

12.12.2000

17.01.2001, Monte Carlo: It is early in the morning, and you ask yourself why all these people are here:

Stage one: wet tarmac, strong rain. Olivier Gillet selects first gear and starts. 300 meters. Left, 2nd, 60 km/h. Olivier looks to his right. NO, he has not gone crazy and he doesn't look at his co-driver. He is simply looking at the road, through the side window. Sadly, the wipers works only on the windscreen. The view through the side window needs more attention, but too much water is running on it.

06.12.2000: Les Rochat: This is not a special stage of the Monte Carlo. But the circumstances are the same. Olivier, the rain, the speed, the wind, and: one difference: we are sitting in the all-new WR-Blue Subaru Impreza WRX.

220 bhp, 290 Nm, four doors, 4wd. A new stiffer chassis, a new suspension configuration together with an optimized drives train. First Impression: the new Impreza feels grown up. New interior materials, beautiful bucket seats, an attractive dashboard, and instruments with chrome rings. „Your workplace feels luxurious“ is what I explain to Olivier when he arrives at the Rochat.

Les Rochat: maybe you remember this name. We were here last August. About 4 kilometers of military test track, somewhere in the Swiss mountains. Today we have Scottish weather. Strong rain and wind are bad for us, not for Olivier and his Impreza WRX. As with every professional rally driver, he enjoys this weather and will show us what are the secrets of this WR-blue WRX.

Olivier fires up the boxer motor and the typical Subaru burble reminds us of the WRC Impreza of Richard Burns and Kankunen. A few seconds, first gear in, and Olivier begins his work.

Please be careful: Do not try this with your car.

When we say work, we are not really precise. For a rally driver, this work is like breathing for a normal person. On the other side instead of work we should write FLY. Why? On this 6th September 2000 we had the ultimate certitude: The new Impreza WRX is an iconic car. 30 seconds later Olivier was passing in front of us the first time: As usual: with 90 kph, on the brakes, the Impreza WRX slows down like a bull ready to spring on his enemy. One second later the rear wheels stop turning (ndr: handbrake) and the WRX turns in the bend like spinning on the ice. Remember: this is the beginning of our test. Imagine the rest.

After a few minutes you are certain that this new Impreza WRX has the pedigree to win. Each bend you notice how well the suspension, chassis, boxer motor and brakes work. Meanwhile Olivier flies on the track and bend after bend we continue to learn and know the behavior of this Impreza WRX.



Specifications

SUBARU IMPREZA WRX

engine	flat four 1994 cc aluminium alloy cylinder block aluminium alloy DOHC 4 valves per cyl multipoint electronic fuel injection turbocharger
location	Front, longitudinal
max power	218 PS 109 PS/litre 6,4 kg/PS
max torque	215 lb/ft at 3600 rpm (290 Nm)
1000 m	27.8 sec
0-100 km/h	6,3 sec.
max speed	230 km/h

Yes here we are: this is a worthy successor to the mythic Impreza GT Turbo. Meter after meter Olivier shows us the subtle differences and improvements. If you look at the WRX, you will not notice that she is about 6,5 cm longer and 3,5 cm taller. With a longer wheelbase (+0,5 cm) and a larger wheel track (+ 2 cm) the WRX stays significantly better on the road. The body shell is now much stiffer and you notice it looking at the WRX changing direction in the bends after loosing the traction. Out of sharp turn the WRX gradually gets the grip and very soon the Turbo motor spin smoothly to the red line: about 7000 rpm. With this configuration the car resist understeer much better than the old GT Turbo.

As you will see on the video we made, the body control of the WRX is certainly one of the major news of the latest Impreza. With unusual confidence Olivier turns through the corners, playing with the bumps even when the rain comes down in sheets.

As Olivier stops a few minutes and we change camera position, we got the most important driving impression. He enjoys the ride, the suspension and the brakes. The rear-ventilated disk with 2 calypers is doing a great job. A new brake master cylinder gives you better feel and the throttle response is softer.

That said we prepare the slalom. 10 cones - one every 18 meters – with an average speed of 75 km/h. Olivier get the Impreza WRX through the cones with the precision of a Swiss watch maker. Not one fell over, but each one felt the front wheel of the WRX at about 20 cm distance!

Perfect body control. The new Impreza WRX is very impressive. It has more performance, grip and sheer dynamic ability than the old one. Our verdict: strong buy.

Do you want more? Order the video of this iconic test now. This is a rare opportunity to learn about the new Impreza WRX and his secrets through the hands of Olivier Gillet. Have a nice time; see you at the Monte Carlo in January 2001.

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Tracktest Subaru Impreza WRX Modelyear 2001: overview

car owner:	courtesy of Subaru Switzerland, Safenwil www.subaru.ch
track:	military tank track, Les Rochat, Neuchâtel, switzerland
surface:	wet, strong rain
temperature:	+ 3 degC
wind:	Strong
tyres	PIRELLI WINTER 240

Hardware changes

	Olivier opinion
New suspensions geometry	+ body control
New strengthened shell	+ body control, stiffer, no creaks, no rattles but more weight
New 17in wheels (215/45-17)	+ ride, hold the line tenaciously
65 mm longer, 35 mm taller	+ more space inside
Larger wheel track (+ 20 mm)	+ ride
Bigger intercooler (+ 11% output)	+ ready for ECU tune up (250 PS)
Aluminium bonnet	+ less weight
4 pot ventilated disks at the front	+ no fading
2 pot ventilated disks rear	+ improved braking stability
