Subaru XV – Brief Road Test

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Subaru XV Premium Lineartronic petrol automatic family SUV briefly put through its paces...

...by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

If you have to ask, you don't know – and that's very much the personality of the Subaru XV Premium Petrol Lineartronic family sized SUV.

Subaru has never fielded a huge range or enjoyed head-turning sales, but its best sellers have and are still highly sought after and popular with fanatical owners.

Few will not have seen the famous blue and gold Imprezas sweeping all before them in the

World or British Rally Championships, and you will still find some ancient Subaru pickups ploughing their way over steep rural hillsides taking feed to cattle in the depths of winter. Two extremes which have their own following and show the diversity of the brand and their “out of the box” appeal.

So any model from Subaru really needs some serious consideration even if it seems to be just following the fashion trend with SUVs. It first went on sale in 2012 and was updated six years later as the SUV/Crossover sectors really began to take off.



There is a comparatively small choice of four XV models with a selection of 1.6 petrol and 2.0 petrol hybrid engines with six speed manual or continuously variable transmission delivering full automatic or semi-automatic drive to all four wheels. Diesel-power has been dropped to keep down the brand's emissions penalties. New 2.0i e-Boxer hybrid assist petrol CVT auto models are about to be added to the range

Prices will range between £28,335 and £33,655 once the e-Boxer variants are added and we tested a 2.0 litre petrol mid-point model in the series, priced at £28,525.



Unlike some lookalike SUVs which are no more than slightly raised front-wheel-drive hatchbacks given impractical plastic wheel arch extensions and an inflated price, the

Subaru XV embodies a proven and highly sophisticated asymmetrical all-wheel-drive transmission.

This idiot-proof powertrain is good for normal and winter-roads or will take you over green lanes and paddocks without an issue and has a 1,400 kg (3,086 lb) trailer limit.

There is fully automatic selection or you can enjoy paddle-shifts to explore individual opportunities and make the most of the modest power delivered by the horizontally opposed engine. It is not quick off the mark or through the gears when overtaking so it’s best to carefully judge situations and use manual selection for the safest overtakes on country roads.

Motorways are where the XV can settle down and the driver relax as the engine is very composed and unstressed at the legal limit and combined with a mixture of other roads we managed to exceed 40 mpg overall.

Power delivery is quiet and smooth, the changes mostly seamless unless hurried under load and the noise levels are low.

Steering is quite positive and the turning circle compact with no kick-back, while the fully ventilated disc-brakes rapidly and effortless contain the performance. The electric parking brake is strong and comes with a useful hill-hold assist function.

Secondary controls are tightly grouped around the wheel or on the spokes for most functions, with gauges in front of the driver along with the selectable info panel, and all clearly display readings. A larger central infotainment screen on top of the fascia carries the standard navigation, communications and entertainment features and it’s comprehensive, quick to change and very easy to read.



Climate control is separate and good throughout the cabin with strong output, good direction and range selection, backed up by four powered windows, with a sunroof on the test car.

For a family car the oddments space is good and the knee-high loadbed floor is flat and wide with a good capacity before you triple that and fold flat the rear seatbacks.



Access is very good through the four doors and room is generous inside while the seats are nicely shaped and supporting, also those in the front have good adjustment range matched with the fully adjustable steering column and wheel for the driver.



Visibility is very good to front and sides, a bit restricted to the rear but it has a very good camera and sensors' system fitted, the headlights are strong and far reaching and the wipers are big to front and back.

As stated, noise levels are generally low with a distant road rumble present all the time and only joined by a busier engine note when it's pressed to perform. Wind noise is very low all the time.

The Subaru XV is a real SUV yet its ride is more akin to a family saloon and not hard but very compliant despite its raised ride height and big 18-inch wheels and tyres. The good sized seats are well shaped and supportive as well.

One of the most comforting features is the Subaru five-year extended mileage warranty.

VERDICT

The Subaru XV Premium Lineartronic CVT doesn't shout its strengths, it just delivers them.

For: Smooth, comfortable, economical, sophisticated infotainment, roomy, good warranty, excellent ground clearance and reasonable off-road/ soft road potential for all-season driving.

Against: Slow acceleration, modest maximum speed, slow changing transmission with some road and engine noises, high-ish tax costs.



Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Subaru XV 2.0i Premium Lineatronic Auto.

Price: £28,525.

Mechanical: 156 hp, four cylinder 2.0 litre, turbo-petrol, CVT, AWD.

Performance: 120 mph, 0 – 62 mph 10.7 seconds, fuel consumption on test 41 mpg.

CO2 155 g/km.

Tax costs: VED First Year £540, Standard rate £150, BiK company car tax 34%.

Insurance Group: 16E.

Warranty: Five years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.47 m (16.67 ft), W 1.80 m (5.91 ft), H 1.60 m (5.25 ft), boot space: 385 to 1,290 litres (13.60 to 45.56 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,400 kg (3,086 lb),five doors/five seats.