



ALL-NEW SUBARU FORESTER E-BOXER (2019) FIRST DRIVE REVIEW

Years ago, Subaru was known for its motorsport and pure performance. It was a brand for petrolheads and rally fans. Now, it prefers to be known for its reliable and safe lifestyle vehicles.

Therefore, out and out performance comes a little further down the list. That's not to say the Forester doesn't have 'oomph' – it does, but not the racing away from the lights kind. The all-new Forester e-Boxer will do 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds, and the top speed is 116mph. Indeed, the car's improved Lineartronic CVT transmission delivers 30 per cent more responsive acceleration than before. That's still not quick, but the union of symmetrical-all-wheel-drive (S-AWD) with the freshly implemented 150ps e-Boxer powertrain (a 2.0-litre four-cylinder petrol engine, joined with an electric motor) works.

RIDE & HANDLING

The fifth-generation Forester's ride and handling are more akin to a car than a go-anywhere SUV. Subaru's factory-fitted symmetrical all-wheel drive provides all-weather ability and assurance, while active torque vectoring gives improved cornering performance.

Considerable enhancements have been made to the car's suspension and other related systems, eliminating vibrations from the floor, seats and steering system.

The changes have helped create a new level of stable and responsive handling, so the Forester drives as precisely as you intend. This means fewer steering corrections are required, which in turn helps to reduce weariness on long drives. Certainly, the 100-mile media launch route in and around Riga flashed by without any fatigue present – and that was straight after an early morning flight from Gatwick. Mind you, the Latvian coffee may have helped!

Alterations to the Forester's body have helped boost ride contentment, too. The all-new SUV's width has been increased to give more front-seat comfort, and a longer wheelbase means more distance between the front and the rear passengers. All this, as well as expansions in hip, shoulder and headroom, have further amplified ride comfort.

It's also worth noting here that although the wheelbase has expanded by 30mm, the all-new Forester's minimum turning radius is only 5.4m (17.7 feet), ensuring first-rate ease of handling.

Words: Tim Barnes-Clay,
Test Location: Riga, Latvia



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