

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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2015 Subaru WRX STI

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VERDE CANYON RAILROAD

BROKEN ARROW 4X4 TRAIL

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AND MORE...

LEMAY MUSEUM MCKEEL HAGERTY AWARD

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It's what makes a Subaru a radical Subaru

By Joe Sage

Everybody's used to seeing the STI in trademark WR Blue Pearl with gold BBS alloy wheels (standard on the Launch Edition), but when our pre-production Limited pulled up in Dark Gray Metallic, it was different. Striking. Dignified, even. A sleeper, really, since a coat of paint cannot conceal the fact that this car is potent as all get-out.

We were immediately impressed. Not even out of the driveway, we had high praise.

Of course we loved its 6-speed manual and the powerful note when you fire it up. Instruments are clean and purposeful, true to form for the brand,

LOGBOOK NOTES

Other drivers seem to be respectful of this, as if they know nobody would be driving it without a reason. People look, listen and even make way.

The pedals are pretty tight if you have size 13 feet.

with a small screen for the radio—very conventional and understandable—and up high a tidy little information screen. The console sports a controller for SI-Drive—Intelligent, Sport or Sport Sharp (note: nothing either stupid or dull here).

Less expected was its knockout interior. Fit and finish are excellent. The seats are stunning—black perforated leather with dark red trim in a reserved manner along the seat bottom bolsters, then wrapping around the upper back bolsters in a dynamic style that's echoed by diagonal stitching in the door panels. Features and controls are intu-

The STI has a fabulous throat that turns heads and makes people in Mustangs and Challengers check to see who's rumbling next to them. Not at all the sewing machine sound effect of many little tuners.

itive and effective, solid and clear—the displays, instruments, climate controls, seats, mirrors, windows and locks. It takes no time to set up and go.

Brand presence is strong but balanced, with "STI" embedded in the sill, carpets, console and wheel. Seats and doors are complemented by a dark red stitch on the steering wheel. It's a neat combination of macho and reserve that could take any boy racer and make him realize that he's now more serious than he already thought he was.

There are a number of things different with the new WRX STI. First and perhaps most obvious, it's a sedan—no hatch, at least not for now (stay tuned). The body and frame—a bit larger this year, for a roomier cabin—have increased rigidity for handling performance, with bonuses in crash testing and weight savings, enhanced further by use of aluminum for the hood and suspension components. There is a boost in aerodynamics, with a raked windshield that starts a full eight

Climate and audio knobs that spin with no end, even when you max out (or min out) annoyed us at first, but we came to like them and concluded that once you're used to them, traditional ones might annoy.



The WRX STI is tough yet stylish, powerful and precise.



inches farther forward than previously.

Everything about the Subaru WRX STI is beyond the ordinary. Power comes from a boxer turbo, of course, this one a 305-hp version of the championship rally engine. A short-throw STI shifter connects it to all-wheel drive—at the heart of any Subaru (except the BRZ). Gearing favors high torque. Three performance modes work with six differential-locking options for total control of your operation. Default torque split is 41:59, favoring rear-drive power and balance on a clear surface.

Rebels have long made up the Subaru core. Free thinkers. Smart thinkers. Practical thinkers. Impractical thinkers. We get it. We like it.

The Subaru WRX STI can enter and win any competitive event you throw at it (see Isle of Man at right and Oregon Trail Rally, next page). But it also shines as a highly capable daily driver, able to hold a strong, steady track, to dart around when need be or to shake off a little traffic. It's not a big muscle car, but it does have the same presence. The STI is scrappy and it's tough. It has cajones. It can rumble. It champs at the bit, ready to hit the road with brass knuckles. And it will have a smile on its knuckles every time it does. So will you. ■



2015 Subaru WRX STI breaks Isle of Man record at 117.5 mph

Mark Higgins, driving a 2015 Subaru WRX STI, broke his own lap record on the fabled 37-mile Isle of Man TT Course in early June, with an average lap speed of 117.510 and a time of 19 minutes and 15 seconds in a final timed run. He had already hit 116.470 mph average and 19:26 time two days prior. Both smashed the previous record of 115.36 mph, set in 2011—also in a WRX STI.

