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Subaru Crosstrek 2.0i Touring – Brief Road Test

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Kim Henson takes the wheel of Subaru's all wheel drive Crosstrek...

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I first test-drove a Subaru (an all wheel drive estate car) in the autumn of 1979, and was impressed by the performance of its horizontally-opposed 'boxer' engine, its versatility in everyday use, and its spectacular levels of traction (albeit without a differential lock). In addition, in service the company's cars of that era proved to be reliable and easy to maintain.

Fast-forward 45 years and Subaru is still building reliable cars with the 'boxer' type engine (with hybrid assistance - and for other models the firm has also now ventured into the 'all-electric' power arena).

It was therefore with interest that I recently had the chance to sample the Subaru Crosstrek 2.0i Touring model, powered by a 1995cc horizontally-opposed engine with self-charging hybrid assistance, driving through Subaru's Lineartronic continuously variable automatic transmission system (with paddle shift facility). Featured too is Subaru's 'SI-drive' ('Intelligent Drive') system.



The Crosstrek is an SUV with the benefit of all wheel drive, especially useful for owners living in country districts and in areas where the weather can be adverse in winter (for example), but handy for anyone to have available. The car features a ground clearance of 220 mm (8.66 in) - useful if the going gets rough.

The towing capacity is a very useful 1,270 kg (2,800 lb).

Built on Subaru's 'Global Platform', the car incorporates MacPherson strut type front suspension, with a double wishbone suspension set-up at the rear, and with ventilated disc brakes at front and rear.



The 'Touring' model features 18 inch diamond turned aluminium alloy sports wheels (whereas the 'Limited' version has 17 inch wheels).

Subaru says that improvements to their Global Platform have enhanced stability, rigidity and strength, with improved roll resistance and more responsive steering than hitherto.

A wide array of advanced safety and convenience technology comes as standard. These including a next-generation EyeSight driver assist system, Autonomous Emergency Steering, Lane Centre function, Traffic Sign Recognition and Intelligent Speed Limiter functions, plus Subaru's Rear Vehicle Detection (SRVD) systems, also a Driver Monitoring System, which provides a warning if it detects that the driver is showing signs of fatigue.

The car is well-equipped for everyday use, including (as examples from a long list of standard-fit items), heated front seats, an 11.6 inch infotainment touch screen plus satellite navigation system, up-to-the-minute connectivity features, automatic LED steering responsive headlights and high beam assist, rain-sensing windscreen wipers, electrically-activated windows, keyless entry and push button start system, plus a reversing camera.

Further features also include synthetic leather upholstery (which extends to the steering wheel and transmission control handle), multi-way electrically-adjustable front seats, dual-zone automatic air conditioning, a power-operated sliding and tilt-adjustable sun roof and roof rails.

Crosstrek prices start at £34,290, with the 2.0i Touring model, as tested, listed at £36,345 ('on the road').

Behind the Wheel

I liked the interior treatment and comfortable seats in the test car, also the large central screen which was clear and easy to read/assimilate.

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On the move I found that the engine worked quietly and efficiently, while producing Subaru's distinctive but not intrusive 'boxer' sound. Acceleration was brisk enough, from rest and on the move, and the continuously variable Lineartronic transmission just did its job well. Progress was smooth and quiet, with hushed cruising at higher speeds.

I drove the test car on a sunny day on dry roads, and the four wheel drive system was not challenged. However, I know from previous experience with different Subarus over the years that it is very reassuring to have the knowledge that the all wheel drive set-up is available to help you in wet or muddy slippery conditions, both on and off road.

The supple ride quality was appreciated by this writer, and on the dry roads experienced, handling and roadholding characteristics were impressive.

There's plenty of room in the car for up to five passengers and their luggage, with a wide-opening tailgate and a 60/40 folding rear seat so that passenger and luggage carrying space can be varied according to need. Head and leg room for rear seat occupants is generous.

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VERDICT

I feel that the Crosstrek is an enjoyable and capable family vehicle. It's very versatile for everyday use and notably has the additional valuable trump card of having a competent permanent all wheel drive system.



