

A luxury car that is smooth and economical

• from SUBARU on page A34

The similarly sized BMW 328Xi with X-Drive all-wheel-drive has a 3.0-litre six-cylinder engine with 15 less hp and costs \$45,500 (BMWgroup.ca).

The Audi and BMW are magnificent road cars, but what they don't have is an enhancement that Subaru calls Si-Drive.

There is a rotary knob on the transmission tunnel

marked as Intelligent, Sport and Sport Sharp. By twisting the knob, the response from the engine and transmission can be changed to best suit one of three driving modes.

Intelligent smoothes out the engine and improves fuel economy by as much as 10 per cent for highway and in-town daily cruising. Sport is more for general use giving more linear throttle response and extra punch when passing. Sport Sharp changes the

engine mapping plus holds lower gears longer for more power plus instantaneous shifts.

The 3.0R comes with a five-speed automatic Sportshift transmission with manual shift mode. It is one of the fastest shifting units in the industry, taking 0.2 seconds (literally the blink of an eye) controlled by big paddle shifters mounted to the steering wheel or by the shift handle on the transmission

tunnel. It also has a "blipping" mode that matches engine speed on downshifts making for smoother and lurch-free gear changes.

In addition to the Si-Drive knob there is a toggle switch on the bottom right of the steering wheel that engages/disengages Sport Sharp without the driver taking his/her hands off the wheel.

With a long wheelbase and wide stance, the engine, transmission and Si-Drive are mated to Subaru's patented symmetrical full-time all-wheel-drive. Developed from the lessons learned in three outright World Rally Championship wins, the Subaru system is at once simple, but very effective, in routing torque back and forth so seamlessly that you don't notice it. For the 3.0R, a limited slip differential is added for more precise torque splitting.

Because the boxer engine layout allows it to sit lower, it lets the driveshaft to the rear travel in a straight line and that makes for a lower overall centre of gravity and less power loss in universal joints.

The result is a sedan that feels very substantial overall. In the 3.0R the build-up of speed is deceptive in that it's so smooth that you don't get a sense of how fast you are going.

Entering and exiting a corner in a Subaru demonstrates the level of grip the AWD system has such is the competency of the pitch and yaw system (Subaru calls it Vehicle Dynamic Control) with traction control, ABS and electronic brake force distribution.

In Sport Sharp mode,



ABOVE: Gone are the days when Subaru interiors meant gray on gray. In the 3.0R passengers are greeted by a two-tone mix with a liberal use of wood and aluminum inserts.

braking and then accelerating is done in one sweeping motion. With the paddle shifters going and the engine blipping matched gears with engine speeds, it's a lot of fun to feel the car respond so fully.

In the snow the first thing you notice at startup is the way the tail hunkers down as all four wheels take up torque and plant it to the surface. Moving off, the Subaru does not take a little step to the right or left like a front-drive, but tracks true.

On a deserted parking lot near my house that had not been plowed, I took the Legacy up to city street speed and then yanked the wheel hard to the left and right to induce a spin. But the VSC was having none of it.

Another thing I noticed was at moderate speed and in a corner, engine braking was noticeable. Coupled with the AWD, slowing was so measured that the brakes weren't needed.

So it's a luxury car, but it also lets you enjoy motoring without breaking any laws.

And speaking of luxury,

the 3.0R shows how far Subaru has come from the days when you could have any interior color as long as it was gray. The 3.0R Premier tested here was finished in a warming two-tone blend with wood and aluminum accents.

With heated front seats with dual zone climate control, the Limited and Premier have a nine-speaker Harman Kardon, 385-watt sound system. The Premier adds a GPS DVD-based navigation system with touch-screen monitor.

The 3.0R is in its element as a highway cruiser. Sticking it on the cruise and picking your favorite tunes on the Sirius satellite radio (three-month trial period) while putting 400 or 500 km behind you can be taken in stride.

But for our weather and driving conditions, especially after last winter and what we have seen so far this season, having Subaru's AWD is a serious buying consideration.

InsuranceHotline.com

Your Search Engine for the Lowest Insurance Rates

Car Insurance Rates Are Increasing – Are YOU Prepared To Pay More?

The average rates in Ontario for car insurance are set to increase in 2009, with some insurance companies getting the approval to increase their rates by over 10%. Are you prepared to pay more?

Given the economic slowdown, how can you ensure that you are not overpaying for car insurance and getting the lowest rate possible for your driving profile?

How To Reduce Your Car Insurance Costs?

First and foremost, the best and easiest way to lower the cost of your car insurance is to shop around.

The rates charged by different insurance companies to insure the same driver, with the same car, for the same coverage, can vary by hundreds and even thousands of dollars. So it pays to shop around. Take a look at the table below.

BUT, where do you start? This is where InsuranceHotline.com can help. InsuranceHotline.com is an independent rate comparison engine that gets quotes from over 30 of the top car insurance companies in Canada, presents you with the lowest 3, and then matches you up with a broker or agent that can set up your policy. The service is Fast, Safe and FREE. So if you are keen to save big on car insurance, why not give InsuranceHotline.com a try?

RATE COMPARISON

Driving Record	Lowest Price	Highest Price	Price Difference
Clean Record	\$958	\$2,213	\$1,255
1 Ticket	\$1,018	\$2,552	\$1,534
1 Accident	\$1,849	\$3,753	\$1,904

For the 3 lowest rates from over 30 major insurance companies, go online to InsuranceHotline.com

GOLF AND SPA GETAWAY TO FLORIDA

Win one of two trips to Florida. Choose between a Golf or Spa Package!

ESTIMATED PRIZE VALUE: \$5,500

InsuranceHotline.com
Visit InsuranceHotline.com for full contest details.



TO ENTER THE CONTEST, GO ONLINE TO INSURANCEHOTLINE.COM

White Rabbit!

The action-packed Rabbit appeals to the thrill-seeking child in you without neglecting the quality-driven adult in you. This nimble little beast packs a German-engineered wallop beneath a slick exterior.

The Rabbit. Well-equipped from **\$19,975***

Lease rates from **2.9%****
O.A.C.

50 in stock & available for immediate delivery!



Oakville Volkswagen

1355 North Service Road West, Oakville

Tel: 905-844-3285

www.oakvillevw.com



* Base MSRP of a new 2009 3-door Rabbit with manual transmission. \$1,335 freight and PDI, PPSA, license, insurance, options, admin./reg. fees, installation, applicable taxes and any dealer charges extra. Model as shown with options and accessories is \$24,975. Dealer may sell for less. Supplies limited. See dealer for details. ** Volkswagen, the Volkswagen logo and "Rabbit" are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG. © 2008 Volkswagen Canada. ** 2009 Rabbit 3-door rabbit with manual with transmission, a purchase price of \$21,335 including freight and PDI of \$1,360. \$3,100 down payment, \$199 first month's payment, and refundable security deposit of \$250 required at time of transaction. Insurance, license, PPSA, administration/registration fees and applicable taxes extra. Monthly payments total \$9,552. Lessee responsible for insurance. At lease end, lessee responsible for \$0.12/km over 80,000 km, and damage and excessive wear. Offer subject to credit approval by Volkswagen Finance, a division of VW Credit Canada Inc. Lease rate is based on 2.9% interest. Offer ends Mar. 31, 2009. See dealer for full details. Supplies are limited.