Road Beat: Mazda CX-9 is a sporty SUV

The Mazda CX-9 is like an SUV sports car. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Now in its second model year, the 2018 Mazda CX-9 is a full-size SUV at 199-inches-long, a 115-inch wheelbase and almost 78-inches-wide. But it drives like a compact or mid-size SUV. Mazda creates this virtual illusion via a new for 2018 handling creation called G-Vectoring Control. It uses engine timing to control chassis dynamics, creating an imperceptible intervention which allows for more driver confidence and more control giving the driver the ability to make the CX-9 do exactly what he/she (or both) wants. It goes where you point it all with feeling (no numbness).

But it’s something that comes standard in every Mazda, a driver’s edge. Go to any race track and you will find more Mazdas than any other car, be it a Miata (the most raced car in the world), a Mazda 3 or an RX-7 or RX-8. You will find this edge or sharpness in every Mazda, and now the CX-9 delivers like a Miata when it comes to driving feel.

CX-9 is a beautiful vehicle. The first generation CX-9 was a stand out and the new gen follows in its path with the Kodo design philosophy emanating from the best front end in the business the Mazda grille. CX-9’s lines are beautifully flowing as like one of the two most beautiful airplanes ever to fly, the Supermarine Spitfire (the other is the P-51 Mustang). Mazda’s logo or emblem looks like a seagull in flight and legend has it that the designer of the Spitfire, R.J. Mitchell, used to watch and study seagulls flying in creating the eventual Spitfire design. Co-efficient of drag is a low 0.35.

Mazda didn’t stop with the design and G-Vectoring Control when it came to deigning the turbo charged direct injected (SkyActiv) 2.5L DOHC, 16 valve powerplant. Instead of using a twin-scroll turbo for quick spool-up, Mazda went one better (maybe two) by creating a Dynamic Pressure Turbo that through valving and port design smooths and evens out exhaust pressure pulses which especially helps improve turbo response at rpms below 1,500 rpm.

Specifications

Price $31,520 to about $45,000 for the Signature model

Engine

2.5L turbocharged DOHC, 16 valve direct injected inline four 250 hp @ 5,000 rpm

310 lb.-ft. of torque @ 2,000 rpm

Redline 6,300 rpm

Transmission

Six-speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 115.3 inches

Length 199.4 inches

Width 77.5 inches

Height 67.6 inches

Track (f/r) 65.3/65.2 inches

Ground clearance 8.8 inches

Weight (FWD/AWD) 4,054/4,307 pounds

GVWR (FWD/AWD) 5,661/5,816 pounds

Tow capacity 3,500 pounds

Steering lock to lock 3.1 turns

Turning circle 38.4 feet

Fuel capacity 19.5 gallons

Wheels 20X8.5 inches

Tires 255/50X20

Co-efficient of drag 0.35

Performance

0-60 mph 7.54 seconds

50-70 mph 3.98seconds
50-70 uphill (6-7 percent) 5.82 seconds
Top Speed Does anyone really care?
Fuel economy EPA rated (AWD) 20/26/23 mpg city/highway/combined. Expect 23 mpg in rural country and suburban driving and 28-29 mpg on a level highway at legal speeds.

Mazda's 2.5L turbo creates 250 hp at just 5,000 rpm and a stump pulling 310 pounds of twist at just 2,000 rpm, but to achieve 250 hp premium fuel is required. Otherwise, if the computer senses 87 octane regular fuel it retards spark and peak hp to 227 at 5,000 rpm. Because the torque is so plentiful at low rpms, I didn't really notice any difference and I doubt you will to unless you are tracking the CX-9 at Laguna Seca. Power is sent to all four wheels via a six-speed torque converter auto cog-swapper.

Performance is little hindered by its near 4,400 pounds of curb weight knocking off 0-60 mph in a quick 7.54 seconds. Acceleration builds with speed at 50-70 mph cones up in 3.98 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade only slows that time to 5.82 seconds. Throttle response is instantaneous once above 10 mph and grows with speed. It will take a few days to get used to the throttle as it is strong.

Fuel economy for my AWD tester is EPA rated at 20/26/23 and don't expect much better. Highway mileage at a steady 70 mph is 28.6 mpg, but overall for 500 miles the CX-9 averaged 22.1 mpg. In my 200-mile round trip to Carson City it averaged 23.4 mpg in fairly aggressive driving. Mazdas are known for fuel economy as the company has held the highest CAFÉ in the

industry. CX-9 is average in that category. Fuel capacity is a needed 19.5 gallons.

