

SUBARU IMPREZA RV 2.0-Litre Manual Five-door Hatch

FEATURES	
BEST	WORST
Secure handling, roadholding and braking	Lacks good low speed performance
Equipment levels	Limited rear leg room
Standards of finish	Temporary use spare tyre



Subaru has expanded its popular Impreza range with a new recreational-style model called the RV.

Originally, the RV was going to be called the Outback Sport (it borrows styling cues from the Liberty Outback) however the name was changed to RV to avoid possible confusion with the larger Subaru Outback.

The Impreza RV is available only in hatchback form, with the option of automatic or manual transmission. The manual has a dual range transmission. Prices are \$29,990 for the manual and \$31,980 for the automatic version.

While these prices might seem a little steep compared to some other small-medium 2.0 litre hatchbacks, the Impreza RV does come with quite a comprehensive array of standard equipment.

As well as Subaru's trademark full-time all-wheel drive system, the RV features air conditioning, anti-lock brakes and dual front airbags. Also included are 16 inch alloy wheels (four only), cruise control, stereo system with single in-dash CD player, power windows and mirrors, remote central locking, front and rear fog lights, and a height adjustable driver's seat.

Externally, the Impreza emulates its Outback stablemate, with a two-tone colour scheme that contrasts grey opal bumpers, wheel arches and side rub strips, with blue, white, green or red body colours.

The two-tone theme continues inside, with black and grey dash and door trims, and grey fleck cloth trim seats.

In keeping with other current model Imprezas, the RV has a solid and refined feel on the road, and looks to be well finished throughout.

Interior space is much the same as in other model Imprezas; front occupants have enough leg room to be comfortable, but rear seat leg room is tight for adults with the front seats set back.

Seat comfort is generally satisfactory, though the front seats don't provide as good lateral support as those in the RX or WRX models.

The hatchback body styling of the Impreza RV is useful in that it provides more luggage space and easier loading than a sedan, plus around 1.6 metres of load length with all or part of the rear seat folded.

On the road, the Impreza RV proved to be very capable on some aspects, and a little disappointing in others.

The most pleasing aspects of the RV are undoubtedly its excellent handling and roadholding.

Assisted by its full-time all-wheel drive system, the extra body and chassis stiffening in these current Imprezas, and the extensive suspension changes, the test car felt very secure and capable over all types of road surfaces. As with other Imprezas, the RV is easy to handle and has high cornering limits.

Braking is also a strong point of the Impreza RV. The four-disc, anti-lock system, with tandem brake boosters, plus the car's inherently high levels of grip, combine to provide powerful emergency braking and fuss-free normal braking. Resistance to brake fade under heavy use was also impressively good.

The area where the Impreza RV falls a little short of expectations is performance. As reported in our initial test of the new model series late last year, these car are close to 200 kg heavier than the previous model and this has told on performance.

The RV isn't what you would call a 'slug' and provided the engine is kept spinning in its upper rev ranges, acceleration is perfectly adequate. However, if engine revs are allowed to drop too low, the performance drops off markedly.

That means frequent gear changing to maintain performance and not being able to use the higher gears as much can have an adverse effect on fuel economy. Fifth gear is very much a freeway overdrive; any hills soon have you changing back to fourth, or maybe third, gear.

The Impreza RV is in no way intended for off-road use, however its extra ground clearance (due in part, to the larger diameter wheels) could well come in handy in adverse road conditions such as mud or snow.

SUMMARY:

The Subaru Impreza RV offers an appealing combination of secure road manners, high quality finish and comprehensive equipment levels, plus it provides sufficient versatility to qualify as an attractive recreational vehicle for the smaller family.

Some buyers might wish for more power, or perhaps a bit more space, but overall, the Impreza RV hits its target market very well and with Subaru's excellent reliability record it's a car you can buy with confidence.

SUBARU IMPREZA RV

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Type Horizontally opposed four cylinder
Capacity in litres..... 1.994
Induction Multi-point fuel injection
Fuel recommendation ULP
Claimed max. power 92 kW at 5600 rpm
Claimed max. torque 184 Nm at 3600 rpm
Specific power output..... 46.1 kW/litre

TRANSMISSION:

Type Five speed manual
Driving wheels Full-time all-wheel drive
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear..... 36.0 km/h

WHEELS: Alloy, 6.5J x 16 inch

TYRES: Bridgestone Potenza, 205/55 R16

Spare: Temporary use T135/70 D16

STEERING:

Type Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock..... 3.1
Turning circle (measured) 11.3 metres

DIMENSIONS:

Mass 1320 kg
Length 4405 mm
Width (incl. mirrors) 1695 mm
Height..... 1485 mm
Ground clearance (measured)..... 158 mm
Seating capacity 5
Fuel tank capacity..... 50 litres

TOWING:

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load) 900 kg
Max. towball download (laden trailer) ... 75 kg

NRMA THEFT RATING:

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) 51.5

WARRANTY: Three years, unlimited km

MANUFACTURED IN: Japan

TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION:

50 - 80 km/h (in 3rd gear)..... 5.8 sec
60 - 100 km/h (in 3rd gear)..... 7.9 sec
0 - 80 km/h 8.1 sec
0 - 100 km/h 12.6 sec
0 - 400 metres 18.3 sec

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Litres/100 km in city 10.8
Litres/100 km on highway 8.6
Litres/100 km overall 9.3

BRAKING:

Distance to stop from 80 km/h 27.8 metres

NOISE:

Interior at constant 80 km/h..... 68 dB(A)

● ... Test vehicle supplied by Subaru (Aust) Pty Limited

Call NRMA Automotive Technical Services on 1300 655 443, should you require additional information on this vehicle, on other makes, or for general advice on automotive matters.