

Apples'n'oranges

BY JOE SAGE

Running through the range of Mazda SUV sizes in recent months, we had a week each with the CX-90 and the CX-50 just two issues ago. As noted at that time, this left us just the CX-5 and CX-70 not recently driven. Well, here is the CX-70. Mazda CX-90 and CX-70—without so much as a CX-80 in between—are an unusual pairing. Despite obviously different numbers, which commonly (including in their own lineup, CX-5 aside) means different sizes—the bigger the number, the bigger the size—CX-70 is the result of a non-standard approach. The CX-70 is a two-row equivalent of the three-row CX-90. This 70/90 scheme, whether it immediately seems to make sense or not, may be defensible in that the 70 is smaller in row count and seat count. Where it may puzzle people, though, is in pricing—the smaller-model-numbered, fewer-rowed CX-70 costs more than the CX-90. Yes, this is atypical. But beyond the model num-

ber and row count being lower and fewer than CX-90, the price becomes higher as the CX-70 is further distinguished by a more luxurious interior. But it certainly didn't have to be structured this way. Why wasn't this just achieved via one model with one number, then options for rows and seats, and options for luxury finishes and features? This is done all the time. It seems a valid question. Product planners always have their reasons—customer psychographs, price, profit and positioning, industry trends and their own dealer inputs. They analyze it all. As with any data, you can reach more than one conclusion. And this is theirs. Very likely, as positioning evolved, the three-row may have been nudged more toward a soccer team persona, while the two-row was fancied up as more of a four-executive corporate suite. This explains it, but still doesn't answer the question—why not flip the numbers to climb by price

walk, or why not just use one number? At any rate, let's drive. It should be much like the recent CX-90, right? All vital specs are identical. Our initial perception this time was of it being a bit ponderous, with a low growl, a steady, measured application of power, evoking a lion awakened from slumber. Within a couple of days, though, we were calling it the king of the beasts and stating that it had "all the power in the world." And that's in line with our prior CX-90 week. We also had especially noted a standout Bose audio system both times. If nothing else, as two- and three-row offerings overlap marketwide, this CX-70-90 identity quirk may help you better remember the Mazda lineup. So go shop the two and see which one suits you best. The thing is, many people are likely to decide based on two rows versus three first, price and features second. Others, the opposite. Although luxury level and price are inverted, most anybody can find exactly the fit they need, from among this mix. They and others will nonetheless surely wonder why the odd apples'n'oranges presentation. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Hofu, Japan
ROWS / SEATS	two / five
ENGINE	e-SKYACTIV G 3.3L inline-6 turbo
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.0:1
BOOST	48V Mild Hybrid Boost w i-Stop
HP/TORQUE	(prem fuel) 340 hp / 369 lb-ft (elec motor) 16.6 hp / 113 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	SKYACTIV-Drive 8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	i-ACTIV AWD
SUSPENSION	F: dbl wishbone; R: multilink
BRAKES	F: 13.7 vented; R: 13.8 vented
WHEELS/TIRES	21x9.5J machine cut / 275/45 R21
TIRES	275/45 R21 107W M+S
HEADROOM (F/R)	(mnrf) 39.6 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.7 / 39.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(21-in wheels) 8.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.1 ft
CARGO CAPACITY	39.6 / 75.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4863 lb
TOW CAPACITY	std 3500 / w pkg 5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem rec'd / 18.5 gal
MPG	23/28/25 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$56,670
PAINT: Zircon Sand Metallic	595
CARGO ORGANIZER	100
ILLUM DOOR SILL PLATES	390
LOGO WELCOME LIGHT	175
RETRACTABLE CARGO COVER	215
DESTINATION CHARGE	1530
TOTAL	\$59,675

Note: price has gone up slightly since ours; see chart.

2026 MAZDA CX-70 LINEUP

3.3 Turbo	Preferred	\$42,750
	Premium	46,780
	Premium Plus	49,570
3.3 Turbo S	Premium	\$53,440
	Premium Plus	56,870
PHEV	SC	\$44,450
	SC Plus	47,450

vs Mazda CX-90 3-row

CX-90 (3-row)	from \$38,900
CX-90 PHEV	" 50,495

