

Commanding concept

BY JOE SAGE

Infiniti QX80 (originally the QX56, before lineup-wide QX renaming) has this year entered just its third generation, after about 20 years of existence (although with a couple of facelifts along the way).

What remains the same is that this is a big—notably big—three-row SUV. Despite a proliferation of three-row SUVs and crossovers, only a few are the full body-on-frame construction of their big pickup relatives (in this case, Nissan Titan, though that is sadly being discontinued after this year).

What's new is a great deal—some subtle, some dramatic, most a bit of both. We're happy to see

Infiniti's particular flavor of distinctive grille evolving—less contrived, more mature. It is yet to be seen just how unified or variable it will be as other applications of it are developed across the brand.

The new vehicle was shown as the Monograph Concept during the weeklong festivities at Pebble Beach in August 2023. The production version was teased and then revealed last winter and spring—all with the concept virtually completely intact.

Our Autograph 4WD sample—a preproduction unit—is the \$110,595 flagship of a four-trim lineup starting at just over \$80,000. All have the same

450-horsepower twin-turbo V6 engine and 4WD, while the two lower trims also offer rear drive. All tow 8,500 pounds. Ground clearance is close to or right at 10 inches, and approach-departure angles are in the mid-20s, making this executive club vehicle capable of just about anything. One way to spot the Autograph is by its 22-inch wheels (others are 20 or 21), which on such a massive vehicle do not seem enormous, just well proportioned.

One thing you get in this true full-size layout is a second row that's both spacious and surprisingly thoroughly outfitted—legroom is a just about 40 inches, and passengers here have their own climate and audio control, power heated-vented seat panels and systems (all of which can also various-

ly be isolated via front controls), and generous console storage and cupholders, arguably better than even the front row. Intriguing (though perhaps disturbing to privacy advocates) is a Journey Diary feature that can archive photos and video from the vehicle's front view and in-car cameras.

As a preproduction build—a prototype of sorts, built before the full assembly line is up to speed and potentially before all engineering and materials are complete—we can be sure of the size and almost surely of the hard-button and interior features. Elements of the drive experience, however, may not fully be as they will ultimately be.

Most often, a preproduction unit is quite transparent, but we reminded ourselves of it regularly in this. We can only look forward to driving a full production version later and comparing notes.

The Infiniti QX80 is refined, luxurious and fea-

Features are innovative, some for the better, some perhaps not. Klipsch audio system speakers integrated into the headrests are visually stunning as well as effective. Faux-haptic control panels include frustrations, not the least of which are the PRND shift buttons at the base of the lower center stack, largely obscured (and reach blocked) by the padded console cover, as well as odd mixes dictated by layout, such as drive modes being accessed via a button in the climate control system.

ture-laden, while also substantial, spacious and powerful. This is a commanding vehicle. Its updated styling is strong, bold and distinctive. And its ride height can make you feel unexpectedly high and mighty in traffic. While fuel mileage information had not yet been released, our readout at the end of a week (spent largely on local suburban streets and freeways) was just under 22 mpg, admirable given its size, power and weight. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

BUILD	.....body on frame (conventional SUV)
SEATING CAPACITY	.....7 (8 optional)
ENGINE	.....3.5L V6 twin turbo, DOHC 24v, direct injection, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	.....450 hp / 516 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.6:1
TRANSMISSION	.....9-spd auto / paddles
DRIVETRAIN	.....Infiniti All-Mode® 4WD
DRIVE MODES	.....standard, eco, sport, snow, tow, personal
SUSPENSION	.....electronic air suspension, dynamic digital suspension dampers F: indep, dbl wishbone, coil spring (or air) with shock; R: indep, dbl wishbone, coil spring (or air) and shock separated from coil
STEERING	.....elec power steering
BRAKES	.....F: 13.78 x1.18, twin-piston swing-caliper; R: 13.78 x0.79, single-piston swing-caliper
WHEELS	.....22x8 cast aluminum alloy
TIRES	.....P275/50R22 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....211.2 / 121.0 in
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....39.1 / 37.8 / na in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....43.8 / 39.2 / 32.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....22.0 / 59.0 / 101.9 cu.ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....(var by susp) 9.6-10 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	.....(varies by spec) 22.1-25.1 / 21.8-25.6°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....tbd
TOW CAPACITY	.....8500 lb
WEIGHT	.....tbd
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....prem unl / 23.6 gal
MPG	.....tbd

BASE PRICE	.....\$109,900
PREMIUM PAINT: Dynamic Metal	.....695
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1995
TOTAL	.....\$112,590

Prices have increased; see below.

2025 INFINITI QX80 LINEUP

.....RWD	.....4WD
Pure	.....\$82,450 \$85,550
Luxe	.....89,550 92,650
Sensory	.....100,645
Autograph	.....▼ 110,595