2022 Kia Sorento PHEV SX-Prestige AWD review by Ben Lewis

Like we noted before, the Kia Sorento has one big problem – it lives in the shadow of it’s big brother the Telluride. Ok, the Telly does deserve the acclaim it’s a great 3-row SUV that looks, goes and performs just how you’d want a big SUV to.

But the Sorento has a lot going for it, too. In fact, while it’s smaller, it still serves up 3 rows of seats, and we’d argue it’s a more advanced vehicle, first being offered in a Hybrid model, and now with a new for ’22 PHEV plug-in hybrid variant. And with the cost of gas, it may be one of the smartest 3-row SUV’s you can buy right now. Let’s take a look!

**Familiar, Elegant Style**

The Sorento recently got a restyle, and the ’22 doesn’t mess with success. Designed by Kia’s California design studio, it’s a clean crisp look. Less truck than the Telluride, but still very capable looking.

Up front, you’ll quickly notice the new Kia logo that we think is especially modern and handsome. Familiar features include Kia’s “Tiger Nose” full-width grille, featuring a sporty mesh design. We especially like the “eyeline” Daytime Running Lamps, and LED headlights and position lights that give an aggressive look.

The profile reminds you this is a 3-row SUV and looks substantial, while a deep character cut in the doors give a more athletic looks. Plug-in Hybrid models like our tester get a sharp looking 19-inch alloy wheels that add to the capable vibe.

The rear feels familiar with a definite Telluride like vibe, with tall LED taillights, a concave-rear hatch, and SORENTO spelled out in big letters. A chrome lower finish and special Plug-in Hybrid badging finish off the look. For a modern, futuristic model, we thought the Snow White Pearl (ok, who thinks up these names?) was the perfect choice.

**Apple Store Interior**

Step in, and it reminds you of the clean all-white vibe you’ll find in an Apple Store.

The first thing that captures the eye is the contrasting two-tone interior, with dark upper panes, and lower parts of the dash, the door trim, and even the steering wheel in white. It looks elegant and modern.

The all-digital 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster adds to that effect, with clear readouts, and Kia’s neat trick when you turn on the turn signal, one of the gauge faces becomes a camera image of the side your signalling for. Luxurious and helpful.

The center console features a oversized 10.25-inch info-tainment display, with thankfully volume and tuning knobs. (Thank you Kia!) The Bose Premium Audio system fills the big cabin with high quality sound. Below that are simple to use climate controls and a large number of vents to help keep you cool, and a nice storage cubby with wireless charging for your phone.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are standard, and Kia’s UVO interface is still one of the best with easy access and simple to understand layout. Our tester also had Kia Connect Ultimate, a free package that includes Remote start with climate control, Find my car with surround view monitor, vehicle voice control, remote lock/unlock and more.

Accessing gears is done by a circular knob that is definitely easier to use than the Acura and Honda pushbutton versions – but we still like a shift lever!

Everyone will find something to like with perforated leather seat trim, heated and cooled front seats and heated 2nd row captain’s chairs. The 3rd row remains for kids only, and we think there’s some great packaging going on – even with plug-ins large battery pack, you’ve got plenty of storage – especially with the 3rd row folded down. The power-adjustable tailgate makes loading gear that much easier.

We also liked the navy color for the seats – previous Sorento models we tested had an off-white color that didn’t seem like a great choice on an active family vehicle.

**The Electric Glide**

Driving the Sorento reinforces the luxurious yet efficient nature of the plug-in hybrid.

Powering the PHRV is a 66.9 kW electric motor that’s combined with a 1.6-liter turbocharged 4-cylinder to combine a strong 261 horsepower. With a full charge, you can run EV only for 32 miles – if that’s your average commute, you can save a lot of gas. It’s silent and smooth, if not outright fast, but you grin because you’re using any expensive petrol. You do get a slightly goofy sounding noise when backing up – hey pedestrians won’t hear you otherwise!

Once you’ve gone out of that EV-only range, the Sorento acts much like the Sorento Hybrid we tested – an excellent system that smoothly switches in and out of EV mode as needed, giving good performance and really extending the range. Kia says that it a 79 MPGe rating.

In Sport mode that electric motor and turbo 4 give plenty of oomph – especially when you consider this is a big, heavy 3-row SUV with standard All-Wheel Drive. It is a very capable AWD system, with a center locking differential and Drive Mode Select with Snow Mode.

Brake feel is notably good for a hybrid as well.

The ride is equally smooth and quiet, and while this is a big vehicle handling is responsive and easy. Speaking of the size, we found the Sorento’s Surround View monitor with its 360-degree bird’s eye view made it easy to slip in and out of parking spots.

Kia is working hard to make you feel confident in their vehicles, and our tester features Kia DriveWise driver assist tech, including Forward Collision Avoidance that includes Cyclist and Junction Turning, Blind Spot Collision Avoidance, Rear Cross Traffic avoidance, Smart Cruise with stop & go, Lane Keep Assist, Safe Exit Assist and more. All top-shelf stuff.

**How Much for the Top Shelf Stuff?**

Well, you pay more for plug-in hybrids, but you also get rebate money back from the government