

# MAD IN NEW ZEALAND

Granted, you may have seen this wild machine before, but you won't have seen it on the road. The Subaru Impreza STI-based **Brough Extreme Vehicles Subzilla** is now officially road-legal and therefore now available to customer order. Just bring your goggles

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## What the hell is that thing?

'Absolutely insane' is the obvious answer, but the proper answer is something more along the lines of the Brough Subzilla.

The back-shed creation of Waikato man Ken Brough, the Subzilla is created by throwing away all of the bits of a Subaru Impreza WRX STI that don't directly contribute to it going fast. The STI's drivetrain and boxer turbo engine are jammed into a custom-built chassis that is draped with a cursory body to produce one of the most outrageous creations to turn a wheel on New Zealand roads.

## Are you trying to say that it's actually road legal?

Yes, although it's taken a while. Brough has battled with bureaucracy for some time, but got the Subzilla certified a few months back, meaning that he can now enjoy his creation on the roads around his Pirongia home.

## So you could theroretically order one of your own?

If you have a sense of adventure and a wallet flexible enough to indulge your fantasies. A basic Subzilla like Brough's first effort will set you back around \$95,000. That compares favourably with a Lotus 7 replica, or something like an Ariel Atom, although none of the potential opposition offer four-wheel drive. Or the Subzilla's feral boxer-engine howling when you let it loose.

**TOP:** Low, wide, really quite angry. And yes, it's definitely all there. There are no bits missing  
**MIDDLE LEFT:** Barbed wire? Very Kiwi and also the easiest way to say 'don't touch'  
**MIDDLE RIGHT:** Proof that the Subzilla is legal and approved. Not proof that it's sane, however  
**LEFT:** Bovines find Ken's creations (Subzilla plus earlier ATV experiment) interesting. Except for one with other things on its mind



## But what's it really like to drive?

In a single word: overwhelming. Okay, two words: brilliantly overwhelming. Brough quotes a 0-100km/h time of 4.7 seconds, but it feels far faster, because you are exposed to, well, everything really.

Nail the small throttle to the bare metal floor and every sense is ruthlessly battered by noise, wind and the sheer aggression of the acceleration. You feel like you are sitting high in the surprisingly roomy cockpit, but only because the bodywork is so low. You are, in reality, mere centimetres off the ground, strapped into blue Brough-emblazoned racing seats. Absolutely everything is amplified. Remember, this car weighs just 750kg and has 210kW.

## So fast! Surely it's utterly terrifying through the corners?

The stripped-out look, brutal acceleration and raucous noise would suggest a machine that is tricky to drive, but in reality it isn't particularly difficult to drive the Subzilla at sensible speeds. Of course, with a car like this the definition of 'sensible' is reset somewhat.



The controls do not have any assistance, so Subzilla drips with the kind of direct connection with the road that has been refined out of ordinary cars. It is a very physical experience, but immensely rewarding to chuck it into a corner. With all-wheel drive and hardly any weight it hangs on with ruthless tenacity.

But you also get the overwhelming feeling that being really committed in the Subzilla would require not only a lot of familiarity with the beast, but also a fair degree of driving talent. And balls, never forget balls. ■■■

**LEFT:** Lack of a windscreen means 'alternative' placement had to be found for those crucial Warrant of Fitness and registration labels

**RIGHT:** Engine cover doesn't exactly cover the engine. But then again, would you really want to hide it?

**BELOW:** Windscreens are over-rated. Sadly, so too are silly goggles and ridiculously long hair on men

## instant expert

**MODEL** Brough Extreme Vehicles Subzilla

**BASE PRICE** \$95,000

**WHAT'S NEW?** The entire idea of a clubman-like sports car that actually has room for two normal-sized adults is pretty new, but then add in a boxer engine and all-wheel drive and you are definitely heading off into some undiscovered territory

**THE FACTS** 2.0-litre turbocharged horizontally-opposed petrol four making 210kW/360Nm. Five-speed manual, all-wheel drive. Or since it's your special order, whatever Subaru powertrain you choose to put in it

**PERFORMANCE** 0-100km/h 4.7 seconds, Combined economy really not important

**HIGHS** The insane noise, the brutal acceleration, the direct controls, the stares

**LOWS** The wait. The fact that it's just one man making it in his shed unfortunately means that you can't have your new toy right now