Handling is Mazda sharp, with sophisticated independent coil suspension all around and turned to perfection. Big meats (tires, 255/50X20) are mounted to beautiful 20X8.5-inch alloys so tenacious grip is standard. But the steering is a tad slow at 3.1 turns lock to lock albeit with good feel and accuracy. But with the G-Vectoring Control, it goes around corners like water in a hose communicating to the driver everything he needs to know when blasting the twisties. It is good.

Ride quality is extremely smooth and quiet. It absorbs bumps and other road imperfections with aplomb. Engine speed at 70 mph is 2,150 rpm in top or sixth gear. There is no wind, road or engine noise and I already told you that CX-9 is smoooooth and quiet.

Mazda is second to none in safety as my CX-9 Touring had it all with every acronym plus auto high beams, lane departure and lane keep assist and Smart Brake. LED adaptive front headlights were fabulous.

Inside is a Mazda leather interior which is sublimely comfortable, infinitely adjustable and super supple. Instrumentation is total with a heads-up display which now recognizes signage. There is even good room in the third-row seating. Now for the big negative, the sound system. Maybe it’s designed to improve your manual dexterity, but it requires too many steps and is much too complicated. Someone from a competitor must have designed it.

Cargo capacity is huge with over 71 cubic feet behind the first row, 38 cubes behind the second row and 14 cubes or about the volume of your average mid-size sedan trunk behind the third row.

Pricing starts at about $33,000 with shipping for the CX-9. My tester was a top of the line Grand Touring in incredible Soul

Red Crystal ($595) stickering at $42,865 plus $940 for the boat from Japan. When you look at the competition, Mazda may offer a lot more SUV for a lot less money. This is a high performance near luxo ride for $43 large and some change. The are lesser equipped mid-size rides that cost that kind of dough. I am not sure if the bean counters had sabotaged adding machines but that seems like its too good a deal. I won’t say anything if you won’t.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

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25 years of Spanish immersion at LTCC

Paella making with Tere Tibbetts, right, is a favorite during ISSI. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Don’t be surprised to hear more Spanish than English at Lake Tahoe Community College this week. Monday begins the 25th year of ISSI – Intensive Spanish Summer Institute.

What started with 150 students in three levels of grammar courses has evolved into 16 levels from low beginning to high superior. Hundreds of people show up for the weeklong course; some are locals, some travel to South Lake Tahoe just for this instruction.

While fun is part of the day, the whole goal is to get people talking Spanish. Some take the classes to help at work, others want to use it while traveling. The reasons to participate are numerous.

“What I like best about ISSI is the commitment of the teachers and the camaraderie of the students. I’m excited about going back for a third year in a row because I know I will increase

my vocabulary and comprehension," Rhoda Shaponik told *Lake Tahoe News.*

A big reason for this South Lake Tahoe resident to learn Spanish is that she has spent part of the last few winters in Mexico.

"The locals really appreciate me trying to speak Spanish," Shaponik said. "My goal in retirement is to speak Spanish fluently."

Shaponik is part of the 40 percent of attendees who are returnees.

ISSI was the brainchild of Sue O'Connor who was the bilingual coordinator at Lake Tahoe Unified School District. She needed more Spanish language training for the teachers. With the backing of LTCC Spanish faculty member Diane Rosner ISSI was born.

Today ISSI is run by O'Connor and Maxine Alper, with the help of countless instructors and others.

"Throughout the years, based on observations, feedback and student evaluations, we have added in mini-courses at lunchtime, at 3:30pm and various evening events. We also collaborate with the Community Education program to offer other events," Alper told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The day starts with grammar at 8am for all students. Another dose of grammar comes in the afternoon. Mixed in each day are various breakout sessions that range from learning various cooking specialties, to working on pronouncing words, to history, to culture. There are about 100 choices.

"Students really love the small group conversation classes. Some of the students tell us that this is the first time they have spoken with a native speaker," O'Connor told *LTN*. "Students like the atmosphere with all the decorations. They

tell us they especially love how the Commons is modeled after a traditional plaza, the hub of the Spanish-speaking community where everyone passes through daily.”

Various Spanish-speaking cultures are featured – from Mexico to Spain to Costa Rica and more.

Some of the offerings are repeated each year, some are new to keep things fresh.

“Most of our ideas come from the student evaluations and from instructors who have an interest, expertise or experience with a subject,” Alper said. “We also come up with some ideas by looking at what we ourselves find interesting.”

To keep going another 25 years the co-directors realize ISSI needs to be responsive to the changing needs of the students and the community. It’s like any education program, it has to adjust even if the language stays the same.

Organizers have had to adapt with California’s changes in regards to repeatability of classes.

“The classes are for college credit so repeatability is not allowed. However, we have added in new levels to allow students to take more classes,” O’Connor said. “In addition, the instructor at the highest level, high superior, writes new curriculum every year to allow these high-level students to continue taking classes.”

Each year new mini-courses and breakout sessions are added as well.

