

Towing the Line



Subaru Outback 2.0D SE Nav Plus

By Tim Barnes-Clay, *Motoring Journalist*

Twitter: @carwriteups www.carwriteups.co.uk

BIG, BOLD and brilliant, the fourth generation of Subaru's Outback is better than ever.

Launched in Europe in 1996, the Outback pioneered the 'Crossover' concept, combining the comfort, interior space and superior on-road handling of a family estate, with the off-road capability and ground clearance of a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). This blend of abilities has now been further refined.

The Japanese-made car is longer, wider and taller than ever before and, inside, the cabin perfectly complements the latest Outback's muscular exterior lines. There is a feeling of spaciousness and the large leather seats, which are fitted as standard, offer excellent support. Behind the wheel, a revised instrument cluster features four dials outlined in aluminium rings, and the three-spoke steering wheel is leather-wrapped, with integrated audio and cruise controls. On the technology front, the apparent lack of a USB port shows the Subaru to be a little behind the times as far as iPhone-style connectivity goes, but the premium six speaker stereo is MP3-compatible. A Bluetooth hands-free and hi-tech sat-nav system is also fitted.

On the road, the most recent Outback, with its completely re-engineered suspension, has decent handling and stability. It is not slow off the mark and the presence of its All-Wheel-Drive (AWD) system reassures you that it is safe and sure-footed in all weather conditions. The 1998cc diesel engine, which is linked to a rather notchy six-speed manual gearbox, produces a maximum of 148 bhp. The oil-burner has a top torque figure of 258 lb/ft and, considering the Outback has permanent AWD, it is surprisingly economical. During the time I had the Subaru, my trips consisted of long dual-carriageway commutes and rugged rural routes. I didn't get the claimed average of 47.8 mpg, but I got a consistent 35+ mpg, which is still not bad for a 4x4.

On the practical front, the rear seat backrest is split 60/40 and folds flat to offer the best people/cargo carrying versatility. The tailgate is nice and wide, and this makes life easy for loading. But what really makes the Outback such a good workhorse is its self-levelling suspension. Not only does this guarantee the Subaru to be a good load-lugger, it also helps it to be a great towcar.



PROS 'N' CONS

- Comfortable
- Great Grip
- Spacious
- Good towcar
- Notchy gears
- No USB port

FAST FACTS

Max speed: 120 mph
 0-62 mph: 9.7 seconds
 Combined mpg: 47.8
 Engine: 1998cc, 4 cylinder 16 valve (Boxer Diesel)
 Max. power: (bhp): 148 at 3,600 rpm
 Max. torque: (lb/ft): 258 at 1800-2400 rpm
 Max. towing weight (braked) 1700 kg
 CO2: 155 g/km
 Price: £30,070 on the road

At over £30,000 the Subaru Outback 2.0D SE is not cheap, but it is a seriously competent all-rounder. Still, you could buy a premium German car for that amount of cash. It's a tricky one.

The latest Subaru range is available from **Westaway Motors Ltd in Spratton, Northampton.**

Visit www.westawaymotors.co.uk for more information or call **01604 847245** to arrange your demonstration drive.

New & Used Sales • After-Sales • Parts • Accident Repair Centre

Westaway Motors Ltd - Subaru - Isuzu - SsangYong

Westaway
Motors Ltd