

Come Rain

*Motor
Madness*



or Shine

Ian Lamming discovers the latest Subaru is more than just a fair weather friend

AS an affirmed weather watcher I do get a bit stressed with the forecast.

If storms are due the last thing you need is a slow-slung supercar which could end up a very expensive submarine.

So when the Met Office starts talking of winter storms, of gale force winds and even snow, the first thing I do is see what the test car is going to be.

One glance at the diary is enough to reassure. I know everything will be fine because test car is a Subaru, in this particular case the latest XV.

There is something special about Subarus. They are unconventional, quirky even, but talk to any owner and they will smile and knowing smile because they are special.

They have an ethereal quality that is difficult to understand because it goes beyond skin deep. You could be overwhelmed by the looks, although new XV looks tidy enough and is genuinely unique.

It's the same with the interior which is solid and well-built, functional and well-equipped, but not flash in any way. The new touch screen is great and much more contemporary, the controls are well placed and intuitive.

The good stuff starts as soon as you slip into the driving seat. It looks normal enough but it is especially comfortable with perfect ergonomics and everything at hand you need to drive easily.

Start the flat four-cylinder diesel motor and it rocks reassuringly in a way only a boxer engine can. The clutch is light and bites just where you like it, the six speed gearbox is well weighted and precise.

Barely a wheel has turned before the driver feels perfectly at a home, like being with an old friend and from there it just gets better and better.

XV has exemplary levels of performance, poise and purpose. It sits beautifully on the road sending driver's confidence off the scale. It is refined, powerful and economical. It's a joy to drive.

The asymmetrical all wheel drive must surely be one of the best on the road. It simply works, makes no fuss and tackles all manner of surface conditions that would leave other 4x4s stranded. It pulls, drags and pushes the car depending on which wheels have the most grip and floods, mud, snow or ice fail to unsettle it one iota. It is truly brilliant.

Come rain or shine, XV will always get you home. It impresses as much with its dynamics as it does with its inimitable charms. It takes the stress out of life and brightens even the gloomiest weather forecasts.

Fact File

- Subaru XV
- Engine: 2.0 boxer diesel
- Power: 147PS
- 0-62mph: 9.3 secs
- Top speed: 123mph
- Combined miles per gallon: 52.3
- Transmission: auto-matic
- Insurance: 27E
- CO2 g/km: 141