February issue of Consumer Reports, which goes on sale January 6. The reports are also available to subscribers of [www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org). (Road test vehicles of recently tested vehicles are also available free at CR's web site.)

The TL is the only vehicle in this month's test group that is Recommended by Consumer Reports. CR only Recommends vehicles that have performed well in its tests, have at least average predicted reliability based on CR's annual Car Reliability Survey of its more than seven million print and web subscribers, and performed at least adequately if crash-tested or included in a government rollover test.

CR doesn't have reliability data yet on the Genesis, MKS, Maxima, G8 and XF.

Spacious and well appointed, the rear-wheel-drive Genesis offers good value and is a compelling alternative to luxury vehicles costing thousands more. This car's forte is swaddling passengers in silence. The engine sounds polished and road noise is strikingly absent. The interior rivals those of the very best luxury cars, with its optional stitched-leather dashboard facing and consistently high-quality materials. The only real drawback is its ride, which can be unsettled at times and doesn't live up to the standards set by other luxury

cars. The Genesis 3.8 (\$36,000 Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price as tested) is powered by a 290-hp, 3.8-liter V6 that feels quick and smooth and delivers a decent 21 mpg in CR's own fuel-economy tests. The six-speed automatic transmission provides smooth, quick shifts. Braking is excellent.

The redesigned Acura TL is a nice car, with responsive handling, a slick powertrain and commendable fuel economy. But when compared with the previous TL, which was CR's Top Pick in this segment for years, the latest generation is not as impressive. Vague steering saps the fun out of its handling, the trunk opening is small, and other competitors have roomier rear seats. The base-model TL (\$35,715 MSRP as tested) is powered by a 280-hp, 3.5-liter V6 that delivers excellent acceleration and a respectable 23 mpg overall on premium fuel. The five-speed automatic transmission is both quick and smooth. Brakes are excellent overall.

The Maxima is a quick car, but it doesn't add much over the less costly Nissan Altima overall. While it's pleasant, it falls short in some ways. Handling is responsive, but at low speeds the steering is overly light. The car is quiet and the ride is decent. But the new coupelike silhouette compromises visibility, trunk room, and rear-seat comfort. The Maxima 3.5 SV (\$33,700 MSRP as tested) is powered by a 290-hp, 3.5-liter V6 that gives the car quicker acceleration than some V8s. Expect 22 mpg overall on premium fuel. The continuously variable transmission works very well overall; it's also the only one available. The Maxima's brakes are very good overall.

As a bargain sports sedan that can challenge the performance of models from BMW and Mercedes, Pontiac's G8 is a success. It handles and rides as well as the best cars in its class. The G8 GT's acceleration is very impressive, with a zero-to-sixty time of 5.7 seconds. But the downside of that is poor fuel economy—at just 17 mpg overall on regular fuel. The G8 GT (\$33,660 MSRP as tested) is powered by a huge 361-hp, 6.0-liter V8 engine that makes it blisteringly quick. The smooth six-speed automatic transmission with a tall sixth gear makes highway cruising relaxed. The brakes are very good overall. (A 256-hp, 3.6-liter V6 with a five-speed automatic is also available in the base G8, but CR didn't test it because a more powerful V6 with a six-speed automatic will arrive in 2010.)

In the tradition of large domestic luxury cars, Lincoln's MKS is built for pampering, not for spirited driving. Handling lacks agility, and the engine is too noisy for a car in this class. The interior amenities and finishes are pleasant, but the MKS feels too much like the Ford Taurus, on which it is based, to justify its luxury price tag. The MKS (\$40,880 MSRP as tested) is equipped with a 273-hp, 3.7-liter V6 engine that performs well, but is not as quick or smooth as its competition in this class. CR measured its fuel economy at just 20 mpg overall on regular, which is not impressive. The six-speed automatic transmission is not as slick as most in this class. Brakes are very good overall.

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