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Hyundai's Feedback Loop Yields a Better Coupe

RATING 7

Hyundai 2013 Genesis Coupe
Automotive · \$24,250 base · Hyundai
Reviewed by Eric Tegler · March 23, 2012



Hyundai has aggressively collected customer feedback about its cars over the last decade. By listening to what Hyundai drivers want and then delivering on those desires, the company is stronger, the public perception of the brand has improved remarkably, and sales are through the roof. The Korean automaker now has over 5 percent of the U.S. market and industry-beating sales increases through early 2012.

It just shows the power of the Feedback Loop principle — action, information, reaction. By embracing the cycle of constant feedback and improvement, Hyundai has been able to produce successively better generations of cars over the years.

The two-door coupe, which shares its architecture (and relatively long wheelbase) with the four-door Genesis sedan, arrives in 2012 as a 2013 model.

Evidence: the [2013 Genesis Coupe](#), which has stepped forward in refinement since it debuted four years ago. The two-door coupe, which shares its architecture (and relatively long wheelbase) with the four-door Genesis sedan, arrives in 2012 as a 2013 model. It builds on the previous version with revised front- and rear-end styling, more power, a revamped interior, as well as drivetrain and suspension tweaks. There are no less than [six trim levels](#) available, from the base, manual transmission turbo four-cylinder 2.0T starting at \$24,250 all the way up to the V6 3.8 Track with a new eight-speed automatic transmission, at \$34,250.

Hyundai is serious about marketing the Genesis Coupe as a car with "sporting cred," but it's important to remember that it is essentially a GT or "personal luxury coupe," as cars of this type are often called. That implies four-seater functionality, and the Genesis has enough rear

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How We Rate

- 1 A complete failure in every way
- 2 Barely functional; don't buy it
- 3 Serious flaws; proceed with caution
- 4 Downsides outweigh upsides
- 5 Recommended with reservations
- 6 A solid product with some issues
- 7 Very good, but not quite great
- 8 Excellent, with room to kvetch
- 9 Nearly flawless; buy it now
- 10 Metaphysical product perfection

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legroom for extra passengers, but insufficient headroom for anyone over 5' 7". As such, it's really a longish two-seater with extra storage space.

Thus, it aligns with some competitors better than others. The most obvious is the similarly-profiled [Infiniti G37](#), over which the Hyundai enjoys a \$10,000 price advantage. Other Hyundai targets include the [Ford Mustang](#), [Chevrolet Camaro](#), and [Scion FR-S](#), which all play in the same rear-wheel drive coupe price range, though they all differ in personality. Volkswagen's [Golf GTI](#) and [Golf R](#), [Nissan's 370Z](#), BMW's [3 Series coupe](#) and Honda's [Accord V6 Coupe](#) arguably also compete with the Genesis for a similar audience. Basically, there's competition aplenty in an auto segment where style counts.

To that end, Hyundai refreshed the Coupe's exterior, aiming, as the company says, for a "bolder and more aggressive statement."

A new, larger front grill and headlight design replaces the previous assembly. The look is more like that of [Hyundai's Veloster](#) — not bad, but let down by a solid black bumper section running through the grille opening under the Hyundai badge. The piece is visually disruptive, particularly against lighter colors. Rear changes are largely to the tail lamps which are more stretched LED units. Profile details remain the same.

The interior, however, is far better than the one it replaces. Instruments are more legible, and an attractive center stack and shifter quadrant are set off by a trio of analog gauges showing fuel mileage, torque and oil temperature. Seat comfort is also much improved, with added supportive bolstering to hold you in place. A revised shifter is attractive, but the shape is a bit awkward. On the early-production car I tested, the shifter loosened up and swiveled — dangerous if you're hot-lapping the Genesis on the track or whipping it on the street. A seven inch touchscreen with navigation (and, optionally, [Hyundai's Blue Link telematics](#)) betters the previous display.



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torque with little lag.

Teaming Hyundai's 3.8 liter [Lambda](#) direct-injected V-6 — now producing 348 horsepower and 344 pound-feet of torque — with its new eight-speed Shiftronic automatic transmission in the 3.8 Grand Touring arguably produces the most satisfying V6 Genesis coupe. The eight-speed accesses the naturally-aspirated 3.8's power well, though it could shift quicker in manual paddle-shift mode. Likewise, the auto trans will not hold a gear to redline. It upshifts near the rev limit. Still, the autobox suits the Coupe's ride/handling balance and long wheelbase character, playing to its miles-devouring GT personality.

Though decidedly not a hardcore sports car, the Hyundai will appeal to the latter-day *Fast & Furious* set.

I spent the most time with the performance-oriented 3.8 R Spec. Previous criticisms of this track-focused Genesis Coupe ranged from awkward suspension tuning and disconnected steering to an unforgiving clutch/shifter combination. The new 3.8 R Spec "part-deux" addresses these shortcomings and makes significant progress toward correcting them. Steering is now linear and less twitchy. The Coupe's turn-in and path accuracy improve as a result, though more load-up would be appreciated, as would more feel.

Re-calibrating the Macpherson-strut front and 5-link rear suspension yielded more compliance and better body control, though the Coupe was still upset when I hit bumps in mid-corner with the power on. However,

the car is less nervous and better stuck. Its front weight bias (56/44) and 3400-plus pounds still promote understeering, but you can even it out with the throttle. In fact, the 3.8 is a fun drift car with the traction control off, belying its weight and wheelbase. Applause goes to the R Spec's fixed, four-piston Brembo brakes, 13.4 inches up front.

The clutch now has better (if not ideal) engagement range and pedal effort has been reduced. A shorter shift-lever length and "bolt" type drive shaft connection improve the throws and feel, but there's still work to be done here. Beating the synchros is not difficult. And for Pete's sake Hyundai — put a lockout on reverse.

The Genesis Coupe is now a better car with a value proposition that's hard to ignore. Though decidedly not a hardcore sports car, the Hyundai will appeal to the latter-day *Fast & Furious* set. The 2.0T R Spec is the most tune-able, likely most dynamically impressive and "hoonish" Genesis Coupe, but improvements to both the turbo-four and V-6 models demonstrate the company's dedication to incorporating feedback. Keep the loop going, Hyundai.

WIRED Two revised engines with plenty of punch let the Genesis Coupe leave a stoplight in a hurry. A stylish interior with good materials boasts the only torque-output gauge I can remember seeing in a car. Turn off the traction control and oversteer like a pro drifter.

TIRED What does R Spec mean? Not "racing," Hyundai says. Still a bit awkward at the limit with less feel than desirable. Shifter and clutch still need more refinement. LED daytime running lights are functional only on the 3.8 Premium and Track models despite look-alike jewelry on every Genesis Coupe.




Photos courtesy of Hyundai Motor America

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