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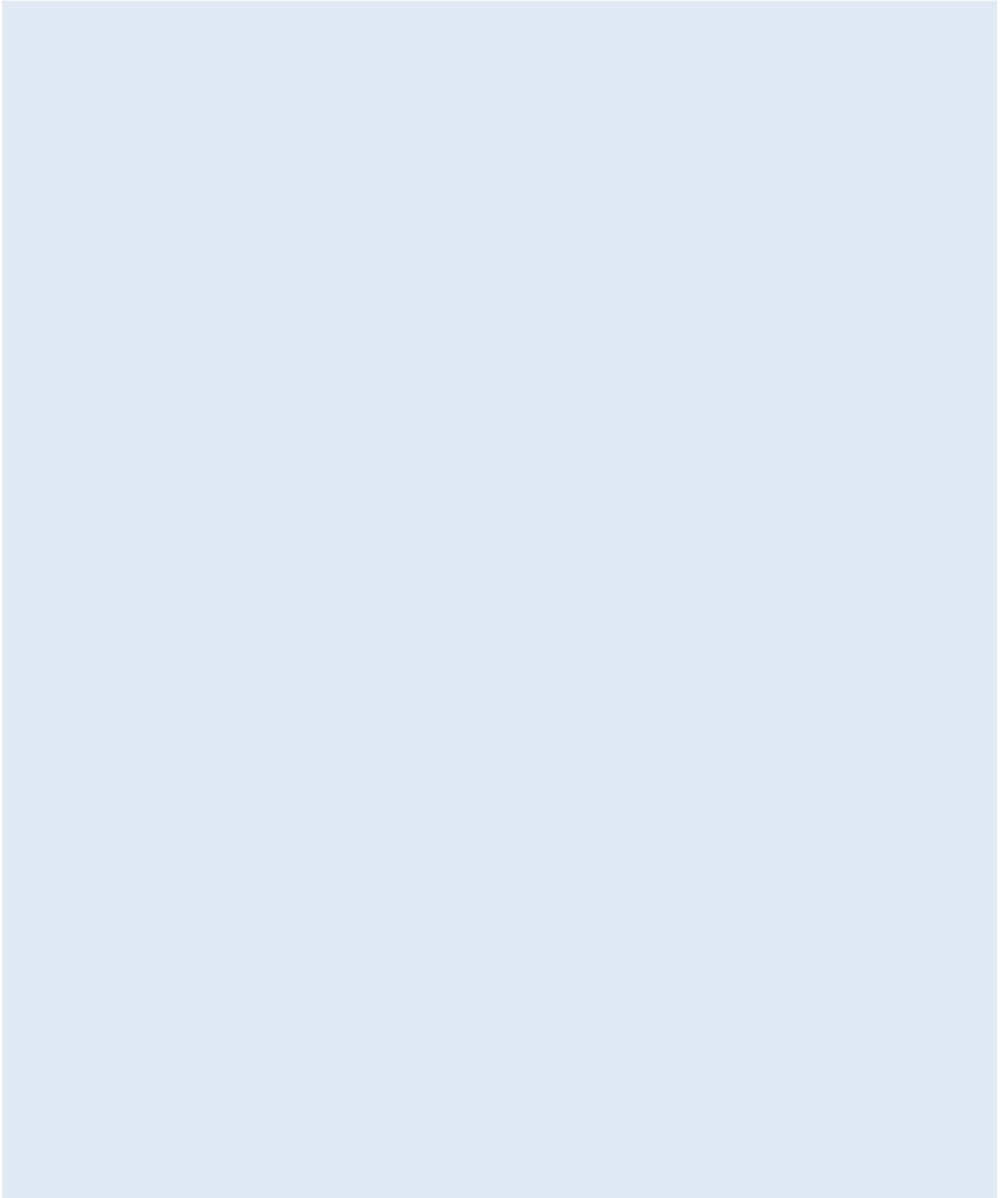
Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Subaru Crosstrek 2.0i Touring



