

In the name of simplification, or at least clarification, during an industrywide time of evolution and experimentation, particularly with electrification, the Mazda SUV-crossover lineup has become quite extensive, with a new set of alphanumeric names to learn along the way.

As with any number of other manufacturers, the Mazda SUV lineup has almost totally eclipsed its cars. Only the eternal (everyone hopes) MX-5 Miata sports car, as well as both sedan and hatchback versions of Mazda3, survive as of now.

The SUVs and crossovers have long borne CX-numeric nomenclature and (mostly) continue to do so. A recent EV effort following suit under an MX-numeric badge has been set aside, though something new could arrive at any time. For now, electrification is focused on hybrid boost and plug-in hybrid variants of CX-numeric gasoline models.

Atop all that, however, the prior generation of CX-single-digit-numeric SUVs has moved, though not all at once, to CX-double-digit models. These,

in turn, have not been mere rebadgings of the single-digits, but rather new vehicles—a staggered introduction new generation with a spotlight on new powertrain-flexible platforms. You could say the MX was the tail that wagged this whole dog.

At a glance, it may have seemed as simple as CX-50, CX-70 and CX-90 replacing existing or previously existing CX-5, CX-7 and CX-9. But each of those has had its own individual story, style and niche. This is underscored by the decision to keep the exceptionally popular CX-5 in the mix for now, even in the company of the new CX-50. And as the past CX-7, with its distinctly different wagon leanings, had already been discontinued, the CX-70 falls clearly into the new SUV continuum.

The good news is that this can all largely be ignored, with your attention simply applied to those that interest you the most.

However, it sets the stage for an area still ripe for clarification. The full SUV lineup pricing chart at lower right reveals the CX-70 is pricier than the

CX-90, sure to puzzle any shopper. The two are actually the same basic vehicle—same size, either towing up to 5,000 pounds, and so on. But whereas the CX-90 is a three-row (seating seven or eight, varying by trim level), the CX-70 is a two-row (seating five). However, while two rows and five seats may sound like “less,” the CX-70 generally goes all-in on a higher level of finishes and features.

That said, the three-row CX-90 has a highly premium interior, itself. You’ll notice it right away in such niceties as second row sunshades, full-size third row headrests and such, as well as notable attention paid to materials and finishes you will find distinctly different from others in the market.

If you need three rows, the decision is predetermined. But if you could largely get by with two,

Quick math quiz: is 90 more than 70?

BY JOE SAGE



you can go with either. It will be hard not to come back to the CX-90 doing functionally all the same—and then some, for times when you just might need more seats—for \$2,600 less (base).

That much squared away (as much as it can be), this is a powerful, premium, high-style beast. It’s a moderate heavyweight, at 4,901 pounds for our top (non-PHEV) version, although it’s easy to find heavier competitors. Its powerful 3.3-liter inline-six turbo powerplant quietly adds something others make great fanfare of—a 48-volt mild hybrid boost system. An unusual (and big) plus with Mazda is that they often engineer so you can run on either regular or premium fuel, with their full blessing, stating power output either way—in this, 340 hp on premium, 319 on regular. Power in town, economy on a long road trip, or other bargaining points are yours to make. Add a few more horses to this from the hybrid boost, but a whole lot more torque—raising the engine’s 369 lb-ft to a whopping 482.

The engine itself has a rich, throaty sound for a turbo-six, a nice effect. After a full stop, though, it comes back to life with quite a clatter, all the more reason to defeat auto-start/stop (hard to find at first, but easy once you learn this is “iStop”). The ride is smooth and solid, very firm on speedbumps, although still not harsh or abrupt.

Though not a likely choice for off-roading, its tires have healthy, wide sidewalls despite the 21-inch wheel size, making it great for using its 5,000-pound tow capacity (on upper trims, with the same power but adding tow mode) to bring weekend toys to weekend places.

The key to Mazda is that—unlike several of the other biggest Japanese manufacturers, each with separate mainstream and luxe-premium name brands—Mazda several years ago declared they would simply move their mainstream brand upscale into premium territory, while maintaining value. This has worked out very well. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Hofu, Japan
ROWS / SEATS	.....three / (Prem Plus) six
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	.....Japan / Japan
PARTS CONTENT	.....Japan 90% / US/Can 0%
ENGINE	.....e-SKYACTIV G 3.3L inline-6 turbo
BOOST	.....48V Mild Hybrid Boost w i-Stop
BATTERY	.....44.4V / 0.33 kWh / 7.5 Ah
MOTOR/GENERATOR	.....11 kW
HP/TORQUE	.....(prem fuel) 340 hp / 369 lb-ft .....(reg fuel) 319 hp / 369 lb-ft .....(elec motor) 16.6 hp / 113 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....SKYACTIV-Drive 8-sp auto w manual-shift mode
DRIVETRAIN	.....i-ACTIV AWD
DRIVE MODES	.....Sports, Off-road, Towing
TOP SPEED	.....130 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: dbl wishbone; .....R: multilink
STEERING	.....elec power rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....diagonal hydraulic; .....F: 13.7 vented; R: 13.8 vented
WHEELS	.....21x9.5J alum alloy, machine cut
TIRES	.....275 / 45 R21 M+S
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....200.8 / 122.8 in
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....(mnr) 39.6 / 38.4 / 36.8 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....41.7 / 39.4 / 30.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....38.1 ft
CARGO CAPACITY	.....15.9 / 40.1 / 75.2 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4901 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....prem rec'd / 19.6 gal
MPG	.....23/28/25 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$56,450
PAINT: Platinum Quartz Metallic	.....nc
SECOND ROW CAPTAIN'S CHAIRS	.....nc
TURBO S PREMIUM PKG: 150W accessory power outlet, windshield wiper deicer, ventilated rear seats	.....incl
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1455
TOTAL	.....\$57,905

2025 MAZDA CX-90 LINEUP

3.3 Turbo	Select	.....\$37,845
	Preferred	.....40,945
	Premium Sport	.....46,400
	Premium Plus	.....49,400
3.3 Turbo S	Premium	.....\$52,950
	Premium Plus	.....▼ 56,450
PHEV	Preferred	.....\$49,945
	Premium Sport	.....54,900
	Premium Plus	.....57,950

2025 MAZDA SUV FULL LINEUP

CX-30	.....from \$24,995
CX-5	....." 28,570
CX-50	....." 30,300
CX-50 Hybrid	....." 33,970
CX-70	....." 40,445
CX-90	....." 37,845

We particularly enjoyed the 12-speaker Bose audio system, for a bit of an unusual reason. Though not confirmed with Bose engineers, its specialized profiles seemed to us to isolate, enhance, re-separate and remix key elements in the style of the very best (and thus rarest) enhanced remixes. Most will probably just notice the system sounds great, but we had fun with this.