



Hyundai Sonata

If I were a rich man

How do I become rich? Research shows that earning lots of money is only half the work done. Spending money wisely is just as important. This can mean that even a car-loving millionaire to be will search the market for the cheapest car. However, there is another solution: a car that gives the feeling of driving a top class touring car for only a fraction of the cost. At least, that is what Hyundai promises with the new Sonata V6.

The fact that part of Hyundai's promise is indeed correct was demonstrated before with a test on the 4-cylinder version of the Sonata. That test drive already proved the Sonata to be spacious and luxurious, and despite that only costs a fraction of a comparable European car. Moreover, this Korean doesn't only look modern and European, it drives like that as well. Thanks to the sizeable engine of the 4-cylinder the previously tested Sonata performed very well too. Then why a 6-cylinder?



V6

The difference between the 4 and the 6-cylinder engine quickly becomes obvious. The 4-cylinder is fast, but the 6-cylinder is even faster. This is nice, but on the other hand hardly useful in day-to-day traffic. The real charm of the V6 therefore is not in its performance, but in the way in which it is achieved. Once up to speed, the rev counter lazily points somewhere in the lower part of the dial and the engine is almost impossible to hear. Thanks to the V6 the Sonata performs with great calm and ease, which takes the whole car to a higher level.

A slight push on the accelerator is enough to cause a good acceleration. Whenever performance is required, the V6 is lively and on the ball. The sound then is not as deep as that of the average V6, but rather raw. It is therefore still the little finesses in which Hyundai exposes her heritage.

Nothing like that though for a disadvantage which became apparent in the first Sonata test: the road holding qualities in extreme situations. Because the car has become heavier, it has become more calm. In borderline cases the car has become better controllable and more predictable. Steering is not too

light so that there is enough feeling with the car. The thought then springs to mind that it would have been a brilliantly manoeuvrable car if Hyundai had equipped the Sonata V6 with rear-wheel drive.

Equipment

The standard "H-matic" 5-gears automatic gearbox enhances that feeling. This automatic gearbox has a good rapport with the driver, but also lends itself to sequential gear changing. Contrary to most other modern automatic gearboxes, this specimen effectively brakes on the engine and an intrusive computer does not correct that effect.



Still, there are a few points where Hyundai has obviously cut costs (also see the previous test). A climate-control system is standard, but is not separate for left and right. The leather seats with seat heating are standard on the V6, although only the driver's seat is electrically adjustable. These however are all appreciative choices, because it saves a lot of money and does not compromise the rich feel of the car.



Conclusion

Hyundai divulges that the Sonata V6 is the result of many years of development and research on the European market. The outcome is the result of it, for the Korean manufacturer seems to understand the European customer better than ever. Road holding is hardly different from European competitors, the space (also in the back!) is fine and the designers did get the message.

Still, the price is the strongest point for Hyundai. For 33,000 euro many other manufacturers only offer a 4-cylinder or at least a significantly less powerful 6-cylinder. Let alone that, the engine as standard is joined to an automatic gearbox. More than that, the Sonata V6 is also more luxuriously equipped; a wealthy feeling. ■



Specifications

Hyundai Sonata 3.3i V6

Size and weight

Length	480 cm
Width	183 cm
Height	148 cm
Wheelbase	273 cm
Kerb weight	1546 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1000 kg
Fuel capacity	70 l
Luggage space	523 l

Engine and performance

Capacity	3342 cc
Cylinders / valves	6/4
Max power	235 bhp @ 6000 rpm
Max torque	304 Nm @ 3500 rpm
Drive	voorwielen
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.8 secs
Top speed	230 km/h
Average mileage	10.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	12.8 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	7.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	241 gr / km



Price

Price	£ 19,995
Price base model	£ 16,995