

# Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2025 Hyundai Kona

**MSRP: \$24,450 (SE FWD) As Tested: \$35,005 (Limited AWD)**



Kona is a subcompact crossover, slotted in between the entry level Venue and the compact class Tucson in the Hyundai lineup. One year removed from the debut of its second generation, Kona returns with minimal changes. The trim level choices expand to six for 2025. A new, N Line S tucks in between SEL Convenience and N Line. Kona 2.0 is longer (5.7"), wider (1") and taller (2.6") than the previous version. All trims can upgrade from Front Wheel Drive to All Wheel Drive for an additional \$1,500. An all-electric version of Kona is also available (base MSRP: \$32,875).

Depending on trim level chosen, buyers of gas powered models get one of two, four cylinder engines. Standard on SE, SEL and SEL Convenience is a 2.0L four cylinder. It's rated at 147 horsepower @ 6,200 rpm, and 132 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,500 rpm. The EPA estimated fuel economy is 29/34/31 (FWD) and 27/29/28 (AWD). N Line S, N Line and Limited models get a turbocharged, 1.6L four cylinder motor. The turbo four checks in with 190 horsepower @ 6,000 rpm, and 195 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,700-4,500 rpm. MPG's are estimated at 26/32/28 (FWD), 24/29/26 (AWD). In a week behind the wheel, I averaged 20 mpg's with the turbo four. That's well short of the estimates, but said week was in a bone chilling stretch of January, which might have something to do with it. The turbo four is matched with an 8-speed automatic transmission. The two paired nicely, returning 0-60 times in the mid to high 7-second range. Kona feels lively underway; lane merges and ramp entries present no problems. Ride comfort is good for this class. Handling is confident though not sporty.



*Photos are courtesy of the manufacturer.*



Sliding inside the cabin, a 12.3" touchscreen greets the driver. It's equipped with Navigation on SEL Convenience, N Line and Limited, and matched with a 12.3" instrument panel. The amount of hard plastics/absence of soft touch spots inside is consistent with it's class. Front cabin storage is found in thin door pockets, glove box, an open center console with a tray below, and a small center storage bin above. HVAC controls are located at center dash. The layout of actual buttons and dials for adjustments is refreshingly straight forward and non-distracting. Higher trim levels in Kona are notably well equipped. Virtually every manufacturer offers quality sound system options. But, features like a birds-eye view camera, ventilated seats, heated steering wheel and hands-free liftgate (all standard on my Limited tester and some optional in other trims) are rarely available in the subcompact segment.

Kona's compact dimensions make it easy to squeeze into parking spots. Gen 2.0 Konas have 3.3" more rear legroom than previously. That's quite an increase, but this is still a subcompact vehicle. Six footers can just squeeze into the back seats with like-size folks up front, as long as those in row one 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 deployed. When folded, the resulting load floor is nearly flat, and the liftover height in back is comfortably low. The hand's-free liftgate is appreciated when approaching the car with your arms full. A Limited trim Kona with AWD is a very nicely equipped subcompact crossover choice.

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