The run was completed in a US-spec 2015 Subaru WRX STI, just as we drove here, with the exception of an FIA-spec roll cage, racing seat and harness, fire suppression system, and modified springs and dampers to handle the sustained high speeds and changing conditions of the course. The Subaru WRX STI Higgins drove also featured Dunlop Direzza tires and a high decibel straight exhaust for crowd safety. The stock speed limiter was also removed from the car. ■



SPECS: PRE-PRODUCTION BUILD

ENGINE	.....2.5L 4-cyl intercooled turbo boxer w/ SI-Drive Performance Engine Mgmt
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....8.2:1
MAXIMUM BOOST	.....14.7 psi
TRANSMISSION	.....6-speed man, hi-po clutch
DRIVETRAIN	.....All-wheel drive: Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive with Driver Control Center Differential (DCCD) featuring three performance modes, six driver-selectable differential locking settings; mechanical and electronically controlled limited-slip center differential; helical limited-slip front differential and Torsen limited-slip rear differential, steering angle input sensor; nominal torque split is 41:59. Multi-Mode Driver Controlled Center Diff.
POWER/TORQUE	.....305 hp / 290 lb-ft
BODY/CHASSIS	.....4-door wide body seats 5. Unitized construction with ring-shaped frame reinforcement structure; high-tensile steel reinforcements at key structural and suspension-mounting locations.
SUSPENSION	.....4-wheel independent, high-po STI sport-tuned. FRONT: Inverted struts w forged aluminum-alloy lower A-arms w pillow ball joint mount, coil springs, 24mm stabilizer bar. REAR: Double-wishbone type w coil springs and damper units, stiffener bar, 20mm stabilizer bar.
BRAKES	.....Brembo Performance Brake System, power assisted 4-wheel disc with 4-channel, 4-sensor Super-Sport anti-lock brake system (ABS) with g-sensor; electronic brake-force distribution (EBD), brake assist and brake override. FRONT: 13.0-in ventilated with four-piston fixed position calipers. REAR: 12.4-in ventilated with dual-piston fixed position calipers.
STEERING	.....Quick-ratio hydraulic power assisted rack-and-pinion. RATIO: 13.0:1. TURN-TO-TURN: 2.5. TURNING CIRCLE: 36.0 ft.
WEIGHT	.....(base) 3386 lb
FUEL CAPACITY / OCTANE	.....15.9 gal / 91 AKI
MPG	.....17/23/19 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED (PRE-PRODUCTION)	3-spoke flat-bottomed leather-wrap tilt/telescope wheel w audio/cruise controls; sport instruments and gauges, 3.5" LCD central screen plus 4.3" configurable upper screen; wide-body design, functional hood scoop, LED low-beams and tails, STI-exclusive down-force-reduction rear wing; carbon-fiber-like interior trim, performance front seats w adjustable headrests; driver's knee air-bag plus six others; standard audio w AM-FM-CD-HD, 6 spkrs, MP3-WMA, RDBS, bluetooth call/audio stream, iPod-iTunes-USB compatibility, satellite radio, 3.5mm aux jack; optional 6.1" LCD nav screen, voice controls, 440-watt 9-spr harman/kardon premium audio; Limited trim adds leather-trimmed upholstery, 8-way power driver's seat, power moonroof.
BASE PRICE (Limited trim)	.....\$38,495
OPTIONS	.....[ na]
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....795
TOTAL	.....\$39,290

Subaru Rally Team USA in 1-2 finish at 2014 Oregon Trail Rally



Defending Rally America Champion David Higgins won the 2014 Oregon Trail Rally over teammate Travis Pastrana, after a massive comeback that came down to the last two stages of this three-day, 18 stage event. The event began with a unique combination of mixed gravel and tarmac stages at Portland International Raceway, then moved to scenic yet challenging gravel roads around the Hood River and Dufur regions east of Portland for the bulk of the event.

Pastrana had led the Oregon Trail Rally from the first stages and held his lead through all three days of competition—until the penultimate stage, where two flat tires, combined with a hard charging David Higgins, forced Pastrana to relinquish the lead and settle for second overall.

Pastrana and Higgins drove Vermont SportsCar-prepped 2014 Subaru WRX STI rally cars in a Subaru-dominated event, with the top five finishers at the wheel of Subaru rally cars.

Higgins' supremacy in Oregon is further solidified by this being his fourth win in a row and sixth total, having won every Oregon Trail Rally he has entered. The Oregon Trail Rally represents round three of the 2014 Rally America National Championship. ■

