

# Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2022 Subaru WRX

**MSRP: \$29,105 (WRX) \$31,605 (Premium) \$35,995 (Limited) \$41,895 (GT)**



2022 marks year one of generation five for Subaru's WRX. The four trim lineup is as follows: WRX (MSRP: \$29,105), Premium (\$31,605), Limited (\$35,995) and GT (\$41,895). All but the GT come with a six-speed manual transmission. The GT is solely equipped with Subaru's Performance Transmission - a continuously variable automatic - which is also optional on the three other trim levels (\$1,850). I drove a Limited trim, six-speed for this test drive.

WRX made its bones on the rally car circuit, and the street versions carry a lot of that DNA, albeit in a more civilized package. The car never met a curvy road that it didn't like, cornering flat and feeling stable. AWD (standard on all trims) puts the power where it should be for optimum grip, on roads dry or snow covered. Drivers get a good feel through the steering wheel. Ride quality is firm, though smoother than previously. Newly available is an adaptive suspension, but you have to choose the GT with the CVT to get it. The good news is, the standard suspension - reengineered this year - is first rate, so you don't have to sacrifice the stick, to get sticky handling.

All WRX models are powered by a 2.4 litre, four cylinder engine. Power ratings for the turbocharged, flat-four are now 271 horsepower @ 5,600 rpm, and 258 lb.-ft. of torque, @ 2,000-5,200 rpm. The engine feels ideal for this package. It's quick (posted 0-60 times are coming in between 5-6 seconds), and the torque curve starts low and stretches wide. Fuel economy isn't a strong point, with EPA ratings of 19/26/22 (I averaged 20 mpg's). The six speed stick is a highlight. The



*Photos courtesy of the manufacturer*



shifter action is short and sure. Clutch effort is modest, and there's a hill holder feature that removes rollback anxiety, for those whose manual footwork is a little rusty.

A hatchback bodystyle will offer more cargo capacity and flexibility than a sedan like WRX. However, the Subaru's trunk holds a usably large, 12.5 cubic-feet, and the rear seatbacks fold forward to a flat floor, to accommodate long items. Set for passengers, the back seats will comfortably hold a pair of six footers behind same. Up front, the driver faces a fat, D-shaped wheel. Driving position is very good, as are the front seats (6-way power on WRX, 8-way on Premium, 10-way on Limited, heated on all but base trim). Recaro buckets are standard on GT: a nicety for enthusiasts but not a necessity. The dual, 7" center screens on WRX are replaced by a new, 11.6" touchscreen on all other trims. Tablet styled and vertically oriented, it's your point of entry to the infotainment system, and better than average in terms of ease of use. Blind spot monitoring is always a good idea for drivers. On WRX, it's standard (and surprisingly only available) on Limited & GT. A Harmon Kardon sound system (504 watts, 11 speakers) is optional on Premium, standard on Limited and GT. Subaru's EyeSight Driver Assist Technology bundle (adaptive cruise control with lane centering, pre-collision braking, lane departure and sway warning with lane keep assist) is only available on WRX models equipped with the automatic transmission.

The latest WRX retains its rally-inspired, fun to drive vibe, now with a bit more refinement. Standard all-wheel drive pays four season dividends, and it's rare in this segment. Off hand, the only other compact performance car with AWD that comes to mind is the VW Golf R. That model offers more power and holds more gear, but it also carries a higher sticker price (MSRP: \$44,090).

*A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons has been reviewing new cars for publications for over 30 years. He is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.*