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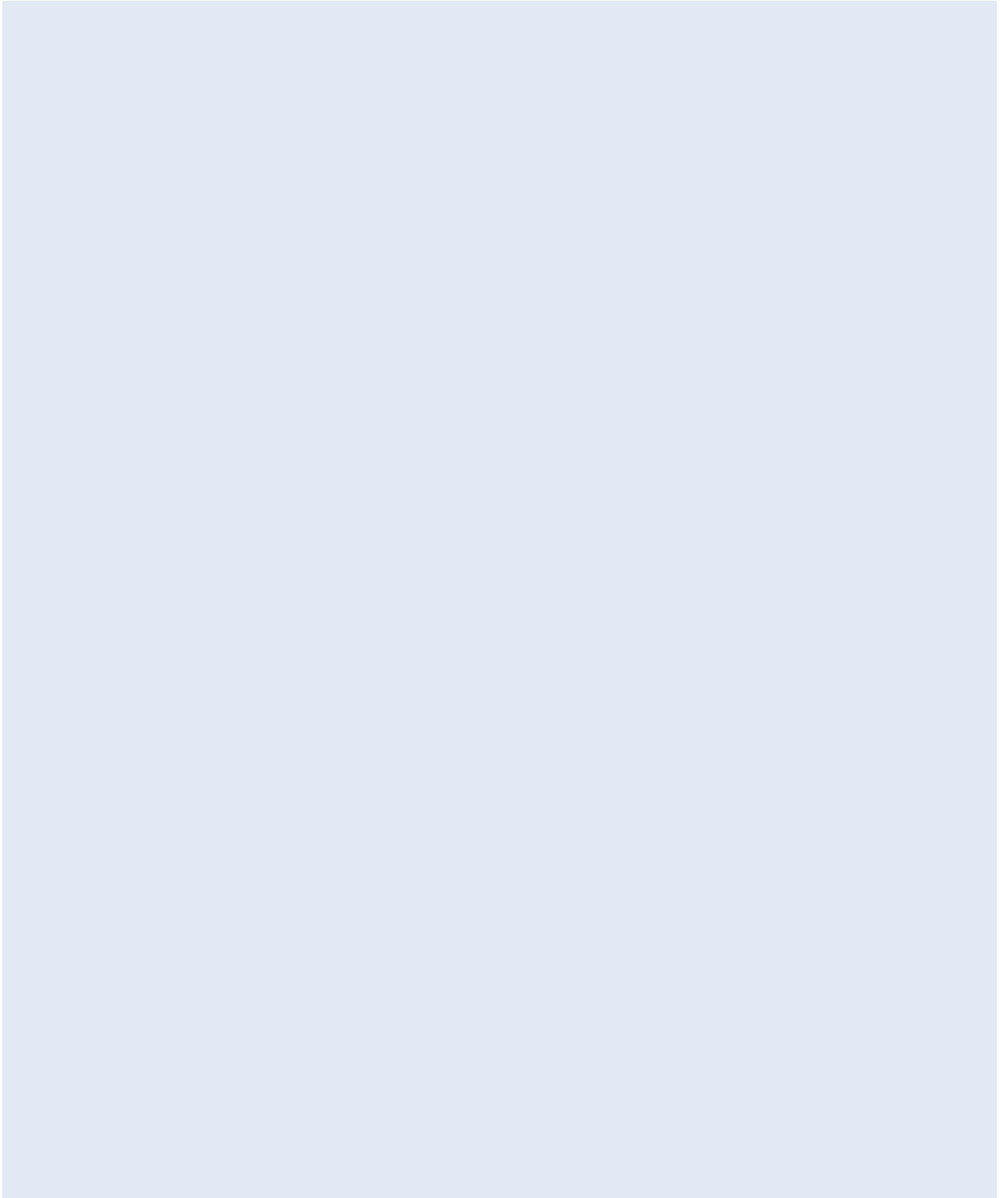
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Powertrain:

2.0 litre (1995cc) e-Boxer horizontally-opposed four cylinder petrol engine, plus self-charging hybrid electric assistance, with Lithium Ion traction battery (this battery comes with an eight year/100,000 mile warranty)

Max. Power: 100/136 PS @ 5,600 rpm

Max. Torque: 184 Nm (136 lb.ft) @ 4,000 rpm

Transmission: Lineartronic continuously variable automatic, driving all four wheels via



a permanent symmetrical all-wheel drive system, with 'X-MODE' (incorporating Hill Descent Control)

Performance:

0 - 62 mph: 10.8 seconds

Max. speed: 123 mph

Fuel consumption (official 'Combined' figure): 36.8 miles per gallon

Fuel tank capacity 48 litres (10.56 gallons)

Approximate maximum range on a full tank, at Combined consumption figure: 389 miles

Dimensions:

Overall Length: 4,495 mm (14.75 ft)

Wheelbase: 2,670 mm (8.76 ft)

Overall Width: 1,800 mm (5.91 ft)

Height, including roof rails: 1,600 mm (5.25 ft)

Kerb weight: 1,597 kg (3,521 lb)

Boot volume, seats up: 315 litres (11.12 cu.ft)

Boot volume, seats folded: 922 litres (32.56 cu.ft)



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Maximum boot volume: 1,314 litres (46.40 cu.ft), or, with sun roof, 1,297 litres (45.80 cu.ft)

Towing capacity: 1,270 kg (2,800 lb)