



SUBARU®



Official name: Subaru Division, Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd

Owned by: Mainly Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd and Toyota (16.5%).

Formerly owned by: General Motors (20%).

Current situation: On the positive side, Subaru vehicles have an excellent reputation for performance, handling, reliability and safety. However, like the giant panda, Subaru has become too specialised and is endangered by a changing environment. Although Subaru is currently profitable, it has a limited model range and is a small fish in a hostile and overpopulated sea.

Chances of survival: okay. Subaru's alliance with Toyota will improve its chances considerably. In the end, Subaru may end up like Daihatsu – simply one of Toyota's specialist brands •



A brief commentary on Subaru



A former lieutenant in the Japanese Imperial Navy, Chikuhei Nakajima was probably a bad guy to mess with.

SUBARU is the car division of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. Fuji also manufactures, among other things, aircraft, trains & ships.

Found by Chikuhei Nakajima in 1917 as the *Nakajima Aircraft Company*, the company changed its name to *Fuji Sangyo Ltd* in 1945, when the American occupying forces split the group into twelve independent companies.

Six of these later regrouped as *Fuji Heavy industries Ltd.* and gradually diversified into manufacturing such things as motor-scooters, bus bodywork and gasoline engines.

The name *Subaru* (correct Japanese pronunciation is *Soo bar roo*, not *soo - ber - ROO*) means 'unite' - but it's also a term for a cluster of six stars in the Taurus constellation, named 'Pleiades' by the Ancient Greeks. It's also a reference to the six companies of the Fuji group.



Subaru produced its first car in 1958. Called the *360*, it was a copy of the Italian Fiat 500.



More conventional cars started with the *FF1* of 1966, formed after a cooperation agreement with Nissan.

Subaru's first big break came with the four-wheel drive *Leone* in 1972, which suddenly made four-wheel drive available for the everyday motorist.



Subaru also did well with small cars & vans and its performance models. There were hiccups along the way: early '80s Subarus had bad rust problems, and Subaru small cars and vans were death-traps.

In the early '90s Subaru really got its act together on both fronts. Most modern Subarus give excellent crashtest results and rarely rust.



Subaru's rally cars like the WRX have made the brand famous among petrolheads. Much of the technology that goes into Subaru's racing vehicles is also present in its everyday cars.



The quality of Subaru, especially their engines, has plummeted in recent years. Whereas they used to be very reliable for the first 100,000km, now they give lots of problems, and these problems are often both hard to fix and expensive to fix.

So, we no longer recommend these vehicles, sorry •

