

overall sense of agility is unmatched. It's a flavorful car.

Infiniti Q45 Second Place

This car topped the fun-to-drive sweepstakes, largely because the engine and the transmission create rapture and there's nothing very wrong elsewhere to break the spell.

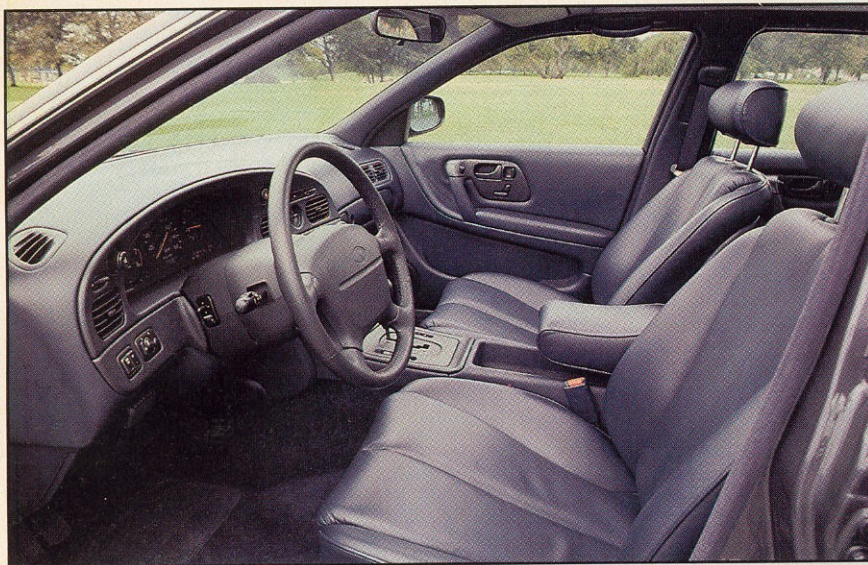
The engine is simply extravagant, 4494cc of sensuous muscle. It idles so quietly that more than one of us, at a driver change, tried to restart it when it was already running.

Response to the throttle is always crisp. And the machinery speaks with sweet verve at full power, truly the voice of luxury.

The Infiniti hauls butt, too. Despite its weight (4020 pounds, the second heaviest of the group), the Q45 was easily the fastest car in our test. It's the only one to 60 mph in under eight seconds, the only one to 100 mph in under twenty seconds, the only one through the quarter-mile at over 90 mph (this is fast-car territory), and the only one to top 150 mph flat out (the Lexus did 150 exactly). You'll have to pay a truckload for a faster four-door.

And yet . . . and yet, the Q45 doesn't go around acting like a fireball car. It's just as mild as your maiden aunt if you don't provoke it. And even when you do, it's the quietest of the group at wide-open throttle.

This is a big car, but not huge like the M-B. Rear-seat legroom is tight, considering the exterior bulk. The driver's seat cushion doesn't tip up quite far enough in front for comfort. And the look of the interior is vaguely offputting. All of the materials are so close to the same hue



INFINITI Q45