ISSI often sells out, so to speak, so when it’s time to sign up for 2019, but sure to do so right away.

Road Beat: Toyota 86 – a bona fide sports car

The Toyota 86, a traditional true sports car, computerized. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Still in its first generation and a joint project of Subaru and Toyota, Toyota 86, which was initially identified as a Scion FR-S front engine), rear drive, sports, has been with us for five years either as a Scion FRS, Subie BRZ and now Toyota 86 since Toyota folded the Scion tent into Toyota.

Since its intro in 2012 not much has changed, except for squeezing out five more hp and pounds of twist. Sales have remained fairly constant with 2013 year bring home the bacon at over 18,000 units now sliding downward to a 2017 total of slightly less than 7,000 units. These are Toyota numbers only.

Those numbers are understandable at the “86” (named after the rear wheel drive Toyota AE86) is a bona fide sports car in the truest sense of the definition. This is not a take your granny to church on Sunday type of car unless your granny is the “Little old lady from Pasadena” made famous by Jan and Dean. This is a car for strafing the corners, any corners, tights, sweepers, off camber, up hill or downhill, it doesn’t matter, 86 begs for changes in direction. And with MacPherson strut up front and a trick double wishbone set up in the rear plus super quick 2.48 turns lock to lock EPS rack steering it has all the creds. My 86 had gorgeous 17 x 7 inch alloys shod with 215/45 rubber.

Motive force is by a Subie designed 2.0L flat DOHC, 16 valve square four (not an Ariel, square in bore and stroke dimensions) that now makes 205 hp at 7,000 rpm and torque peaks at 156 pounds at 6,400 rpm. The longitudinally mounted front engine drives the rear wheels via a six-speed manual or auto cog-swapper, with the manny having shorter gearing. My tester was the bicep/triceps enriching version.

Performance is right where most of the buffs found it with 0-60 mph arriving in 6.79 seconds and passing times supporting that number with a 50-70 mph third gear pass arriving in 3.92 and up a six-seven percent grade slowing things down to 5.67 seconds. These numbers are virtually identical to the numbers I achieved three years ago (6.81, 3.82 and 5.79 seconds).

Specifications

Engine
Horizontally opposed 2.0L, DOHC, 16 valve four cylinder
200 hp @ 7,000 rpm
151 lb.-ft of torque @ 6,400 rpm
Transmission
Six-speed manual
Six-speed torque converter automatic
Configuration
Longitudinal front engine/rear wheel drive
Dimensions
Wheelbase 101.2 inches
Length 166.7 inches
Width 69.9 in inches
Height 60.6 inches
Track (f/r) 59.8/60.6 inches
Ground clearance 4.9 inches
Turning circle 36.1 feet
Steering lock to lock 2.48 turns
Fuel capacity 13.2 gallons
Trunk capacity
Seats 4?
Weight (m/t/a//t) 2,758//2,806 pounds
Wheels 17X7 inch alloys
Tires 215/45X17 Michelin Primacy HP summer
Co-efficient of drag 0.27
Performance
0-60 mph 6.79 seconds
50-70 mph 3.92 seconds
50-70 mph up 6 percent grade 5.67 seconds

Top Speed Plenty fast (130 mph plus plus)
Fuel economy (MT//AT) EPA rated 21/28/24//24/32/27 mpg. With the M/T expect 30-32 mpg in rural county driving and 37-39 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

While most 86 buyers could care less about fuel economy, especially since many 86er's also love drifting like the original 86, its actually remarkably good even with an engine that spins 3,200 rpm at 70 mph. EPA says expect 21/28/24 mpg city/highway/combined fuel economy, but my tester averaged 39.1 at a steady 70 mph on a level highway. In a 350-mile round trip to San Jose and through the Delta in moderate to heavy traffic at times averaged 34.1 mpg. Overall for 500 miles of trashing the 86 averaged better than 32 mpg. The auto cog-swapper with much taller gearing has EPA numbers of 24/32/27 mpg and should also do way better. Fuel capacity is listed at 13.2 gallons, but I am not sure most humans will last a full tank drain in one sitting, certainly not rear seaters, if one could even get in the back seat, never mind extricate oneself from it.

Toyota 86 flat out handles. Water through a hose, unless you want to get the rear end out with some throttle and drift your way around corners wearing out a set of rear tires in a week. 86 will do it.

Ride quality of the other hand is smooth on smooth roads. It is stiff and transmitting on lesser roads. Not quite jarring but as to a long trip it still can be a bit less than pleasant as the noise will drowned out the quality of the sound system. While there is no wind noise, you couldn't hear it anyway over the tires and engine. Did I mention it sounds a bit like an old "Vdub?" Remember they were both powered by flat fours.

