

MOOGARU: TOWING THE LINE

FORGET YOUR JDM. MOOG GIVES HIS FORESTER THE TDM MAKEOVER.

IF YOU THINK about the most popular car modifications, you wouldn't be considered crazy if you thought it was a head unit install. Or maybe bigger rims or lowered springs. Or even a muffler. But in fact probably the most common car modification in Australia is the fitment of a tow bar.

A tow bar can literally transform the usability of your car, and while people don't often think of them as a "performance" modification, this is not entirely the case if the car in question is being used to tow a performance car to the race track. You can head away for weekends, drag around JetSkis, motorbikes and boats. Even horses, donkeys and unicorns if you so desire. In fact it is the simplest way to radically transform the usability of your car, and soon after your install you will be inundated with calls from all your friends moving houses who will ask you to go and pick up a trailer for them...

It's not until you start delving further into the tow bar "scene" that you realise just how in depth it is. (Yes there are forums, dedicated websites, fans and a whole scene set up for tow bars just like any other modification scene) And their forums are just as full of strange, wonderful and crazy questions as any other forum. There are some seriously crazy TDM (Tow Domestic Market) fans out there.

Because Marty and I both ride motorbikes, plus go to track days and are regularly picking up parts we decided that considering I'm the only one of us that now has a Subaru, that we needed to increase its practicality even more. The Forester has a 1600kg towing capacity, more than enough to carry the Blue Turd to the race track and with a huge amount of towing potential for what is already a great car it was time to join caravan lovers everywhere, and enter the TDM scene.

There are a huge range of tow bars available for different models and it's incredibly important to make sure that you choose the one that is made for your car. There are variances in years and models so you have to make sure the one you are getting is compatible. When it comes to tow bar choice, we chose Hayman Reese. They've been manufacturing tow bars for the Australian automotive industry since 1951 and making sure grey nomads (and their caravans) make it to their ever changing destinations for over 60 years. They also make a range of related products like wiring systems,

tail lamp protectors, general protection bars, electronic brake controllers and cargo barriers. The bar we are installing is the famous Haymen Reese Hitch Receiver Tow Bar which also has a removable Trailer Ball Mount. These Hitch Receiver Tow Bars are often rated to the vehicles maximum towing capacity which is a must if towing caravans, large trailers, boats or horse/unicorn floats, though the only boat we'll be towing will be whatever horrible old car Marty buys next.

Choosing a Tow Bar comes down to making sure it has a maximum capacity that exceeds the loaded weight of the trailer you are intending to tow. You need to know the maximum tow rating of your car which you can check in the towing section of your cars handbook. You also need to know the loaded weight of your trailer. For this you may need a visit to a weigh bridge. It's important to make sure this loaded weight does not exceed your cars maximum tow rating, or the rating of your tow bar. It's incredibly important that you never exceed your tow bars maximum towing capacity. Again, a google search should be enough to scare you off ever attempting to do so.

There are two main types of Haymen Reese tow bar available with the first being classed as 'Standard' with a towing capacity up to 1250kg. For heavy duty towing, the hitch receiver is used, and it can be used with the removable ball mount or the Haymen Reese Weight Distribution Hitch. All Haymen Reese tow bars have a compliance plate which states the maximum tow rating and they have a life time warranty for the original owner. Winning!

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It is possible to install the tow bar yourself, but it does bring up a lot of questions about safety and insurance so if you are in anyway unsure, then it should be installed by a professional such as Pedders. There have been numerous horror stories posted online about dodgy tow bar installs... Luckily for us the team at Pedders Mascot stepped up to do the install as they have been doing them for years. The Subaru has been to Pedders a number of times over the years for springs, coil overs and suspension set up. But today, we're getting practical with the tow bar install.

The Foresters rear bumper is taken off and then the rear impact beam is removed as it is no longer used. The two rear exhausts are lowered which makes way for the alignment of the tow bar via the attachment of two 3mm plates. The tow bar then is raised up and aligned with the existing holes in the chassis rail. Whizz nuts are fitted to the rear studs of the car and then all the hardware is fastened to the specified torque listing.

The Forester also needs a 90mm wide cut out of the rear bumper to make way for the new bar and the guys did an

amazingly neat job. Once the bumper is refit, the last thing to do is sort out the wiring. This takes around 25 minutes, and the wiring loom is mounted to the underside of the bumper bar.

The finished job is fantastic, and not nearly as ugly as I have seen on other cars. With the TBM removed, and the small black cover over the hitch it really is a stealthy install, with all the practicality that we've come to expect, from the every practical Moogaru. 🍷

Big thanks to the team at Pedders Mascot and the guys at Hayman Reese

*Installation by Gavin Sidhu
Photos and assistance by Mark Johnson
Thanks also to Adam Gillick @ Pedders*

*pedders.com.au
haymanreese.com.au*

STEP BY STEP GUIDE



STEP ONE

The rear bar is removed and set safely aside.



STEP TWO

The Hayman Reese towbar ready for install.



STEP THREE

The bracket is then installed into the pre-existing mounting holes.



STEP FOUR

A hole is cut in the bumper for the towbar itself.



STEP FIVE

Wire up the tow bar loom

