SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

BY JOE SAGE

It's definitely a kick to have a humble brown Subaru wagon that is by far the quickest thing on the freeway ramp. Of course, some may point out that this is officially an SUV. Its Brilliant Bronze Metallic paint may be a warm grey to some eyes. And, like Subaru Solterra, it's a Toyota-shared build. But such quibbles miss the point—this thing is hot.

The 2026 Subaru Trailseeker, their second EV, is to Solterra sort of as Outback is to Impreza, as well as how WRX is to Impreza, all in one. While adding a more outdoor personality (and 3500-pound towing), Trailseeker also has 60+ percent more horsepower (375 vs 233 max for Solterra), quicker acceleration (0-to-60 as quick as 3.8 seconds vs 6.5 for Solterra), all with almost the same range (281 miles vs 288 Solterra)—while still under $40,000 (just $1500 more than Solterra). It's quite a package.

In a rear three-quarter view, Trailseeker doesn't look so much like an SUV or wagon, but arguably more like a European shooting brake, one of the sexiest body styles in the world, though not seen and not even widely known on our shores.

From a powertrain standpoint, the Trailseeker is very simple and straightforward, as EVs generally are. From a personality standpoint, it's much more complex, and all in a good way.

Smooth and absolutely trouble-free behind the wheel, we imagined someone driving it, knowing nothing about it, and when told it's an EV, saying yeah? Wow. Okay. After all, there was time when a fuel-injected vehicles were so unusual, so specialized, they had their own model designations, and surf bands wrote songs about them. What matters is that the Trailseeker is smooth, potent and quick. The drivetrain, while delivering EV benefits, is basically transparent.

When EVs were new, with their radical acceleration, we wondered how well they could cohabit in traffic with more conventional powertrains. This one has *very* strong acceleration (4.4 seconds to 60 mph), yet the pedal feels solid and tame, and you feel totally in control. Aggressive moves do *not* feel squirty, spurty, radical or on the edge of control—just very firm and comfortably potent.

Throughout the week, our notes were largely the same—"this is just a dreamy drive. Smooth-powered, accurate placement and handling... and there is nothing to dislike about it."

The interface is also blessedly normal. We surmised that if a time traveler popped into our world a couple of years ago and found themselves in an EV, eight out of ten chances are that they would find a lot very odd about the whole experience, with strange, slightly disorienting controls and a disorienting drive experience, hardly a slip-behind-the-wheel-and-go. But if that same time traveler slipped into this, now, they would simply be driving along saying, wow, this is a really nice car. Our conclusion is that *finally*, this is where this powertrain category should have been all along.

Subaru (along with EV partner-to-date Toyota) may seem to have come into the EV category later than others. But before anyone thinks that means they're late to the game, it very possibly now puts them ahead of the curve. While many others went off throwing unfathomable amounts of money at something that was not ready for prime time, because they were told had to, billions of dollars and some questionable early products later, the definition of leading the pack has new perspectives.

Subaru waited to get things right—for technologies to mature and to gauge actual market interest beyond mandates. The results are thus well above par and the experience more satisfying.

In fact—having just launched a third Toyota EV collaboration, the Uncharted, and with a fourth, a big three-row 2028 Getaway, coming in spring—Subaru has also just announced its first solo EV platform effort is underway, working toward 2029.

While Subaru is famous for the intensity of its brand loyalists and return customers, Trailseeker is one that might turn a whole lot of new heads. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY ..Yajima Plant, Ota, Gunma, Japan
ROWS / SEATS .....two / five
MOTOR .....front & rear AC synchronous permanent-magnet motors, integral transaxles front & rear, power inverters
OUTPUT .....167 kW / 375 hp
HP/TORQUE .....375 hp / 396 lb-ft*
*(torque per various 3rd party sources)
BATTERY .....74.7-kWh high-capacity Li-ion 104 cells, 391V rated , 191 Ah rated, w battery cooling/heating system
DRIVETRAIN .....Subaru Symmetrical AWD
MODES.....X-MODE w snow/dirt and deep snow/mud modes; grip control; downhill assist control; hill-start assist
0-TO-60 .....4.4 sec
SUSPENSION .....4-whl indep: **F:** MacPherson-type struts w internal rebound springs, lower L-arms, coils, stblzr bar; **R:** dbl wishbone, coils, dampers w internal rebound springs, steel lower arms w aerodynamic covers, stblzr bar
STEERING .....quick-ratio elec pwr assist rack & pinion
BRAKES.....**F:** 12.9 in vented, dual-piston; **R:** 12.5-in vented, single-piston; regenerative system w 4 modes
WHEELS.....20x7.5 alum alloy, machine finish w dark gray spoke inserts
TIRES .....235/50 R20 100V all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....190.8 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE .....8.5 in
TURNING CIRCLE.....36.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/R).....(moonroof) 38.6 / 37.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....42.1 / 35.3 in
CARGO CAPACITY .....31.3 / 74.0 cu.ft
ROOF RAIL LOAD.....(dyn/static) 176 / 700 lb
WEIGHT .....4530 lb
TOW CAPACITY .....3500 lb
RANGE .....(Limited trim) 274 miles
CHARGING SPEED .....up to 150 kW DC fast: 10 to 80% as quickly as 28 min
MPG ...(MPGe)* 125/103/114 (city/hwy/comb)
*(per Edmunds)

BASE PRICE **$43,995**
DESTINATION CHARGE.....1450

TOTAL.....**$45,445**

2026 TRAILSEEKER LINEUP

Premium.....**$39,995**
Limited .....▼ **43,995**
Touring.....**46,555**