86 comes with Star Safety Sense which is your basics like ABS, vehicle dynamics control (defeatable) and your other basic acronyms. But don’t be looking for lane keep assist or departure warning, you won’t find them. Headlights are very good and large four wheel ventilated (front and rear) are super strong, anticipating your times at the track.

Inside are comfortable front chairs, but to call this a two plus two is a miscalculation, it’s more like two plus two quarters. Perhaps rear seating is a model for new a new sardine packaging system. This ride is just 167 inches long on a 101-inch wheelbase and just 77 cubic feet of passenger volume.

Instrumentation is excellent with a digital speedo contained in the center tach. The smaller analog speedo to the left is superfluous and hard to read anyway. The sound system is way too complicated.

Pricing is reasonable as my no optioned 86 GT Monroney totaled $29,280, including $805 for the boat from Ota, Japan. If you like changing directions, the 86 can do it better, quicker and slicker than any politician.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Protect yourself from opioid

misuse

By Matthew Wonnacott

Everyone seems to be talking about opioids lately. The news is alarming: more than 40 Americans die every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids.

It’s an issue for people of all ages and backgrounds. Anyone who takes too much of an opioid is at risk. If your doctor prescribes an opioid pain medicine, here’s how to avoid a tragic mistake:

Matthew Wonnacott

What are opioids?

Prescription opioids are used to treat moderate to severe pain. They may be taken after an injury or surgery, or for a health condition such as cancer. Examples include:

- Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin)
- Morphine
- Oxycodone (such as OxyContin)

Opioids can cause side effects, such as constipation, nausea, sleepiness, and confusion. In addition, overuse of opioids could potentially lead to addiction or overdose.

Ask about alternatives

If your doctor prescribes an opioid, talk about the risks and benefits. Ask if there are any alternatives for treating your pain. Options may include other medicines such as prescription-strength ibuprofen or over-the-counter medications, physiatry, physical therapy, or exercise. In some cases, these options can work better than opioids– with less risk.

Avoid taking too much

If you do take an opioid, follow these safety tips:

· Use your medicine exactly as directed. Never take it in larger amounts or more often than prescribed.

· Tell your doctor about any other medicines you're taking. Don't forget over-the-counter and herbal products.

· It can be dangerous to mix opioids with certain drugs, particularly ones that cause drowsiness.

· Have one doctor oversee your opioid treatment. When multiple doctors are writing your prescriptions, the risk of an overdose rises.

· Fill all your prescriptions at one pharmacy, if possible. Your pharmacist can help watch for risky drug interactions.

More than 1,000 Americans end up in emergency rooms every day due to misuse of prescription opioids. A few small steps can have a big impact on your health and safety.

Matthew Wonnacott is a physician and the medical director at Barton Community Health Center, which provides a variety of care practices including behavioral health services.

Road Beat: Honda Accord Touring improved for ’18

The 2018 Honda Accord Touring is new and improved. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Competition and free markets are a wonderful thing. And the competition in the mid-size sedan market is beyond fierce. Toyota’s new Camry set some new standards so what does its chief rival do, try to do something better. Honda hopes it exceeded the Camry with its new Accord. Did it? The cars are so close, it almost comes done to which headlight assembly looks better? Honda wins that one, but what about the rest of

the new Accord?

My tester was the top of the line Touring 2.0T with a 10-speed auto torque converter cog swapper which is perhaps a tie in as this new Accord starts its tenth generation. Everything was standard, no extras. It had everything anyway down to lane keep assist, full power, leather and NAV. In other words, the lock, stock and barrel, a phrase meaning buying the entire gun, the whole enchilada with nothing left off the option plate.

Honda’s new body strongly resembles the new Civic, the same window line, similar tail and head light shapes. The flanks are different but some will have trouble differentiating the two different models.

Honda get a bigger wheelbase, riding on a 111-inch wheelbase (interestingly the same as a Camry) and while length remains the same at 192 inches. It is a bit wider at 73 inches and it stands 57 inches tall, about an inch shorter. But the inside has grown as the new Accord is half a cubic foot shy of being classified as a full-size car. Without a sunroof Accord becomes a full-size car by a couple of cubic feet. It is a roomy ride.

You won’t find a V-6 under the hood and no, it’s not located in the trunk either. The 278 hp V-6 is no more an option. Now the Honda sports two turbo motors, a 1.5L of 192 hp found in lesser models (and in many Civics) and a 2.0L turbo monster motor found in my tester that is similar to the 306 hp Civic Type R except “only” knocking down 252 hp at 6,500 rpm and a monstrous 273 pounds of twist from 1,500 to 4,000 rpm. That is prodigious as you will see. It sends that power to the front wheels where 61 percent of its weight resides.

