



Mitsubishi Outlander Way Out

Car manufacturers seem to have lost their way. The luxurious sport utility vehicle (SUV) has been stripped of all its off-road capabilities and reduced to nothing more than a petrol-guzzling lifestyle vehicle. But Mitsubishi has promised to amend its ways! The new Outlander feels just at home off-road as on the motorway. To boot Mitsubishi claims that it has low fuel consumption. So, does the Outlander offer a way out? Is it the solution to all the old complaints?

The previous generation Outlander is still available under the new name Outlander Sport. It is still on the market, and rightly so. This new Outlander and the Outlander Sport are like chalk and cheese. The Outlander Sport is a large estate with all the external characteristics of a SUV. The new Outlander is a SUV as it is meant to be: an off-road car for daily use.

It is clearly visible that the Outlander was meant as a real off-roader from its appearance. The wheels have been placed at the furthest corners, reducing overhang to a minimum. The bumpers slant to prevent them catching when on steep climbs or inclines (front angle: 22 degrees, rear angle: 21 degrees), and the floor is protected by strong plates which run from bumper to bumper.



The two-part tailgate is extremely handy, making loading and unloading so easy. The lower section of the tailgate can double up as a seat for a maximum weight of 200 kilograms. Unfortunately the upper section does not open high enough, potentially risky for taller people.

The luggage space is enormous, which is why Mitsubishi has chosen to produce the Outlander as 7-seater car. However, they have somewhat overreached themselves. As the first back seat is on rails, there is sufficient leg space here. , all the same there is very little head space in the back.

With the simplest of moves, the second rear seat appears out

of the floor of the boot as if by magic. These two extra seats are in fact pretty difficult to reach, with only enough head and leg space for (small) children. It'd be better to consider the Outlander as 5-seater, and not really as 7-seater.



Interior

Fortunately, the car does offer space in abundance. The front seats are very comfortable. The interior is modern and taut, but at the same time easy to keep clean even after an adventurous excursion.

The dashboard is best described as having been "tidied up". Nearly all the functions (and there are a lot!) are controlled with buttons placed on or around the wheel. The only buttons on the dash are those for the climate control. These large knobs look fairly tough but are in fact a bit dicky and let the final finish down. And another thing, the edges of front windows could do with improvement: at high speeds, the wind catches.



The combined audio, navigation and communication system

of the test driven car, are controlled with a touch sensitive screen. The audio system does deserve an honourable mention in respect of this. Working with the audio specialist Rockford Fosgate, Mitsubishi has one of the best car audio systems on the market at the moment! There is still room for improvement, but then it'd cost twice as much (Volvo) or even five times as much (Lexus).



Driving

At the time of test driving the Outlander, there was only one engine available: the 2.0 litre four cylinder turbo diesel. This identifies it as a typical off-road engine. The Outlander reacts to acceleration just like a large, good-natured old softy. A sprint from traffic lights requires patience.

In the city, the Outlander is and will always be a large SUV. The car reacts with a certain slowness to steering commands, but the road handling is good. The Outlander doesn't require the driver to adjust their driving style. It is as safe as an ordinary family car.

On the motorway, the Outlander does show its power. Here, high cruising speeds are maintained easily. Also acceleration from high speed to an even higher speed poses absolutely no problem.



Consumption

The Outlander is not really fast, however its performances are sufficient. Moreover a moderate consumption is comparable with the moderate need to perform. Mitsubishi promise an extremely moderate thirst of only 6.9 litres per 100 km. In practice, this is easily achievable and with a gentle driving style it can be even more efficient.

The low consumption is partly due to the two wheel drive which can be switched on or off. This means of course that on the open road it is not more mechanically driven than is necessary.

Off Road

Away from prepared roads, the four wheel drive is activated with a simple switch of a button between the two front seats. With a slow response to the accelerator (without turbo gap), the Outlander is easy to manage off-road. Special gears for off-road use (low gearing) are unfortunately missing. The gradual increase of engine capacity as well as the well-chosen gearbox proportions makes the Outlander nevertheless very capable off-road.

When the four wheel drive is not enough, the mid-differential can be blocked with the same button between the front seats. Then the Outlander is able to make its way through thick mud or loose sand. In short: at last an SUV as it should be!

Conclusion

With the SUV being in hot water, Mitsubishi offers a solution with the new Outlander. Many of the frequently discussed disadvantages of SUVs are the moderate road handling, the considerable consumption and the lack of serious off-road capabilities. The new Mitsubishi Outlander has good road handling, an economical diesel engine and even has serious off-road capabilities.

However the car is not perfect; the rear space is not great and the finish leaves much to be desired. Apart from these imperfections, Mitsubishi has found the way which many other manufacturers have lost. The Outlander is an SUV as SUVs were meant to be. ■



Specifications

Mitsubishi Outlander 2.0 DI-D Elegance

Size and weight

Length	464 cm
Width	180 cm
Height	172 cm
Wheelbase	267 cm
Kerb weight	1630 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	2000 kg
Fuel capacity	60 l
Luggage space	771/1691 l



Engine and performance

Capacity	1968 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	140 bhp @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	310 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	vierwielaandrijving
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.8 secs
Top speed	187 km/h
Average mileage	6.9 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	8.8 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.9 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	183 gr / km



Price

Price	£ 24,766
Price base model	£ 19,466