

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2008 Subaru Legacy 2.5 GT spec. B The Turbo Legacy

By KATHLEEN CARR

The problem with expectations is the sole fact that they exist. Throw a turbo-charged boxer engine, a six-speed manual transmission and a sport-tuned suspension together and many drivers may expect the latest performance car from Porsche.

One car nobody would expect is the 2008 Subaru Legacy 2.5 GT Spec.B. The Legacy is constantly outshined by its rally-inspired stable-mate, the Impreza WRX STI, but with its 243-horsepower flat four engine and symmetrical all-wheel drive, the Legacy is more than capable to hold its own. In combining the horizontally opposed engine and Subaru's Symmetrical All-Wheel drive system, Subaru has created one of the most balanced mid-sized cars on the market. Drivers can expect to race from 0 to 60 mph in about five and a half seconds.

The GT spec. B Legacy adds several performance enhancements to the well-equipped GT Limited trim. In addition to GT features like a Momo steering wheel, electroluminescent gauges, and SI-Drive, the spec. B includes upgraded Torsen limited-slip differential, a stability control system, sport-tuned suspension with



Specifications: 2.5-Liter 243-hp @ 241 lb-ft. torque DOHC Intercooled Turbo engine; 6-speed SI-Drive manual transmission; AWD; 17-City 24-Highway MPG; \$35,730. MSRP

Bilstein dampers, 18-inch alloy wheels, performance tires and alloy-trimmed pedals covers. The spec. B also gets a lower stance thanks to a ground effects kit. A navigation system is also standard.

The smoothness of the Boxer engine is achieved by having the pistons counteract each other's force by reaching top dead center at the same time. This combined with the low center of gravity afforded to flat-style engines, gives the Legacy stellar handling capabilities. Unlike other all-wheel drive vehicles, Subaru's Symmetrical All-Wheel drive offers a 50/50 torque distribution between the front and rear. The Spec.B's only available transmission is a six-speed manual and this specific car came equipped with the op-

tional (\$451) short-throw shifter that made driving the car even more fun.

The Legacy's SI-DRIVE allows the driver to switch between three driving modes, Intelligent (I), Sport (S) and Sport Sharp (S#), that fine tunes the engine performance and throttle response. The driver controls the SI-DRIVE setting using either a dial near the gear shifter or by using buttons located on the steering wheel. The Intelligent mode optimizes fuel economy. The Sport and Sport Sharp modes noticeably tune the performance capabilities of the Legacy especially in reference to throttle response.

Not one to grab too much attention, the Legacy's design is unique but doesn't stand out too much. The pillar-less doors

and functional hood scoop definitely add character to the Legacy. The lower stance, 10-spoke wheels and projector beam headlamps gives an aggressive look to the Spec.B model.

A throaty note of the exhaust under acceleration is similar to many tuner cars - making downshifting and heavy acceleration very enjoyable. The 100-watt, six speaker audio system also helps to provide excellent listening enjoyment. Conveniently controllable from the steering wheel, the audio system features a six-disc CD changer with MP3/WMA capability and AUX input.

Inside, the layout of the interior is very simplistic and useful featuring touch screen navigation within an easy reach and basic

controls on the steering wheel. While the front seats offer excellent side bolstering in corners, on long trips can be a little uncomfortable. The Legacy 2.5 GT Spec.B comes with leather-trimmed seating that feature stylish Alcantara inserts that give a look of suede but feel closer to cloth.

The electroluminescent gauge cluster provides a stylish touch to the instrument panel. The information screen is located in tachometer and controlled using buttons on the lower part of the steering wheel. One aspect that seems redundant in the cluster is the MPG gauge. While the gauge does give quick and easy view of the car's instant miles per gallon, the same thing can be tracked digitally using the information system. Its mere presence is almost comical watching it swing from the plus (good mpg) to the minus (bad mpg).

Known for its safety, the 2008 Subaru Legacy received the highest rating from both the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) for frontal, side and rear impact protection. Key aspects to the Legacy's safety include seat-mounted airbags and whiplash-protecting active headrests for the front passengers and roof-mounted side airbag curtain for all outboard passengers.

With an as-tested price of \$35,730, the Legacy is rather pricey when compared to its competition but few other mid-size sedans leave a driver smiling after tight S-curved roads.

Veteran's Needed Home Repair Done



Ray and Dina Clark plan on getting a new lease on life after volunteers came to help the family make badly needed repairs to their home.



More than 60 volunteers made about \$50,000 worth of repairs to a veteran Marine's Portland home through a charitable event organized by Sears, Sovereign Construction, Hands On Greater Portland and Rebuilding Together.

Mailbox Food Drive Saturday Letter carriers to collect donations

Close to 3,000 letter carriers in Oregon and Clark County, Wash. will help Stamp out Hunger on Saturday, May 10, by collecting donations of nonperishable food from postal customers while delivering the mail.

The letter-carriers food drive is the largest single-day food drive in the state. In this time of economic difficulties, donations to the Oregon Food Bank are down while demand for food is up.

The food collected during the National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive helps the Oregon Food Bank Network serve the estimated 192,000 people who eat meals from

emergency food boxes in an average month. Of those, nearly 72,000 are children. That's the equivalent of 160 elementary schools each month.

Studies show that children who are hungry have more trouble learning in school and may face irreversible health problems later in life, such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease.

"Food drives like National Association of Letter Carriers provide a critical source of much needed nutritious, shelf-stable food," says Rachel Bristol, the food bank's executive director and CEO.

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and nervous system. When the body yells, "Fire!" and you experience pain; it is trying to get your attention that it is being injured. When there is stress in the nervous system, this is a serious problem. The nervous system controls every other function of the body and left untreated can cause ill-

health in other areas of the body as well. Our specialty is finding the cause of your problem and taking care of it, painlessly, without drugs...Just as nature intended. If you suffer from pain, stop pulling the alarm wires from the walls. Together, we can put the fire out...for good!

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