Specifications

Price $24,465 to $36,695

Engine

1.5L DOHC, 16 valve turbo directed injected inline four cylinder 192 hp @ 5,500 rpm 192 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,600 rpm – 5,000 rpm

2.0L DOHC, 16 valve turbo directed injected inline four cylinder 252 hp @ 6,500 rpm 273 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,500-4,000 rpm.

Transmission

CVT 1.5L

10 speed torque converter automatic 2.0L

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 111.4 inches

Length 192.2 inches

Width 73.3 inches

Height 57.1 inches

Track (f/r) 62.6/63.1 inches

Weight 3,428 pounds

Weight distribution (f/r) 61.2/38.8 percent

Wheels 19-inch alloys
Tires 235/40X19
Passenger volume 102.7 cubic feet
Trunk volume 16.7 cubic feet
Fuel capacity 14.8 gallons
Turning circle 39.4 feet
Steering lock to lock 2.23 turns

Performance

0-60 mph 5.72 seconds
50-70 mph 3.20 seconds
50-70 mph uphill (6-7 percent) 4.02 seconds
Top speed Who cares?
Fuel economy EPA rated 22/32/26 mpg city/highway/combined. Expect 28 mpg in rural suburban driving and 37 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

Even with 26 less hp, Accord outperforms its predecessors scampering 0-60 mph in a quick 5.72 seconds. It will run from 50-70 mph in just 3.20 seconds and the same task up a steep (6-7 percent) grade only slows that time to 4.02 seconds. Throttle response is strong and with the 10 speeder there is no turbo lag. Power is right now. This 2.0L mill is exceptionally smooth and quiet.

Full economy is average with EPA numbers of 22/32/26 mpg city/highway/combined. But expect better. My Accord averaged 28.1 mpg for 443 miles od varied driving. On a long 40-mile two-way highway run at 70 mph, the Accord averaged 37.6 mpg with some traffic. Part of the excellent highway mileage is due to an engine that spins just 1,700 rpm at 70 mph. Fuel

tank is a small 14.8 gallons. It should have at least two more gallons of capacity.

Handling initially felt sloppy and loose, very un-Honda like. It has great creds, four-wheel state of the art independent suspension, a wide 63-inch track front and rear, a super quick electric power steering rack that goes lock to lock in just 2.23 turns, and wide 19-inch alloys shod with low profile 235/40 series rubber. But first impressions felt like a 1994 Buick Regal sedan I happened to drove last week. Weight is not an issue at 3,428 pounds (interestingly the base hybrid version weighs less at 3,342 pounds and even the top of the line Touring hybrid weighs exactly the same as the non-hybrid Touring edition. In other words, there is no weight penalty for the Accord hybrid). A base LX Accord with the 1.5L turbo is nearly 300 pounds lighter than the Touring edition.

But here is the deal, my Touring tester is lighter by about 40 pounds from the prior 9th generation and stiffer in torsional rigidity. Honda now has a Two-Mode Driving System and Adaptive Damper System that actually works, big time. Leave it in normal and you get reasonably nimble handling with some body roll and a super smooth ride that most drivers want. However, put it in Sport mode with a button push and the Accord tightens up like the edgy Honda you expect. Ride suffers little while handling sharpens up like a sporting sedan. Turn in is very crisp. The good news is that the Honda edge in handling is still there.

The Active Damper System also besides adjusting shock damping, also works on other components, like steering (it gets real), throttle mapping and the tranny gets sporty as well. Even Active Sound Control enhances engine sounds. It works big-time as the Honda handling I was so familiar with was back and improved, shaper than ever while still giving granny a great Sunday ride including silence from wind, tire and engine noise. Honda has put the new Accord into a noise abatement program and it has definitely worked as it is noticeably

quieter than previous Accords. Thanks Honda.

Accord comes with every safety acronym including Honda Sensing which now recognizes traffic signs. I mentioned lane keep assist and the brakes are large four-wheel discs and they are powerful. Headlights are also fantastic as well as beautiful.

Inside is a soft leather interior with sublime seats up front and new found huge legroom in the rear. Instrumentation however gives the drivers choices that should be automatic in that you can have a fuel computer or an analog tach. In Honda's defense a graphic tach can be displayed in the Heads-up display, but it's not the same. Having the trip computer helps improve your fuel economy and with a ten-speed tranny, the tach is less necessary except for detail types like me.

The sound system is a bit difficult to operate with its touch screen, but in a couple of weeks it should be second nature, HVAC is a piece of cake. Trunk is a huge, almost 17 cubic feet.

