# Road Beat: ’18 Genesis G80 Sport gets even better

The 2018 Genesis G80 Sport is competing with Mercedes and BMW. Photos/Larry Weitzman

**By Larry Weitzman**

This is my third go around with the new Genesis G80, now in an updated Sport version. Offered in RWD and AWD, it is designed to be a significant player in today’s era of super sedans, like Mercedes AMG or BMW M cars.

How could a Korean compete in these lofty automotive circles? In the same way Genesis competes with other luxury sedans, by offering more for less. In fact, this car is so good, I expect BMW will file a lawsuit attempting to outlaw the sale of this new Genesis.

Genesis begins by sculpturing a sedan with world class looks, starting with an aggressive, strong front end, broad, long relatively flat hood, a single upper character line connecting the entire body all ending in a flowing rear end with a slight kamm tail. Genesis is a great looking ride.

With its long 119-inch wheelbase, Genesis is classified as a large car stretching out 197 inches while maintaining a svelte wide of 74 inches. Interior volume is 108 cubic feet with a 15-cubic-foot trunk. At 4,519 pounds, Genesis is no lightweight. AWD will add another 155 pounds.

**Specs and Techs**
**Price** $56,225 to $58,725
**Engines**
3.3L turbocharged, direct injected DOHC 24 valve V-6
365 hp @ 6,000rpm
376 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,300 to 4,500 rpm
**Transmission**
Eight speed automatic
**Configuration**
Longitudinal front engine/Rear Wheel Drive/All Wheel Drive
Dimensions
Wheelbase 118.5 inches
Length 196.5 inches

Width 74.4 inches
Height 58.3 inches
Track (f/r) 64.1/65.3 inches
Ground clearance 5.3 inches
Weight (RWD/AWD) 4,519/4,674 pounds
Trunk capacity 15.3 cubic fee
Passenger volume 107.7 cubic feet
Fuel Capacity 20.3 gallons
Steering lock to lock 2.55 turns
Turning circle 36.2 feet
Wheels 18X8/19X8.5f; 19X9r inches
Tires 245/45X18/245/40X19f; 275/35X19r
Coefficient of drag 0.27

**Performance**

0-60 mph 4.94 seconds
50-70 mph level 2.40 seconds, uphill 2.99 seconds
Top speed will be mined blowing
Fuel economy EPA rated at 17/25/20 mpg combined. Expect 22-23 mpg in suburban/rural driving. 31-32 mpg on a level highway at 70 mph.

Powering up the G80 Sport is the same 3.3L direct injected, DOHC, 24 valve turbo V-6 engine used in the Genesis G90. Belting out a 365 hp at 6,000 rpm and a healthy dose of twist (376 pounds at 1,300-4,500 rpm), Sport becomes a veritable animal sending prodigious power to the rear wheels (AWD is an

option) via a super slick eight-speed auto cog swapper. The power is so stupendous it hits like a hammer, no make that a sledgehammer.

And the numbers don’t tell the real story. Zero to 60 mph in less than 5 seconds at 4.94 seconds. That’s supersedan numbers. Passing is also mind boggling with a 50-70 mph level pass requiring 2.40 seconds and the same run up a steep grade only slowing the Chrondex to 2.99 seconds. Interestingly, these times are virtually identical to the G80 V-8 (4.92/2.44/2.99) which has 420 peak hp at the same 6,000 rpm and 383 pounds of twist at 5,000 rpm. The reason the lesser hp Sport performs as well as the V-8 is because of the prodigious torque curve of the V-6 turbo.

And the numbers don’t tell the real story. First there is a hint of turbo lag or maybe fly by wire lag, a tenth or two. But during real passing maneuvers on Highway 50 in the four lane passing zones I would nail the go pedal and the car behind me also passing would too. But I pulled away from them so fast the vacuum created probably sucked all the coolant out of their radiator or else he thought maybe he hit the brake instead of the gas pedal as his image literally disappeared in my rear view mirror. I have never had that happen before. Astounding. This car inspires confidence.

Fuel economy wasn’t that bad, in fact maybe quite good considering. While the EPA rates the G80 Sport at 17/25/20 mpg city/highway/combined, you can expect better. My two-way highway fuel economy test at 70 mph averaged 31.9 mpg with the engine spinning an idle like 1,700 rpm. Overall the G80 averaged 22.6 mpg in 425 miles of mostly aggressive driving. My Carson City round trip averaged 25.1 mpg with massive traffic on the return home. In rural country driving 23 mpg should be the norm. The G80 Sport is guilt free.

In the handling department, the state of the art suspenders combined with an almost hydraulic feeling electric power rack

that is quick at 2.55 turns lock to lock and staggered alloys measuring 19 x 8.5 and 19 x 9 inches shod with low profile 245/40 and 275/35 all season rubber. The result is incredible cornering power, accuracy and feel. It certainly belies its 4,500-pound curb weight like it’s a thousand pounds lighter. Cornering speeds were about 10 mph higher than other test vehicles while still having the feeling of being quite comfortable. Superb turn-in and off and on center feel are also standard equipment. Amazing.

And then there is the ride quotient. Awesome. This is one of the, make that it is the smoothest and quietest ride yet, except for when dipping into full tilt boogie when the engine makes some incredible sounds. Wonderful.

Brakes maybe be a little too sensitive, but the stopping power is amazing. All four rotors are ventilated and the fronts resemble 30-pound turkey platters at over 14 inches in diameter with four pot calipers. Massive. Every other safety acronym is standard in the G80 Sport and the LED headlights with dynamic bending could be used for the U.S. Open tennis tournament if there were a power failure.

Inside is a magnificent interior of leather, soft touch materials and carbon fiber. Seats are spectacular with power in every axis plus heating and cooling. Ditto for the steering wheel. Rear seating is equally comfortable with copious leg and shoulder room. Instrumentation is complete down to the tire pressure monitor which on the last day of my test became an important tool. Gauges are clear and Swiss watch precise including the heads up which became important because glancing at the speedo at supra legal speeds could be dangerous. Just take a look at the interior and you will understand right down to the contrasting perforations in the leather seating surfaces.

Pricing starts and ends at $55,250 plus $975 for the luxury suite on the boat from Ulsan, Korea. AWD will add about 155

pounds and $2,500. While there is no question G80 Sport is the best supersedan buy on the market, you will buy it for the car itself and forget about the propeller or three pointed star badging. Koreans again out Japanese the Japanese and now the Germans.

*Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.*