

The Accent is on value and safety

by Barbara and Bill Schaffer
photos by Joe Sage

The bottom of the automotive pecking order is the lowly entry-level sedan. This was traditionally the car an automotive journalist might get right after testing an \$80,000 luxury sedan—the car that slammed us back into the real world.

But like everything else automotive, these smaller sedans are getting a bit bigger and significantly better. We recently drove the latest version of the

smallest Hyundai, the Accent, and came away once again impressed with its high value and quality.

Are the \$70 fill-ups starting to put a strain on your MasterCard or Visa? Are you looking to move down the automotive pecking order? Then, think about the entry-level Hyundai Accent GLS.

Here's a nice four-door sedan that gets double the fuel economy of your SUV, is loaded with safety equipment, has the

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The latest version of the Hyundai Accent is sold and serviced by 670 dealerships in the United States.

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DrivingMBA's primary objective is to keep teen drivers and all of us safer on the road. Stories about teen drivers continue to be featured in newspapers and publications across the country. DrivingMBA is the only driving school in Arizona that uses state-of-the-art driving simulators to train its students. The airline industry has been using this type of technology for decades to train pilots. The military also uses this type of technology to train soldiers, AND DrivingMBA's equipment is the same equipment that is being used by police academies throughout the country, including here in Arizona, for its advanced driver training. The effectiveness of this type of driver training is indisputable, and DrivingMBA has documented results that prove its driver education program works.

Whether your teen has never been behind the wheel, has driving experience or has their driver's license, DrivingMBA is the only driving school with a driver training program to meet their specific needs. Don't let your teen get their driver training through trial and error. The errors are costly. They not only cost you in insurance rate increases, vehicle damage, but the most significant cost, the loss of life. Whether it is you, your teen, friends or family, even someone you don't know, a car collision can change lives forever. Make sure your teen is prepared to handle all types of driving situations.

Driving is the most critical lifelong skill to learn—don't take short cuts!



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Hyundai Accent GLS

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Four-speed automatic transmission; Anti-lock brakes; Tilt wheel; Driver's folding armrest; Tinted glass; Rear window defrost; AM/FM/CD audio with six-speakers; 60/40 Split folding rear seat.

Base Price \$13,305

Options: Premium Sport Package (Air conditioning, Power windows, Power heated mirrors, Power door locks, Remote keyless entry with alarm and panic alert, 15-Inch alloy wheels) — \$1,500; Carpeted floor mats — \$65

Total Options \$1,565

Freight \$540

Price as Tested \$15,410

DIMENSIONS

EPA Size Compact

Weight 2,403 lb.

Wheelbase 98.4 in.

Length 168.5 in.

Width 66.7 in.

Height 57.9 in.

Fuel Capacity 11.9 gal.

Cargo Capacity 12.4 cu. ft.

MECHANICAL

Engine 1.6L DOHC 4-Cyl. .

Horsepower 110@6000 .

Torque 106@4500

Transmission 4-Spd. Auto

Drive Front wheel

Brakes Disc ABS

Tires 195/55R15

PERFORMANCE

0 to 60 mph 9.1 sec.

Speed to 1/8 mile 70 mph

Top speed 112 mph

EPA economy rating 28/36 mpg

Our actual fuel economy 32.8 mpg

COMPETITORS

Chevrolet Aveo, Chevrolet Cobalt, Ford Focus, Honda Civic, Kia Rio, Mazda3, Nissan Versa, Saturn Ion, Scion xA, Suzuki Aerio, Suzuki Forenza, Suzuki Reno, Toyota Yaris ■



best warranty in the business—and you can probably even *buy* it with your MasterCard, if your gas purchases haven't pushed your card to the limit.

None of the entry-level cars are going to win any prizes for great design, but the Accent is good looking, with a clean European flair and large windows for good visibility. The inside has an upscale two-tone design with high quality materials and very good fit and finish. The audio system with AM/FM/CD is mounted in a center pod, high on the center section of the dash, while lesser-used climate controls are mounted lower. The instrument panel has two large round dials with metallic accents; one houses a tachometer and temperature indicator, the other the speedometer and fuel gauge.

Hyundai says the Accent is 39 percent stiffer than the previous version and we'll have to take their word for that. It feels very stiff and solid, and that translates to a smooth ride and good handling, with only a hint of body roll when cornering at speed. The front suspension is MacPherson strut based with coil springs and gas shock absorbers. The rear is a torsion beam with coil springs. Rack-and-pinion steering assist is based on engine speed,

giving more boost for maneuvering around town and less at highway speeds.

The Accent has one of the best braking systems we've seen on a small car: four-wheel disc brakes with anti-lock and electronic brake force distribution.

The small Hyundai sedan only comes with one trim level, the GLS. For \$12,995, including destination charge, standard equipment includes a five-speed manual transmission, tilt wheel, driver's seat folding armrest and a bunch of minor convenience features. There are only four options, other than colors. A four-speed automatic transmission adds \$850, carpeted floor mats \$65, air conditioning \$800—or there's the premium sport package (\$1,500) which includes air conditioning, power windows, powered heated outside mirrors, power door locks, remote keyless entry with alarm and 15-inch alloy wheels. The most you can spend for a new Accent is \$15,410.

The Accent is propelled by a 1.6-liter DOHC in-line four-cylinder with a CVT (Continuously Variable Valve Timing). Horsepower peaks at 110 and the torque is 106-lb.ft. at 4,600 rpms. The automatic

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transmission gets an EPA fuel economy rating of 28 mpg for city driving and 36 mpg on the highway. The manual gets 30/35. Our fuel economy for the week averaged 32.8 mpg.

The standard safety equipment roster is very impressive for a car in this price range. In addition to the four-wheel disc brake system, the Accent has six airbags including dual front bags, front seat-mounted side impact bags and roof-mounted side-curtain airbags covering front and rear seats. It also has front seatbelt pretensioners to tighten seatbelts prior to a collision and load limiters not to over-tighten the belts.

Probably the weakest attribute of the new Accent is its acceleration. We've seen reports of a 0-to-60 mph time between 9 and 10 seconds, making it one of the slower of the entry-level economy cars. We recorded 70 mph in an informal acceleration test, in which we run from where we pull onto the highway and accelerate for about one-eighth mile.

We've said this repeatedly: if the Hyundai had a Toyota or Honda nameplate on it, the price would be several

thousand dollars more. The Accent is not different. It's impressive with its excellent value, good build quality and great warranty. If you're thinking of downsizing or going for a more economical car, the Hyundai Accent should be on your shopping list.

We enjoy these entry-level cars because they are fun to drive, offer a great value and make so much sense. Hyundai's latest Accent has industry leading safety equipment and a very impressive interior.

The all-new 2006 Hyundai Accent is protected by the Hyundai Advantage, America's Best Warranty™, which includes five-year/60,000-mile bumper-to-bumper protection, 10-year/100,000-mile limited powertrain warranty, and seven-year/unlimited mileage anti-perforation coverage. In addition, Accent buyers receive 24-hour roadside assistance coverage at no extra charge for five years (no mileage limit) and that service includes emergency towing, lockout service and limited coverage for trip-interruption expenses. There is no deductible on any of these coverages. It doesn't get any better than that. ■

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