Pricing for the well-equipped Accord with the 1.5L, 192 hp four banger, starts at $24,465 including $895 for shipping from its Marysville, Ohio, assembly plant. My top of the line Touring stickers for $36,695 all in. But one might consider it a near luxo ride which it is. Great power, good fuel economy plus very good handling and a ride I prefer when in Sport mode makes the Honda a perennial contender for sales champ and a continual Car and Driver top ten pick (31 times) of all cars for sale under $60,000.

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Road Beat: Volvo XC40 has room for improvement

Volvo XC40 has great looks and design, but disconnected. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Volvo has been on a serious roll with some new product that is off the charts like the new S90, V90, XC90 and XC60 and their sales growth indicates renewed customer enthusiasm. But now we have the new XC40 which was rewarded recently with the European Car of the Year for 2018. So, it was with much anticipation that I awaited the arrival of the new XC40.

Its boxy design didn’t disappoint with a crisp, up right two

box look with very pleasing lines especially in black as the rear cabin behind the side window is always in black giving the all black car a more cohesive appearance. XC40 is a small vehicle (174 inches) about half a foot shorter than your average compact car. At 65 inches tall it looks even shorter. It is beamy at 73 inches. But with that wide girth, front and rear tracks measure a very wide 63 and 64 inches respectively which bodes for excellent handling.

Under the hood of my T5 AWD R-Design is the familiar Volvo 2.0L DOHC, 16 valve turbocharged inline four-cylinder engine knocking out 248 hp at a low 5,500 rpm and 258 pounds of twist at 1,800 rpm connected to an eight-speed torque converter auto cog-swapper. All four wheels get driven but it is an on-demand system with a front bias, but there was absolutely no torque steer. This same engine with the addition of mechanical supercharging in Volvo’s larger models belts out about 320 hp with a commensurate increase in twist.

Performance is hampered by lag, either by throttle mapping (to improve fuel economy) or turbo lag or both. In normal driving XC40 is a bit of a dog taking 8.23 seconds to achieve 0-60 mph. Fifty to 70 mph runs level and up a steep grade averaged 4.40 and 6.76 seconds respectively. Pretty sloggy performance for a $38,000 compact near luxo CUV. However, there is a way to change the driving dynamics by selecting the drive mode button inconspicuously place among the climate control button which allows you to go from eco, comfort normal or dynamic driving which consists of a remapping of the powertrain and sharpens up the response although there is still some lag at tip in. Times dropped to 7.45/4.16/6.27 seconds respectively making the Volvo times more respectable in the dynamic mode.

Specifications

Price $37,700 to about $45,000

Engine 2.0L DOHC, 16 valve, turbo charged, direct injected inline four 248 hp @ 5,500 rpm

258 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,800 rpm

Transmission

Eight-speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.4 inches

Length 174.2 inches

Width 73.3 inches

Height 65.0 inches

Track (f/r) 63.0/64.0 inches

Ground clearance 8.3 inches

Max wadding limit 17.7 inches

Weight 3,825 pounds

GVWR 4,960 pounds

Fuel capacity 14.25 gallons

Steering lock to lock 2.7 turns

Turning circle (curb to curb) 37.4 feet
Wheels 20X8 inch alloys
Tires 245/45X20
Cargo capacity (rear seats up/down) 47.2/20/7 cubic feet
Max trailer tow weight 4,629 pounds
Performance
0-60 mph 7.48 seconds
50-70 mph 4.16 seconds
50-70 up (6-7 percent grade) 6.27
Top speed Imagine a Volvo with a factory top speed of 143 mph?
Fuel economy EPA rated at 23/31/26 mpg city/highway/combined. Expect about 23-26 mpg in rural/suburban driving and 33 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

Driving the Volvo is different. Every time the brake is applied coming to a full stop a brake hold remains in place until the throttle is applied. And it can be abrupt. The car will not creep forward in drive or backwards when in reverse making control a bit disconcerting. There is noticeable engine or turbo lag not experienced with the turbo-supercharged version of this engine. Once underway, say from 10 mph, XC40 feels pretty sprightly. Hard throttle produces some engine noise, sometimes coarse, and certainly not pleasant.

EPA rates the XC40 at 23/31/26 mpg city/highway/combined. With the engine spinning a low 1,900 rpm at 70 mph, it is inaudible

under light throttle conditions. In a two-way run it averaged 33 mpg and overall 23-26 mpg was the norm. In a 200-mile trip to Carson City the XC40 averaged 26.4 mpg but it was in a 45-minute traffic jam so it should have averaged at least an mpg or more even though it has an automatic engine stop feature which I could not disable even pushing the button to stop the auto stop feature. One other disconcerting feature of this auto engine stop feature was auto A/C stop feature which wasn't exactly pleasant in 100-degree weather, especially in my all black XC40.

