

WHAT MAKES A SUBARU A SUBARU?
WELCOME TO AN ERA OF SUBTLE REDEFINITION BY JOE SAGE

It's interesting to trace the evolution of the entire Subaru lineup. In particular, the crossovers started out easy to follow—Outback based on Legacy Wagon based on Legacy Sedan; and both the Crosstrek and Forester based on Impreza Sedan. As all have migrated to the Subaru Global Platform, keeping track of individual model evolutions is equal parts compelling and almost unnecessary. A disappearance of sedans and increased emphasis on utilities and crossovers has been happening industrywide for years, as market forces and platform evolutions intertwine. For Subaru, it has been taken as an opportunity, using their adaptable universal platform to move away from that sibling relationship and create new utilities.

And the overall change feels significant. Through considerable evolution, Forester has stayed conceptually stuck in our heads as its earliest iterations—shorter and (therefore seemingly) taller, even as it had evolved to more common proportions. Such echoes are now easily cast aside, as the new Forester takes on considerably more mainstream SUV proportions. In its new form, we suspect many may take the Forester as an Outback at a glance (or even the less commonly seen Ascent), till they see the badge. But Outback is now embarking upon its own upscaling for 2026, a story for another time. We spent considerable time developing a complex chart for you, comparing the evolution of just

the two most recent (or upcoming) generations of Forester and Outback, only to realize Forester has not changed as dramatically as it may seem, so we are skipping the chart. It turns out to be more a case of solidifying Forester's form and space, in turn clarifying Outback's upcoming nudge upward within its space. As both evolve in style as well as size, when you come down to it, it seems the driving distinction is persona as much as specifics. And the persona of the new Forester will appeal widely. All that aside, Subaru Forester for 2025 has a range of news and advancements all its own. Tops on the list may be the one we're driving here—a hybrid, with an all-new, next-generation power-

train, with a new engine in familiar size and format, still a 2.5-liter boxer, adding hybrid components for up to 40 percent higher fuel mileage and massive torque (combined figures still do not have an industry standard), along with advancements in both vehicle and user style, comfort and tech. The hybrid also brings towing to Forester, at 1500 lb. We always notice others of the same vehicle we're driving each week, especially all-new vehicles. Subaru's presence in our market has been growing dramatically for years, and the gen-six 2025 Forester seems to be catching on fast. Through it all, Subaru's evolving wagon-crossover-SUV set has seemed to own its own space—long known for their utility, standard universal all-wheel-drive and active lifestyle buyers, attracted by affordability, value and reliability. It may seem that Subaru is migrating some of its key lineup toward the space occupied by others, and there is some truth to that—again, market forces, perhaps over idiosyncrasy. But it could

also be said that others have migrated to try to be more like Subaru. Our week of driving was remarkable in its lack of nitpicky notes. Power and handling were tops. Legroom and headroom provide full-size-worthy fit and long-drive comfort. Subaru's iteration of CVT avoids the feel and operation that bother some people with other brands. And that was without even relying on its extensive set of modes and management—it's good to go, right out of the box, which is our favorite setup. The broader point may be about how shifts in key Subaru vehicles may shift the feel of the overall lineup and brand. We suspect most people won't think about it in this much depth (although their base is tops in loyalty and commitment, so they may debate things a bit among themselves). But without changing their basic flavor at all, Subaru has made a few moves, equal parts subtle and dramatic, to make sure they fortify their position-and still own the space. ■



SPECIFICATIONS	
ASSEMBLY	Yajima Plant, Ota, Gunma, Japan
ENGINE	next-generation Subaru series-parallel hybrid system: 2.5L 4-cyl boxer, DOHC + two electric motor generators
ELEC MOTOR / BATTERY	three-phase AC synchronous elec motor, high-voltage sealed Li-ion battery
HP/TORQUE (ICE)	162 hp / 154 lb-ft
ELEC MOTOR	118 hp / 199 lb-ft
COMBINED	194 hp
TRANSMISSION	Lineartronic CVT w integrated motor-generators, X-Mode, SI-Drive performance mgmt, EV drive mode, 6-spd manual mode
DRIVETRAIN	Symmetrical AWD
SUSPENSION	four-wheel indep, raised: F: MacPherson-type struts, lower L-arms, coils, stblzr bar, hydraulic engine mts; R: dbl-wishbone, coils, stblzr bar
STEERING	dual-pinion elec pwr-asst
BRAKES	F: 12.6 vented; R: 11.8 vented
WHEELS	19x7.5 alum alloy, bronze finish
TIRES	235/50 R19 99V a/s
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	183.3 / 105.1 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.7 in
APPR/DEPART/BRKOVER	19.0 / 24.7 / 19.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.0 / 37.7 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	43.3 / 39.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY	27.5 / 69.1 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	1500 lb
WEIGHT	3913 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 16.6 gal
MPG	35/34/35 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$37,995
DESTINATION CHARGE	1420
TOTAL	\$39,415

2025 SUBARU FORESTER LINEUP	
FORESTER (base)	\$29,695
Premium	31,995
Sport	34,495
Limited	35,995
Touring	39,995
FORESTER HYBRID	
Premium Hybrid	\$34,995
Sport Hybrid	37,995
Limited Hybrid	39,410
Touring Hybrid	41,695

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