

INSTANT COLLECTIBLE

INFINITI'S NEW 7-PASSENGER MIDSIZE LUXURY CROSSOVER ALREADY SET TO BE RENAMED WITH REST OF LINEUP

BY JOE SAGE



Despite being an all-new 2013 model, the Infiniti JX35 midsize luxury SUV has been around for about a year already, introduced in spring 2012. So maybe that mitigates the fact that no sooner did the JX arrive, than Infiniti announced a renaming of its entire lineup. All the cars will be Q-something, and all the utilities will be QX-something.

The JX35 will become the QX60, lower-mid-pack in a range from 50 to 80, nosing its way between the obviously close siblings EX and FX, which will become the QX50 and QX70, while the existing QX56 moves up the mathematical chain to become a QX80.

These will be effective with Infiniti's 2014 model lineup, which could theoretically arrive any time now, so the JX name could end up with either as much as two years' final lifespan, or just about none at all, depending how you look at it. It's definitely the designation for the 2013 model year. So buy yours today, and let's see what it's worth at Barrett-Jackson in ten years.

But none of that is supposed to be the big news.

THE ALL-NEW INFINITI JX35

The significant thing is that this is Infiniti's first seven-passenger, three-row, midsize model.

Boasting 265 horsepower (and 248 lb-ft of torque) delivered through a continuously variable transmission (CVT) from its 3.5-liter V6, the new JX35 can handle a large family and friends and/or a healthy volume of cargo, all with the handling benefits of a midsize chassis, while delivering a reasonable 18/24/21 MPG (city/highway/combined).

All this comes embedded in a high-tech, luxury foundation, as well. Driving features include Infiniti's trademark engine and transmission mapping modes for Sport, Snow, Eco or Standard conditions, plus electronic handling embellishments including 4-wheel ABS, brake assist, brake force distribution, and vehicle dynamic and traction control systems.

Occupant technology includes an intelligent key with push-button ignition, a standard 7-inch display, Bluetooth hands-free phone, 6-speaker audio, USB connections and auxiliary inputs in the console. That's a good basis, but upgrades are also reasonable (see specs at the end): our test vehicle added four packages containing pretty much anything you can think of—for example upgrading the audio to one Bose system in a Premium Package, then further in a Deluxe Touring Package. The base price, a hair over \$40,000, is very reasonable for a luxury vehicle with this capacity. Compared to option package pricing in some other high-end brands, a grand total of \$54,000 with all these inclusions is still a bargain, for this level of luxe.

The standard interior needs little else (although one package added maple accents, heated seats and moonroof to ours). Infiniti does its usual job of combining more materials and colors than average—multiple leathers, elegantly shaped brushed aluminum fixtures and renewable exotic woods—to present a rich tapestry of look and feel. The JX has triple-zone automatic temperature control, a sliding moonroof over the front seats (ours adds another with the Deluxe Touring Package), 8-way driver and 6-way front passenger power seats, second- and third-row heat vents under first- and second-row seats, power liftgate, and even sequential welcome lighting. All of that should make it clear to you that you have arrived.

A WEEK WITH THE NEW JX35

We actually had a brief drive in this vehicle a couple of months earlier, at the Active Lifestyle Vehicle Awards event in Chandler, where it was a finalist in the Luxury On-Road category—for vehicles with base price of \$35,000 or more, designed primarily for driving on pavement—the most crowded of all categories. (The winner in this segment was the Audi allroad, which is a decidedly different type of vehicle.) We noted several things at that time: the vehicle's very favorable CVT (a feature some people debate in other vehicles), its nearly invisibly smooth starts and stops, the exquisitely well-executed sculptural door handles and other such details, and its superb (and tight) handling on an impromptu parking lot autocross course.

All this was borne out in our full week. This time, we tried out the double-upgraded Bose 15-speaker audio system, which was very strong once we fine-tuned it.

As usual, we could live without a driver's seat that relocates while parked and takes you for a ride upon entry.

The JX ran our tight maneuver tests well, despite having a 38.7-foot turning circle. It felt (and fit) more like 36. It's not a sports performance driver at 265 horses and 4280 pounds, but it's a very spry utility driver.

In terms of the Infiniti four-SUV pecking order, in which this is numbered as the second-smallest overall (though not by seating), the JX seemed plenty big. As the to-be QX60, the JX is bracketed between the two-row EX and FX (which will become the QX50 and QX70).

The other three-row SUV in the lineup, the current QX56 (to become the QX80) is huge. With a relatively narrow cabin and "personal aircraft" feel, the QX56 doesn't necessarily feel as big as it is, behind the wheel, but it's still a handful to park and to handle. Enter the JX. As the trend continues to downsizing of everything, we would guess this is a better resale investment, and it will please you more on a daily basis. (But if you need the big QX56, well, it's because you know you need it.)

To us, the JX35 (QX60) comes across as just right. ■

OUR TEST 2013 INFINITI JX35 FWD

Base price.....	\$40,450
Roof rails.....	370
Technology Package: heated steering wheel, remote start, brake assist, forward and backup collision warnings/intervention, blind spot warning/intervention, lane departure warning/prevention, intelligent cruise control, distance control assist.....	3,100
Theater Package: dual 7-inch monitors w/wireless headphones and remote, headphone jacks and volume, aux input, 120v power outlet.....	1,700
Deluxe Touring Package: 20-inch wheels, 15-speaker Bose audio upgrade, advanced climate, heated/cooled front seats, heated second row, rain-sense wipers, moonroof and power sunshade over second and third rows, maple accents.....	3,550
Premium Package: hard drive nav, Infiniti Connection™, 6-inch touchscreen, voice recognition, traffic, weather and restaurant info, Around View® system, Bose audio system (replaced with Deluxe Touring Package), streaming Bluetooth audio, driver two-way lumbar support, intelligent key.....	4,950
Destination.....	950
TOTAL.....	\$54,070