Handling is quite sharp bolstered by state of the art four-wheel independent suspension, wide track, quick steering at 2.7 turns lock to lock and big 20-inch wheels shod with serious 245/45 x 20 inches. The 20-inch wheels are an $800 upgrade over the standard R-Design nineteens. Changing directions in this 3,825-pound ride should be easy but it is impeded by electronic intervention which I couldn't seem to turn off. Everything in this car, including the owner's manual is contained in the computer operated by a large 12-inch touch screen which sometimes didn't respond to my touch. I guess I didn't have the "right" touch. Most if not all systems are handled through the center touch screen. Maybe Volvo is trying to save trees.

Back to handling and while there was significant cornering power when pushing the XC40 hard especially near a painted line in the road, you could feel the steering wheel slightly vibrating or counter steering on its own. Very disconcerting. I couldn't find a way to turn it off.

Ride quality was good, being smooth as long as the throttle isn't more than half way down and then noise will intercede. It rides very smooth and takes bumps very well. There is no wind and little road noise.

Safety is almost overdone. Yes, it has every acronym and safety feature known to man and Martians alike. But sometimes

intervene too early. Brakes are powerful except for the brake hold feature then they are too powerful. LED Headlights are excellent.

Inside is a different Volvo interior. Always of the highest quality and best leathers, my tester looked like the San Francisco Giants with its Nappa black leather super comfortable seats and bright orange/reddish carpet. Instrumentation is all electronic with a big speedo and tach, but in Volvo's effort to be different, the trip computer is in the lower part of the tach and needs to be activated with a button push on the steering wheel. Other wise only average fuel econ is displayed. I prefer more info.

Rear seating is comfortable with good room, but while the cargo space appears very large the numbers provided by Volvo aren't at 47 cubes behind the first row and about 21 cubes behind the second row. It might be due to Volvo's measuring system. Fuel capacity is also small at 14.25 gallons.

Pricing for the T5 AD R-Design $37,700 plus $995 for boat from Europe. Three packages and some other options drove the Monroney to $45,340. Enough said, too much electronic intervention hurts an otherwise outstanding design.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Money Matters: Financial

plans help achieve bucket lists

By Rick Gross

We spend a lot of time daydreaming about and planning how to achieve our goals. Charting a new career, creating a bucket list, helping a loved one reach success and other goals all have

financial implications that deserve consideration. This is where a financial plan comes in. The goal of a plan is to lay out what success looks like to you, and how you can position your finances to help you get there.

Rick Gross

A well-crafted financial plan is:

1. Personalized. Your plan should contain the details of your current financial situation and outline your life goals, both near-term and extending into retirement. Using actual data can ground your plan in reality and help you see what you need to do to stay on track. Generally, there are four areas you should address:

· **Covering your essentials.** Essentials are the monthly expenses that keep your life running, such as mortgage payments, utility bills and insurance premiums. Your financial plan should provide advice and solutions to cover your day-to-

day needs while also providing for your necessary living expenses in retirement.

· **Maintaining your lifestyle.** Lifestyle refers to the things you want to do and how you want to live, today and in the future. If you dream of purchasing a second home or retiring in a warmer climate, your financial plan should quantify the costs of these goals and outline action steps to help you achieve them.

· **Preparing for the unexpected.** Life is not without its surprises. Your financial roadmap should include contingency plans to help you stay on track financially when something unexpected happens to you or a loved one. This may include establishing an emergency fund and insurance coverage to help offset damaged property or lost wages.

· **Leaving a legacy.** Your legacy is the impact you make on people, charities and causes that are important to you – now, in retirement and after your death. Key components are naming beneficiaries on key accounts, building charitable giving into your financial life and estate planning to determine how you want your assets to be distributed to your heirs.

2. **Comprehensive.** All the bases of your financial life should be covered within your plan, from insurance to investments, cash flow, retirement, estate planning and everything in between. Include your financial obligations and goals, no matter how big or small they are. Seeing your full financial picture in one place makes it easier to adjust course or test scenarios as your priorities change down the road.

3. **Dynamic.** A financial plan is not a static document you create once and never revisit. Rather, it puts a stake in the ground that can inform future decisions. Your financial plan should be updated as your life goals and circumstances change.

4. **Trackable.** Without a plan, it is difficult to determine if you will be prepared to meet your anticipated retirement date, whether you have sufficient sums saved to put a child through college, or if you've taken proper steps to protect your family. In this way, your financial plan can help you stay accountable to your financial future.

5. **Useful, no matter your net worth.** Turning your goals into reality without a financial plan is a lot like driving in an unfamiliar place without a GPS. Regardless of how much you make or have saved, a financial plan can help you be strategic with your dollars.

If you have not yet had a comprehensive financial plan prepared for you and your family, consider working with an advisor who can help you get started. Together, you can identify doable steps to help you work toward your financial dreams.

