

Percentages

BY JOE SAGE

Mazda CX-50, a new model in 2022, has two quite different engine offerings (though both 2.5-liter), each in four trim levels. Early information had said we'd be getting the lower powertrain, in a lower trim level, the 2.5 S Preferred. This would contrast well with a top power and top trim model—the 2.5 Turbo Premium Plus Package—we had just a year earlier. The 2.5 S would have 73 percent the horsepower (187 vs 256), 58 percent the torque (186 vs 320) and 57 percent the tow capacity (2000 vs 3500 lb), all for 73 percent of the price (\$31,650 vs \$43,300).

Having liked last year's quite a bit, this could be an interesting comparison. However, it turned out this CX-50 was again the 2.5 Turbo Premium Plus Package—98 percent the same as our other recent one. Differences? That was a 2023. As a 2024, this one has new dampers, aimed at more all-terrain use, especially in a new Turbo Meridian Edition with 18-inch wheels (all have an impressive 8.3 to 8.6 inches of ground clearance). And builds later

than ours will also have recalibrated electric power steering. This one was also a different shade of grey than last year's—yes, they were very similar.

Still built in Alabama with Japanese engine and transmission, tweaks for 2024 have dropped Japanese content from 20 to 15 percent, while raising Mexican content from 25 to 30 percent.

The new CX-50 is part of a realignment of Mazda's SUV lineup, with new CX-double-digit models intertwined with remaining CX-singles. An updated visual character is achieved with a lower beltline, for a long, low, road-hugging look, though comparison of old and new specs is closer than they look.

As noted last year, features are solid, and power is ample. The turbo's ability to run on regular or premium gas, not completely uncommon but here with a meaningful difference in power, is a useful trick. We found some elements of the interface frustrating, though we've heard these are still being improved. One disappointment for us was the audio system, surprisingly weak for a Bose Centerpoint unit. (Although you can always spend on custom audio, we hope they're addressing this.)

2024 MAZDA CX-50 LINEUP

SKYACTIV-G 2.5L 4-cyl, AWD, 187 hp, 186 lb-ft, 2000 lb tow	
2.5 S Select	\$30,300
2.5 S Preferred	▼ 31,650
2.5 S Premium	34,000
2.5 S Premium Plus	37,500
SKYACTIV-G 2.5L w twin scroll turbo, AWD, 3500 lb tow (87 oct) 227 hp, 310 lb-ft; (93 oct) 256 hp, 320 lb-ft	
2.5 Turbo	\$38,000
2.5 Turbo Meridian Edition	40,800
2.5 Turbo Premium Package	41,300
2.5 Turbo Premium Plus Package	▼ 43,300

We had given last year's a few miles' run on a loose and rutted unpaved road, despite its 20-inch all-season tires, which gave us a feel for its strong potential with Turbo Meridian Edition 18-inchers.

As noted last year, the redesign earns an A-plus and is on track to not only be in step with the times, but to redefine them.

We'd still be interested in trying the lower powertrain. Or, for that matter, we'd be interested in giving the Turbo Meridian Edition with its 18-inch wheels a solid run. Perhaps we'll have a chance at one of this year's comparos. Note that the CX-50 scored significant awards at those in 2022. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Madison, Alabama
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION	Japan / Japan
PARTS CONTENT	50% US-Can, 30% Mex, 15% Japan
ENGINE	SKYACTIV-G® 2.5L w twin scroll turbocharger, alum alloy block/head
HP/TORQUE	(87 octane) 227 hp / 310 lb-ft
	(93 octane) 256 hp / 320 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
TRANSMISSION	SKYACTIV-Drive 6-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	i-ACTIV AWD
MODES	Mi-Drive sport/off-road/tow
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut; R: torsion beam
STEERING	elec pwr rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 12.8 vented; R: 12.8 solid disc
WHEELS / TIRES	20-in alloy / P245/45 R20 m+s
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	185.8 / 110.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	36.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.6 / 37.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.7 / 39.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	31.4 / 56.3 cu.ft
CURB WEIGHT	3913 lb
TOW CAPACITY	3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY87 reg unl or 93 prem / 15.0 gal
MPG	24/30/27 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$43,300
PAINT: Machine Gray Metallic	595
TURBO PREMIUM PLUS PKG: heated rear seats, 360° monitor, traffic jam assist, front & rear parking sensors, smart brake support rear, blind spot assist, Mazda nav, wireless charge, traffic sign recog, frame auto-dim rear mirror w Homelink, auto-dim driver side mirror	incl
DESTINATION CHARGE	1375
TOTAL	\$45,270

