

2009 Subaru Impreza WRX

by Gary Dickinson

INTRODUCTION

The Subaru Impreza WRX was all-new for 2008 with more sophisticated design, greater room and improved safety technology. A new Impreza platform is built on a longer wheel-base resulting in improved interior roominess and ride quality. The new chassis also provides improvement in crash-worthiness, and a stiffer platform gives Impreza crisper handling.

In 2009 a new more powerful version of the turbocharged intercooled 2.5-liter boxer engine increases horsepower by 41 and torque by 18. The suspension tuning with higher rate springs, larger diameter stabilizer bars and dedicated damping force tuning is also new. The 5-speed manual transmission features a viscous coupling locking center differential that splits power 50-50 from front to rear and will transfer power to wheels with the best road grip.

TEST DRIVE OVERVIEW

Throughout the test drive I was very impressed with the Impreza's ride, handling and especially acceleration. It provides a good mix of practicality and sports performance with adequate room, storage capacity and all wheel drive capability, very quick acceleration, sports car handling and smooth manual transmission operation. Usually fuel economy suffers when acceleration performance is enhanced. The redesigned turbocharged 2.5 liter engine minimizes this and provides good highway economy.

Some minor complaints. I was not impressed with the design of the speedometer/tachometer cluster which puts the tachometer in the center and larger than the speedometer. For instrumentation and controls I lean toward the practical side and speedometer center and larger as most drivers would use it more. The ventilation control design also lends something to be desired and the controls are mounted low on the dash and hard to see and find at times.



TEST DRIVE PERFORMANCE

- ☺ **Acceleration:** Zero-60 MPH tested at a impressive 6.1 seconds, 55-65 MPH passing performance tested at 2.9 seconds.
- ☺ **Steering:** The Engine-speed sensitive, power rack-and-pinion steering provided accurate response.
- ☺ **Handling:** Excellent cornering grip.
- ☺ **Ride:** Good road isolation.
- ☺ **Braking:** Sure and responsive.
- ☺ **Transmission:** Extremely smooth and accurate shifting.
- ☺ **Interior Noise:** Good isolation from road and engine noise.
- ☺ **Test drive mileage:** 27.5 MPG (highway driving); EPA estimates 25H/18C.

TESTED VEHICLE

- Vehicle:** Subaru Impreza WRX.
- Class:** 5 Door small wagon.
- Engine:** The 2.5L DOHC Intercooled Turbo Engine yields 265 HP at 6,000 RPM and 244 lb-ft torque at 4,000 RPM.
- Transmission/Drive train:** 5 speed manual. All wheel drive (AWD).
- Brakes:** Power assisted 4-wheel disc with standard 4-channel 4-sensor ABS, electronic brake force distribution and brake assist.
- Steering:** Rack and pinion with engine speed controlled variable power assist.
- Base MSRP:** \$29,995.
- Tested Vehicle MSRP with options:** \$30,690 (which includes a destination charge of \$695).

EXTERIOR

- ☺ **Engine Service Points:** All fluid service points are located for easy access.
- ☺ **Body:** No exterior fit or finish problems found.



INTERIOR

- ☺ **Room:** Roomy cabin with plenty of shoulder room, leg room and headroom.
- ☺ **1st Row Seats:** Provides good back support but thigh support is limited.
- ☺ **2nd Row Seats:** Adequate seat support but only enough room for two adults.
- ☺ **Ventilation:** The automatic climate control operated seamlessly but controls are mounted low hampering visibility and accessibility.
- ☺ **Storage:** Well designed and ample storage areas in dash, console and door pockets.
- ☺ **Fit and Finish:** No interior fit or finish problems found. Quality craftsmanship and materials were evident throughout.



VEHICLE CAPACITIES

- Seating:** 5
- Interior Volume:** 93.2 cu. ft.
- Cargo Volume:** 19.0 cu. ft.
- Base Curb Weight:** 3,229 lbs.
- Fuel Tank:** 16.9 gallons.



Test Drive is conducted and written by the Motor Watch staff, who contribute their own unbiased and unfettered comments in order to meet our mission: "To help save consumers time and money, and to help save motorists lives."

If the price of gasoline in the US had increased since 1961 at the same rate as health care cost, a gallon of gasoline would go for \$14.99⁹ right now.