Rick Gross is a financial advisor and private wealth advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services Inc. in South Lake Tahoe.

Physiatry can get you back on your feet

By Gregory Burkard

You may not be familiar with the practice of physiatry, but from sports injuries to stroke, a physiatrist can play an important role in patient recovery. A physiatrist is also known as a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician. Physiatrists treat a variety of conditions related to the musculoskeletal system, which includes bones, joints, tendons,

ligaments, and muscles. They also focus on the central and peripheral nervous system—the brain, spinal cord, and nerves.

Gregory Burkard

What does a physiatrist treat?

A physiatrist can provide care for many different problems, injuries, and disabilities to restore overall patient function and improve quality of life. Those conditions include the following:

- Traumatic brain injury
- Stroke
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputation
- Burns
- Cardiopulmonary deficits (such as heart attack, congestive heart failure, and COPD flare-ups)
- Musculoskeletal problems
- Sports injuries.

Physiatrists may specialize in areas such as pain medicine, sports medicine, spinal cord injury medicine, brain injury medicine, prosthetics and orthotics, or pediatric rehabilitation medicine, among others. As part of treatment,

physiatrists may prescribe physical, occupational, or aquatic therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, dietitian services, neuropsychology or psychology care, and pain medications.

Should you see a physiatrist?

You might want to make an appointment with a physiatrist if:

· You have an injury or chronic condition that has resulted in pain or limited functionpedicsandwellness.com.

· You have an illness that has limited your energy or ability to move easily

· You're recovering from a stroke or other problems related to nerve damage

· Life changes such as childbirth have caused new difficulties in your physical function

· You're thinking about surgery or you're recovering from a surgical procedure.

If any of these situations are affecting you or a loved one, a physiatrist will be able to guide treatment to restore function and improve your quality of life. Talk with your primary care provider about a referral to meet with a Barton physiatrist.

Gregory Burkard Jr. practices physiatry at the Barton Center for Orthopedics & Wellness.

Free bereavement camp open to

ages 7-14

Barton Health in August will host Camp Sunrise, a free bereavement camp for ages 7 to 14 who have experienced the death of a loved one.

The grief camp offers education and support through fun-filled activities and programs on the shore of Lake Tahoe. Camp Sunrise takes place Aug. 16-17 at Galilee Camp and Retreat Center in Glenbrook. Registration is open through July 31. Camp Sunrise is offered to children in the Lake Tahoe and Carson region; applications are available **online.**

Children receive grief education and support including memory exercises, physical activity, honoring ceremonies, and talking circles. All activities including lodging and meals are free for campers.

For questions and more information, call Barton Hospice at 530.543.5581.

NTPUD ex-GM, NTFD ex-chief Whitelaw dies

North Tahoe Public Utility District is mourning the passing of former General Manager/CEO Duane Whitelaw.

Whitelaw retired in June after four years as general manager/CEO. Prior to that, he served the district from 1985-89 as the recreation and parks director.

Duane Whitelaw

During his time as recreation and parks director he secured grants for projects including, but not limited to, the North Tahoe Event Center renovation in 1989, Coon Street Boat Ramp dredging and improvements through a partnership with the Department of Boating and Waterways, North Tahoe Regional Park playground, Phase 1 of the Kings Beach State Recreation Area parking lot, restroom, and playground, and the purchase and renovation of the North Tahoe Beach Center which was the first project at Lake Tahoe to utilize California environmental license plate funds.

After leaving the district in 1989 to serve as the fire chief for North Tahoe Fire District, he also served on the Placer County Parks Commission for almost 20 years representing the interests of eastern Placer County. Park projects for which he advised the Board of Supervisors include the Squaw Valley Community Park, Hidden Falls Regional Park, Commons Beach Enhancements, the Martis Valley Trail, and segments of the Lake Tahoe Bikeway.

After a short retirement from the North Tahoe Fire District, Whitelaw returned once again to public service with the North Tahoe Public Utility District. He led a strategic planning process for the board, re-engaged the Recreation and Parks Commission, and encouraged public outreach surveys to guide the district’s priorities and has worked diligently to find strategies for success for the Event Center.

NTPUD Board President Tim Ferrell said, “Duane was one of the

best general managers I have had the pleasure of working with. He taught me that leading through compassion and respect unites the workforce and keeps people motivated to give their best even in the hard times. He will be greatly missed but his legacy in North Tahoe will live on for many years to come."

District flags will fly at half-staff July 24 in honor of his service and dedication to the community. Acting General Manager Will Stelter stated, "To live a life leaving the world a better place, due to one's positive actions, care and devotion, is a life to be celebrated; although sad to have it come to the end."

A celebration of his life will take place on Aug. 5 at the North Tahoe Event Center. More information will be forthcoming.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News