

Sportier by Joe Sage

The 2023 Infiniti QX50 compact crossover is only the model's second generation under this name, the first having come to market for model year 2019 largely as a rebadged Infiniti EX.

New this year are an available Infiniti Premium Care three-year basic service program and additional standard features across the lineup—heated mirrors, remote start, wireless charge and such.

Also new is this Sport trim level, falling right in the middle of a now-five-level family from \$40,300 (Pure FWD) to \$57,350 (Autograph AWD-only).

Sport's build, outside, includes gloss black exterior trim details, 20-inch dark machine-finished wheels, and a distinct front fascia. Inside are semi-aniline leather and 12-speaker Bose audio. Overall, Sport combines purely visual cues with tangible and functional premium features.

All QX50s have a 268-hp 2.0L turbo-four, Xtronic CVT and are front-drive-based. Ours adds Intelligent AWD, available across the full lineup.

Healthy ground clearance suggests off-roading, but wheels are 19- or 20-inch on all (20 on ours)—

and Intelligent AWD is automatic. It adds up to more of a snowy, rainy or sandy road cruiser, though fine for off-pavement camping, fishing or hiking-biking. We weren't receiving snow up north, so instead took it on relatively but not completely tame dirt an hour or so north of metro Phoenix, up I-17.

Our QX50 tracked accurately and confidently in town, with only a slight touch of front-drive basis in curves or turns. Its relatively tight turning circle is great in town and also helps off-pavement.

A generous cabin belies its compact size, front and rear (there's also a mild fastback QX55 variant). Two moderately sized center stack screens are well organized, with a useful mix of redundant direct touch or scroll. The heated steering wheel is automatic depending on conditions.

Sport's trim-specific fascia helps what may be gradual evolution of Infiniti's family-wide grille. Handsome sheet metal curves and creases create a bigger size impression, especially striking under night lights, and our Monaco Red interior nails its sport-premium mix. Though no more nor any less a performance machine than its stablemates, the QX50 Sport is a bit sexier. It's a keeper. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Aguascalientes, Mexico
ENGINE	2.0L transverse inline-4 turbo, alum/alum, DOHC 16v CVT, dir & port inj
HP/TORQUE	268 hp / 280 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	(variable) 8.0-14.0:1
TRANSMISSION	Xtronic CVT, manual mode, rev match
DRIVETRAIN	Intelligent AWD
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut, alum-alloy upper/lower, alum/steel subframe, twin-tube shocks; R: indep multilink, monotube shocks, stblzr bar
STEERING	speed-sensitive var assist
BRAKES	F: 13.0x1.3 vented; R: 12.1x0.6 vented
WHEELS	20x8.5 alum-alloy dark machine finish
TIRES	P255/45R20 a/s run-flat
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	184.7 / 110.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.6 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	17.2 / 23.9 / 19.0°
TURNING CIRCLE	36.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.0 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	39.6 / 38.7 in
CARGO CAPACITY	31.1 / 64.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	4116 lb / 60/40%
TOW CAPACITY	(n/a- Autograph only, 3000 lb)
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem inj / 16.0 gal
MPG	22/28/25 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$50,500
ILLUMINATED KICK PLATES	485
WELCOME LIGHTING W LOGO	635
DESTINATION CHARGE	1195
TOTAL	\$52,815

