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THE INDEPENDENT / ACTON FREE PRESS

Subaru Legacy wagon entices buyers— it's more than a sum of its parts

Talking about value for the money and buying a car seems like an oxymoron.

Any car, no matter how cheap, will break down and turn to rust eventually; thus it can't have lasting value such as with a painting.

But cars can be works of art. And while some firms have elevated their machines to the brink of collectability, the main function of any automobile is to get from A to B reliably and as cheaply as possible.

Like many of you, taking a trip means more than a few pieces of luggage and a camera case. For me it's wife, baby, our bags, baby's bag, high chair, playpen, stroller, cooler for her milk, and various thicknesses of blanket—especially this time of the year. So we're talking about a station wagon here or a four-door sedan with a very large trunk.

I also like a bit of style coupled with safety features like all-wheel anti-lock brakes and discs at all four corners. I have also become a convert to all-wheel drive/four-



The Subaru Legacy LS wagon has all the room you'll ever want plus standard features such as four-wheel drive and anti-lock brakes. Height control is an option.

wheel drive in automobiles. Acceptable gas mileage is a must and it's nice to have one of those new electronic overdrive automatic transmissions.

But the killer is wrapping all this into an under \$30,000 package which includes all touring amenities such as cruise, standard air conditioning, power steer and brakes, power windows and outside remote mirrors, power two-way roof with sliding sun shield, and power antenna connected to a full ETR cassette stereo cassette. Oh yes, the seats have to be fully adjustable and I want overhead cams and four-valves-per cylinder technology.

New Sedan. It certainly got my vote and I was not surprised the new turbo version is also one of the finalists in 1991 AJAC voting to be announced at the Toronto International Auto Show in February.

Recently I had a few days off, so the family decided to take a bit of a late autumn trip down to the Isiah Tubbs Resort near Picton, providing an ideal opportunity to check out the wagon version of the Subaru. Firstly everything fit with room to spare. With one half of the 60/40 seats down, I just chucked in the stroller and the bags and off we went.

Power comes from a 2.2-litre, flat-four putting out 130 hp employing centre differential-viscous coupling four-wheel drive which does not rob the engine of horses like the old manual systems. The Saab-inspired instrument binnacle and centre console contain gauges and pictograph controls. The stereo has a built-in programmed equalizer which served us well especially when we called upon our last resort—a Fred Penner tape—to quiet baby down a bit. The long-reach antenna allowed us to pull in Toronto FM stations all the way to Belleville.

Road Worthy

By JIM ROBINSON

As a bonus, I want the car to have enough ground clearance so I can use the four-wheel drive system on gravel and back roads. But it has to be not so lofty on the freeway that side winds cause problems with lateral control.

All the above, except height control (which is an option) is part of the Subaru Legacy LS Wagon which has a price as tested of \$27,416 with 4WD or \$24,921 without.

Subaru Canada was formed two years ago after the carmaker's parent firm, Fuji Heavy Industries, bought out a distribution organization which had sold the vehicles in adequate, if not industry-shattering numbers.

With the unveiling of the Legacy line last year, the Automotive Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) promptly named it Best

Being a longish vehicle with rounded flanks, I expected a bit of buffeting from tractor-trailers but nothing occurred. But I chalk that up to the fact all four wheels were at work. In the slop and slush of the 401 in the dead of winter, you'll be glad to have 4WD going for you.

But the lasting impression is one of solidity, something which is confirmed by putting the car up on a hoist and looking at the components.

Subaru is moving to expand its dealer network to keep up with the demand they expect for the Legacy in four-door sedan, wagon, and turbo GT form.

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