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TEST DRIVE

Back to the Future

2019 Acura RDX AWD A-Spec

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

The new, third generation RDX takes a page from the original 2007 RDX. Sort of.

RDX — the top-selling model in the top-selling luxury class — replaced the V-6 engine from the outgoing, second generation model, with a new, turbocharged four-cylinder mill. That's the same engine design used in the first generation versions. However, time and technology changes, and the direct injection, turbo four rolled out for 2019 (2.0L, 272 h.p., 280 lb.-ft. of torque) is more powerful than the motor in the first gen RDX (2.3L, 240 h.p., 260 lb.-ft. of torque). And while it's a few horses shy of the V-6 in gen two models (3.5L, 279 h.p., 252 lb.-ft. of torque), the new mill makes more torque over a wider rev range (1,600-4,500 rpm, vs. 4,900).

The engine provides lively acceleration. And, with 10 — count 'em — 10 speeds, the new automatic trans-

2019 Acura RDX AWD A-Spec
MSRP: \$ 45,500 · As Tested: \$46,495

mission has enough cogs to ably support the motor, keeping the power flow smooth. The drivetrain handles passes and merges with ease. Seated in the cabin, the engine tone, when throttled, is fairly quiet. That's to the good, generally, though the former V-6 would respond (when prodded), with a slight growl which I enjoyed, and that's gone now. Somewhat surprising, given the move to a smaller engine and a wider transmission spread, fuel economy for the 2.0L turbo four (EPA estimates are 21/26/23 for AWD models) isn't much different than last year's six (19/27/22).



AS ACURA'S LUXURY CLASS CROSSOVER, the 2019 RDX has replaced the previous generation's V-6 with a turbocharged four-cylinder engine, which is actually more powerful (272 h.p.) than the one found in the first-gen RDX.

Owing to weight, ride height and front/rear balance, most crossovers and SUVs — even those with sporting intentions, don't feel truly agile when it comes to cornering. RDX bucks the trend, with good-for-the-breed handling, and a ride smooth enough to suit most any passenger. The Integrated Dynamics System offers four, driver-selectable modes — Comfort, Snow, Sport and Sport+. Each makes corresponding adjustments to the suspension, shift points, throttle response and steering feel. Sport+ feels a little too nervous for daily use; Sport is a nice compromise of sharpened reflexes and ride comfort. The torque vectoring AWD system that Acura employs works behind the scenes, keeping you on the straight and narrow, injecting some fun into twisty road

RDX bucks the trend of non-agile crossovers with a ride smooth enough to suit most any passenger.

encounters, and building confidence in wintry conditions. In climates like ours, all-wheel-drive is easily worth the upcharge over FWD (\$2,000), and with little parasitic loss in fuel economy (just one mpg less in city, highway and combined modes), there's little giveback at the pumps.

Beyond the standard trim level, the RDX can be specified with the Technology package (+\$3,200), to which buyers can also add the A-Spec package (+\$3,000) and the Advance package (+\$1,900) My tester had both the Tech bundle (navigation, front/rear parking sensors, blind spot and rear cross traffic monitoring, 19-inch alloys, leather seats, voice control, and a 12-speaker ELS sound system) and the A-Spec package

Continued on page 4

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