

Flagship Finds Its Voice

Infiniti's Biggest SUV Blends Serenity, Style and Real Presence

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

It's not old in a dated sense, but old in the best luxury-SUV way. It feels heavy, planted and expensive, with the kind of smooth, isolated ride that makes a long drive feel shorter than it is.

That matters because this big Infiniti is no longer just trying to be a nicer version of something else. It finally feels like its own vehicle.

A year after its dramatic redesign, the QX80 has settled into its new identity with real confidence, and for 2026 the new Sport trim sharpens that message. It replaces last year's Sensory grade and brings a darker, moodier look with blacked-out accents, unique interior finishes and a more sinister personality overall. Infiniti says it wanted to make a bold entrance, and this version absolutely does that.

What impressed me most during a week behind the wheel, though, was not the styling. It was the refinement.

The cabin is wonderfully quiet, the seats are plush and the available massaging chairs make this one of those rare three-row SUVs that genuinely leaves you feeling fresher after a long drive. Infiniti has done an excellent job here. This is a joy to drive, assuming you are among the fortunate buyers who can comfortably



The 2026 Infiniti QX80 pairs bold proportions, dramatic lighting and upscale detailing to create a full-size SUV with unmistakable presence.

spend six figures on a full-size luxury SUV.

It also feels better than I expected from behind the wheel.

The QX80 uses a 3.5-liter twin-turbo V6 rated at 450 horsepower and 516 pound-feet of torque, and honestly, if you told me there was still a V8 under the hood, I might have believed you. Infiniti has done a remarkably convincing job preserving the easy, muscular character that older luxury SUVs used to have. The power comes on with smooth authority, and the sound has just enough depth to feel appropriate in something this substantial. Officially, it is more modern and more

efficient than the old V8 formula, though with EPA ratings of 16 mpg city and 19 highway for 4WD models, nobody is buying a QX80 to save fuel.

Still, in this class, efficiency is relative. Character matters more, and the Infiniti has plenty of it.

I also think Infiniti has found its design stride.

The exterior has presence without looking cartoonishly oversized, and the interior strikes a smart balance between contemporary tech and traditional luxury.

The dual 14.3-inch displays look crisp, and the lower 9-inch touchscreen for climate and drive functions

helps the cabin feel high-tech without going full minimalist.

That is important because the competition here is serious.

The Cadillac Escalade still owns plenty of driveway cachet, the Lincoln Navigator remains a road-trip favorite and the Lexus LX600 has its own loyal following. The Infiniti stacks up better than you might expect. Its 450 horsepower tops the 2026 Escalade's 420 horsepower and the Lexus LX600, and its maximum towing rating of 8,500 pounds keeps it right in the conversation with the Navigator.

The catch is that this

Sport tester did not quite nail the comfort brief as well as it could have.

I would not buy mine with the 22-inch wheels. They look fantastic, and on this trim they are very much part of the visual drama, but they also nibble away at the soft, creamy ride that should be one of the QX80's biggest selling points.

It is not uncomfortable on them. Far from it. But I suspect smaller wheels would make this already excellent cruiser even better.

Price is another reality check. My tester came to \$107,965, which is serious money by any rational standard. Still, in this rarefied segment, the QX80 can be framed as a value play. The Sport 4WD starts at \$101,950, and even well-equipped examples undercut some obvious rivals while delivering a genuinely luxurious experience. For shoppers who want a full-size flagship without paying quite as much for the badge on the grille, that matters.

The best thing I can say about the new QX80 is this: It finally feels fully resolved.

It is handsome, deeply comfortable and surprisingly charismatic. The old shadow of the Nissan Armada has faded, and what remains is an Infiniti that feels confident enough to stand on its own.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Infiniti QX80 Sport 4WD (\$101,950). Options: Sport exterior package (\$1,060), interior lighting package (\$1,060), premium two-tone paint (\$1,900). Price as tested (including \$1,995 destination charge): \$107,965

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 121.1 in.
Length: 211.2 in.
Width: 83.3 in.
Height: 77 in.
Engine: 3.5-liter twin turbo V6 (450 hp, 516 lb.-ft.)
Transmission: Nine-speed automatic
MPG: 16 city, 19 highway

RATINGS

Style: 9
Performance: 9
Price: 4
Handling: 7
Ride: 10
Comfort: 10
Quality: 8
Overall: 9

WHY BUY IT?

The QX80 is for buyers who want full-size luxury SUV comfort, standout style and genuine flagship presence at a price that still undercuts some key rivals.

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The cabin is wonderfully quiet, the seats are plush and the available massaging chairs make this one of those rare three-row SUVs that genuinely leaves you feeling fresher after a long drive. Infiniti has done an excellent job here. This is a joy to drive, assuming you are among the fortunate buyers who can comfortably spend six figures on a full-size luxury SUV.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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