Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2009 Subaru Forester 2.5XT

The Boxy Charmer Grows in Character

BY KATHLEEN CARR

The 2009 Subaru Forester, the third generation of this versatile, sure-footed pack mule, and Subaru still isn't quite sure what to call it. So far as we can discern the fuzzy corporate description, the 2009 Subaru Forester is a crossover-utility vehicle on a sport-sedan chas-

In its first full redesign the Subaru Forester has moved closer to the mainstream than some fans might have hoped it would. The old model's boxy charm has been toned down, and what's left is a compact SUV whose driving dynamics are on par with some of the nimbler players in this segment. A few Forester die- low and visibility high. hards may cry foul. The SUV remains as practical as ever, but now in the market to buy

While the 2009 is only 3 inches longer than the previous generation, its proportions have changed, tionally tall greenhouse was replaced by one of average height. In particular, the hood is higher, even though Subaru has always noted that its horizontally opposed engine style helped keep the hoodline



Specifications: 2.5-Liter 4-cylinder 224-hp @ 226 lb-ft. torque turbocharged engine; 4-speed automatic w/manual-shift mode transmission; AWD; 19-City 24-Highway MPG; \$30,660. MSRP

Ground clearance is also raised a bit, to 8.9 inches. Fog lights are an boasts enough refinement to merit option. Turbo versions are distinserious consideration from anyone guished by a hood scoop that funnels cooling air into the intercooler just under the hood.

Standard dual exhaust pipes add a sporty touch, as do the 17-inch and it seems like the models excepalloy wheels that come on all but the base trim level. The doors have the gas pump. window frames now, which gives them a much sturdier feel when is a five-speed manual or four-speed slammed than last year's frameless automatic for the base-model en-

4 has been substantially revised for 2009 and includes a new intake system, intercooler and turbocharger as featured by the Legacy

and Outback engines. The turbo makes highway driving much more fun, merging into traffic less dramatic. The turbo requires premium gas; something to the wheels with the most grip. consider with the daily increases at

gine, while the turbo gets only the to the large side and rear windows,

When the Forester comes with a four-speed automatic transmission, the torque split for the AWD system constantly varies according to have an upscale finish, but some of acceleration, deceleration and the plastics lining the glove comwheel slip, and as much as 100 percent of power can be directed to The steering wheel has a satisfying

The Forester's dash sits higher against the windshield than you'll The 2009 Forester transmission find in many SUVs, which gives the cabin a more carlike feel and a lower perceived driving position. Thanks

excellent.

Interior quality is good, if occasionally inconsistent. The materials vary: The upper dash panels partment look grainy and cheap. grip, but I found the blue-and-white gauges a bit tacky. Other controls, from the turn signals to the window switches, show sturdy construction, and overall fit and finish is respectable.

Given that all-wheel drive is stan-The turbocharged 2.5-liter boxer- 4-speed automatic with manual- however, overall visibility remains dard, the Forester packs impres-

sive value. Subaru shaved some \$1,200 off the sticker price for 2009, including a temperature/gas mileage display, A/C, cruise control, a CD player with an MP3 auxiliary jack, power accessories and remote keyless entry.

Standard safety equipment includes six airbags, with side-impact airbags for the front seats and side curtain airbags for both rows. The curtain airbags have tip sensors to deploy during a rollover. Active head restraints, four-wheel-disc antilock brakes, traction control and an electronic stability system are also standard. All five seats have adequately high head restraints.

We haven't said much about the styling, which unless you own a previous Forester, won't do much to tickle your excitement meter. The 2009 Forester looks a bit more upscale and sophisticated than its predecessors and avoids the cuteute look.

Driving the 2009 Subaru Forester is more exciting than staring at it. Tip the throttle on the turbo model and you get a smooth, lag-free response. The four-speed automatic could use another gear, but it had no problem working with the allwheel drive to power us up and down steep rocky slopes and muddy, rutted trails.

