

Portland Observer Auto Review



Tested Vehicle Information: 3.6L Horizontally-Opposed-6 Cyl Engine; 5-Speed Auto Transmission with Manual Mode; 18 City MPG, 25 Highway MPG; MSRP\$32,220, Tested Vehicle Price \$33724.

2011 Subaru Outback 3.6R Limited / BDK

BY KATHLEEN CARR

The 2011 Outback is now bigger and more comfortable than before with the redesign of this year model it has added more comfort to fit more lifestyles. Its generous ground clearance and standard all-wheel drive makes this a vehicle that can adapt to a very of road conditions.

The 3.6R comes 3.6-liter six-cylinder with a five-speed automatic transmission. The CVT and automatic transmissions feature a manual mode with paddle levers on the steering wheel. Limited models feature leather seating, a six-disc 440-watt nine-speaker harman/kardon audio system, dual-zone automatic climate control and Bluetooth hands-free phone capability. It handle great, even felt a little more sportier. Not much as an impact when you hit the bumps in the road.

Subaru was able to keep the pounds down through the use of high strength steel, making the structure both safer and lighter. The Outback's relatively restrained tonnage helps the boxer six feel that much more potent when pushed,

and the weight reduction pays dividends in the braking department, allowing the Outback to be halted with minimal fuss on wet or dry pavement. It comes in at just over 3,600 pounds.

The tailgate is wider, the floor is lower, and the packaging of the new double-wishbone suspension combine to add a shade less than one cubic foot of extra cargo room over the current car with the rear seats up, and a tad less than six cubic feet with the rear seats down. Those rear seats, by the way, are one-touch fold-down with a 60/40 split, and also recline. The hauling space behind them can be covered with a retractable tonneau, and when you don't want to mess with the cove you can hide it in the subfloor, accessed by lifting the up the rubber mat and carpet.

The Limited model we drove had the Power Moonroof package, which adds a sunroof and an auto-dimming rearview mirror with integrated rearview camera. The Limited can be equipped with a navigation system, which requires the

Power Moonroof package and further includes a touchscreen interface, a larger rearview camera display in that touch screen, a single-CD player and an iPod interface. Port-installed options include satellite radio on non-Limited trims and a Bluetooth system that plugs into the open dash slot beneath the stereo and relies upon its own small speakers rather than the stereo system. For safety the Subaru Outback comes standard with stability and traction control, four-wheel antilock disc brakes, front side airbags and side curtain airbags.

Living in the Northwest the Outback is one vehicle that will make the cut. Subaru managed to combine a superb engine, capable AWD, impressive handling, capacious interior and improved looks into a functional, family-friendly package. I personally like the Ruby Red Color that the tested vehicle came in. It may get back reviews on the interior of the vehicle but if you live for the outdoors then the interior is just right. It also is not as boxy as previous models.

Major League

continued **▲** from front

lines employees modeled the new kits. Again, there was a surprise waiting. The team unveiled a new color to the team's palate: two tones of red on the secondary (away) jerseys.

"We are bringing world class design and innovation right here to our Portland Timbers with the launch of the team's official uniform today," said Antonio Zea, director of Soccer for adidas America. "As the official partner of the MLS we create uniforms for all 18 teams but there is something special about designing the jersey for the team in our own backyard which, we believe, em-

bodies the true spirit of Portland and Timber's fans."

The color and some of its detailing is intended to pay homage to Portland's "Rose City" nickname. More importantly, the Timbers' enthusiasm is rubbing off on one of their first major sponsors.

"This agreement is huge for us," Alaska Airlines president Brad Tilden said. "It is by far the biggest sponsorship the company has ever done in almost 80 years of our history. Soccer is huge in Portland. Our employees are hugely into soccer. And we're really excited about what the affiliation's going to do for our company."

Doug Binder writes for Major League Soccer.

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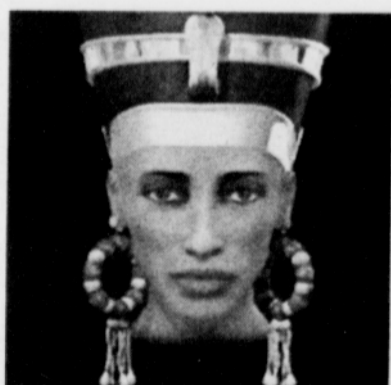
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