

The Hyundai Elantra sedan was redesigned in 2021 to good effect, with smart styling and a good enough interior for the price point. This year, Hyundai has added a performance-oriented N model, boasting a turbocharged engine and suspension upgrades.

At a Glance

- Quick little car with good handling characteristics
- Loud and stiff to drive, as befits a sports car
- Lackluster interior materials and design
- Big red button on the steering wheel makes exhaust farts

Unlike the standard Elantra model or the fuel-sipping Elantra Hybrid model, the Elantra N tosses out the idea of a fuel-efficient sedan and brings on the speed. Most of the additions to the N model are sport-centric, including a turbocharged engine, manual transmission option, high-performance tires, and similar upgrades.
Starting with the engine, which is a 2.0-liter four-cylinder that’s turbocharged to produce 276 horsepower (205.8 kW) and 289 lb-ft (392 Nm) of torque. For reference, the turbocharged 1.6-liter engine option in the Elantra N Line model produces 201 hp (150 kW). The Elantra N has an eight-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission or an option for a six-speed manual transmission. We drove the latter and would recommend it.

Another big improvement for the Elantra N over its siblings is in the larger brakes and its more sophisticated rear differential and suspension designs. The electronically-controlled limited-slip rear differential is designed to maximize traction. But given that the Elantra is front-wheel drive, that differential is mainly for lateral control rather than acceleration grip. The rear suspension design, which comes from the N Line package, includes adaptive dampers, which are far more relevant to the car's tires-on-deck capability.

The 2022 Hyunda Elantra N also comes with 19-inch alloy wheels and high-performance summer tires. These are key to its on-road performance metrics, we feel. Standard road or winter tires would greatly dampen the Elantra N's grippiness, given its front-wheel drive architecture and front-biased weight balance.

Other changes to the Elantra N are less sports-oriented and more visual. The N-specific steering wheel, with its N-specific wrap and flat bottom is one such change. Front and rear fascia changes that add more dynamics to the Elantra N's look and its molded rear spoiler are also nice visual touches. The sport seats are well-done with good bolstering that doesn't pinch, while gripping the driver and front passenger nicely.

The 2022 Elantra N has a starting price of about US$34,000, making it one of the cheaper compact performance sedans on the market. It also comes with Hyundai's long warranty (five-year basic, 10-year powertrain) plus three years of maintenance – all leading the class. So, if you can put up with a sub-par interior compared to rivals and a hard ride quality, this might be the sports car for you. Fart button included.

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