It doesn't matter what you call the 2009 Subaru Forester. Although it's bulked up a bit and taken on the look of something serious, this is still at heart the same funky station wagon we have grown to love. It was a crossover; before crossovers were cool, a utility vehicle that's easy to live with.

Bringing Hope

continued A from Metro

Through a rigorous encounter with great texts and ideas, the program hopes to foster the intellectual and personal growth of ing prison more confident and the participants, to further their ready to continue on a road to engagement in civic and commu- higher learning. nity life, and to make it possible for them to choose to continue hard road to the perfect world, we their education.

to evaluate everything from works wrote another inmate.

of Plato to the U.S. Constitution, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and W.E.B. DuBois' "The Souls of Black Folk.

The EPCO inmates who participated say they plan on leav-

"Although we still have a long have the ability to accomplish The 12-week class met 23 times anything we put our mind to.

Housing Designed Affordable and Green

continued A from Metro

Shaver Green will include most if not all of the following green features: Sixty percent or better performance beyond the Oregon Energy Code, saving 7,320 therms achieve some on-site power gen- least 60 years. eration; use of materials with su-

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low-flow lavatories.

is selecting finishes and building materials to not only achieve the goals of sustainability but also to is being financed by Armstrong keep cost as low as possible while building living spaces that will per year; solar roofing system to last and remain affordable for at Development, U.S. Bank Commer-

toilets and shower heads; and high-quality building can have DECA Architecture.

an impact beyond the local and Armstrong said his company regional green building market," Armstrong said.

The fully-funded development Stafford, the city of Portland's Bureau of Housing & Community cial Real Estate Division, Key Com-"Our hope is that through this munity Development Corp., perior durability for high traffic development, we can encourage Multnomah County, State of Orareas; use of recycled and pre- other affordable housing devel- egon Housing and Community fabricated materials; storm water opers to incorporate more sus- Services, Portland Development management and zero potable tainable elements. We intend to Commission and Housing Authorwater for irrigation; dual flush demonstrate that a sustainable, ity of Portland. The architect is

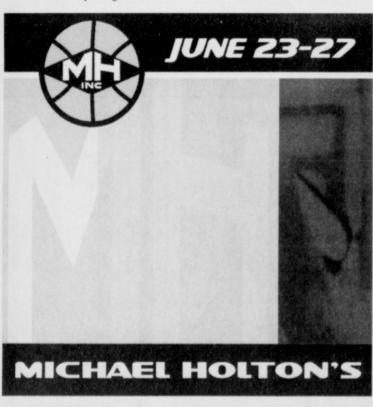
Leadership

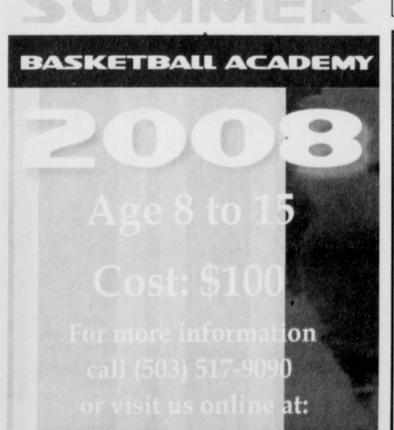
continued A from Metro

influence the American educational

He was attracted to "the idea that you can take people who wouldn't readily have access to this highly valued kind of education and bring it to them and say, 'What can you do with this?"

For more information about the Humanity in Perspective program for low-income adults who have struggled with education from a young age, contact Phoebe Wayne, 503-241-0543, extension 12 ore-mail pwayne@oregonhum.org.





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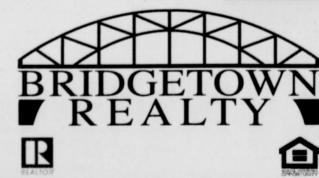
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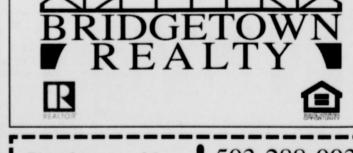
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