

Road-Trip Ready Family Hauler

Subaru's Three-Row SUV Balances Confidence, Comfort, Technology

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

The 2025 Subaru Ascent is not the flashiest three-row SUV on the market, but it might be one of the most confidence-inspiring.

After a week behind the wheel, it's clear that Subaru's biggest vehicle leans into what the brand does best: all-weather grip, smart packaging and safety features that make family duty a little easier.

The Ascent's defining trait is its sure-footedness. Subaru's standard all-wheel drive and well-tuned chassis give it a planted, predictable feel on the road.

In corners, it hangs on better than most rivals this size, with body motions kept in check without making the ride too stiff. It feels closer to the expensive German crossovers than mainstream competitors when it comes to handling composure, which is high praise for a vehicle starting under \$40,000.

Under the hood, every Ascent comes with a 2.4-liter turbocharged flat-four rated at 260 horsepower and 277 pound-feet of torque. On paper, that might look small compared to the V6 engines many competitors still offer, but in practice it's plenty. The Ascent doesn't struggle to get up to speed even when fully loaded.

The continuously variable transmission (CVT) is a



The Subaru Ascent offers standard all-wheel drive and a sleek, upright SUV profile with blacked-out accents on Onyx trims.

mixed bag. It helps fuel economy, rated at 19 mpg city and 25 highway, but it also makes the Ascent feel a little more lethargic than it really is. That rubber-band sensation is less bothersome in a family SUV than it is in a sporty car, but it still dulls driver engagement.

Practicality is where the Ascent shines. Thanks to a relatively low beltline and generous glass, visibility is excellent to the front and sides. It's easier to place in tight parking lots than many rivals, despite being nearly 197 inches long.

Standard driver-assist

tech — including Subaru's latest EyeSight system, blind-spot monitoring, lane-keeping, and even automatic emergency steering — adds another layer of reassurance.

Inside, the Ascent makes good use of space. Second-row passengers get USB-A, USB-C, and also a household outlet, so devices stay charged on long trips.

There's an available Cabin Connect intercom system that projects the driver's voice to the third row, a small but clever feature for families with chatty kids.

The Onyx Edition Touring

trim adds blacked-out styling cues, ventilated front seats, Nappa leather with green stitching, and Harman Kardon audio. It's an upscale take on the family hauler formula, though its \$53,802 as-tested price edges close to premium-brand territory.

That said, you get a long list of standard equipment that rivals often charge extra for, including a panoramic moonroof, heated steering wheel and power liftgate.

Not everything is perfect. Fuel economy is only average for the class, and the

CVT's feel will turn off some buyers. While Subaru's cabin materials are generally solid, a few surfaces don't match the near-luxury price tag of the Onyx Touring. And though the Ascent can tow up to 5,000 pounds, buyers needing frequent heavy towing might still prefer a body-on-frame SUV.

Overall, the Ascent is one of the more balanced and thoughtfully executed three-row crossovers. It doesn't try to overwhelm with size or brute force but instead focuses on being easy to drive, safe and accommodating.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2025 Subaru Ascent Onyx Edition Touring (\$52,050). Options: All weather floor mats (\$176), cargo tray (\$156). Price as tested (including \$1,420 destination charge): \$53,802

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 113.8 in.
Length: 196.8 in.
Width: 76 in.
Height: 71.6 in.
Engine: 2.4-liter four cylinder (260 hp, 277 lbs. ft.)
Transmission:
Continuously variable
MPG: 19 city, 25 highway

RATINGS

Style: 8
Performance: 7
Price: 6
Handling: 7
Ride: 7
Comfort: 7
Quality: 8
Overall: 7

WHY BUY IT?

The Ascent combines Subaru's trademark all-wheel-drive confidence with space, safety and family-friendly tech in a practical three-row SUV.



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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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