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Mitsubishi ASX – Revised 2017 Model; Launch and Road Test

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2017 Revised Mitsubishi ASX Crossover Debuts in the UK.

Report by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The revised, high specification 2017 Mitsubishi ASX mid-sized Crossover/SUV range is now on sale in the UK with prices starting from a competitive £16,184 on-the-road or £169 a month PCP finance plan over three years.

All models have a five year, 62,500 mile warranty and, keeping running costs affordable, Mitsubishi's Service Plan covering scheduled maintenance for the first three years, is available for £500 for the 1.6 petrol and turbodiesel models and £675 for the 2.2 turbodiesel



versions.

Highlights of the changes are a new 'Dynamic Shield' front end styling in line with Mitsubishi's larger Outlander and Outlander PHEV SUVs, a shark fin roof antenna, revised seats plus a new simplified trim designation with improved equipment for most models - namely more logical ASX 2, 3, 4 and 5 levels. There are six core versions but with leather upholstery and metallic paint choices there are 18 derivatives to choose from.

As before there are three engine options; a 1.6 litre 117 hp petrol with front wheel drive and a five-speed manual gearbox with ASX 2 trim level, a 1.6 litre 114 hp DI-D turbodiesel with a six-speed manual gearbox with front wheel drive on ASX 3 versions and on demand four wheel drive for ASX 4 and ASX 5 versions. The most powerful engine is a 2.2 litre 150 hp DI-D turbodiesel with on demand 4WD and six speed auto gearbox as standard with ASX 4 and ASX 5 spec levels. Range prices top out at £29,114 for the 2.2 ASX 5 auto 4WD derivative.

Apart from functionality and the must-have kerb appeal of robust styling, the major consideration by the growing number of customers for Crossovers and SUVs is the comfort level and specification they get for their money. It's a large and still growing market sector - but highly competitive.



The latest ASX models don't come up short in the specification stakes. ASX 2 priced at £16,184 has 16-inch alloy wheels, front fog lamps, air conditioning; Bluetooth phone connectivity, a USB port with iPhone compatibility, a leather-trimmed steering wheel, multifunction colour instrument display, electric windows front and rear, rear privacy glass and arm rests for front and rear occupants. Safety equipment includes Mitsubishi Active Stability and Traction Control (M-ASTC), Hill Start Assist and seven airbags as standard.

The ASX 3 level additions include two-tone 18-inch alloys; black wheel-arch garnishes, automatic climate control, keyless entry and operation, cruise control, automatic light and rain sensors, xenon super-HID 'wide vision' headlamps with washers, DAB radio and Bluetooth music streaming, auto-dimming rear view mirror, heated front seats, electric-folding door mirrors and, new for 2017, a reversing camera.



The Mitsubishi ASX 4 features four-wheel drive as standard and is available with the 1.6 litre turbo diesel and 2.2 litre turbo diesel automatic. Standard features in addition to the specification of the ASX 3 include leather upholstery, black roof rails, an aluminium pedal kit (new for 2017); a panoramic glass roof and the Mitsubishi Multi Communication System (MMCS), which includes a seven-inch HD touch-screen display, satellite navigation, DAB, CD player, SD card compatibility and reversing camera.

The new ASX 5 level becomes available during January 2017 with seats trimmed in rich Nappa leather with a choice of three colours - Claret Red, Porcelain Cream and Gunmetal Grey. Also included is a premium carpet mat set and boot mat featuring colour-coded piping to match the leather trim. For improved comfort heated rear seats are standard as are a power-adjusted driver's seat, twin rear USB charging ports, LED interior lighting and front-door entry guards.

Famous for their 4WD vehicles, Mitsubishi launched their ASX mid-sized five door five seater in 2010 as one of the first Crossovers of this size and at a price to compete with the all-conquering Nissan Qashqai. The ASX was updated in 2015, including a new 1.6 litre diesel engine, so now it's time for a further programme of improvements.

One of the major complaints about previous versions was the cheap quality of the interior trim, but the cars were praised for their good equipment levels, safety features and interior space. The ASX was also perceived to be noisy to drive, with poor insulation from engine noise entering the cabin.

All that seems to have changed, but I did initially notice wind and road noise intrusion during my first outing in the vehicle. However that seemed to have melted into the back of my mind after an extended road test period over the festive holiday.



My test drive of the 2017 range was with the best selling 1.6 litre turbodiesel engine with its manual gearbox and 4WD system and the ASX 4 level of specification. The interior quality looks to have been improved - indeed it looked and felt quite plush, and well priced at £24,434, or with metallic paint as my test car had, £24,959. There were no squeaks or rattles, the trim was soft-feel and it was all well laid out. The leather upholstery was really well done and with the cold weather which prevailed during my loan period, the heated seats were much appreciated. It is good to see a manufacturer taking note of past criticisms and improving things the next time around. There is still more to do as most competitors with medium spec Crossover models now include items such as an electrically heated windscreen, emergency city braking and blind spot monitoring functions. Mitsubishi take note please.



In addition to good space for up to five passengers there is a reasonable sized boot of 419 litres (14.8 cu.ft) which, with the rear seat backs folded, goes up to 1,193 litres (42.1 cu.ft). For those owners who need to use the ASX 1.6 diesel as a tow vehicle the braked weight limit is 1,400 kg (3,086 lb).



Outside the ASX looks like a proper SUV, a chunky design with a rising waistline, a new prominent front end with impact-absorbing bonnet, wheelarch extensions and solid impact-absorbing bumpers.

Being a tallish off-road styled vehicle there was some body roll during cornering but generally the handling was tight and well controlled - and it still offered a compliant and comfortable ride. Although the steering didn't offer much feedback it was at least consistent, with predictable grip during cornering.



Further grip with the 4WD system was also available through its various selectable modes. In 2WD torque is delivered only to the front wheels. In 4WD Auto mode torque distribution is variable from 98% front to 50/50% front and rear, ideal for ice or snow on-road or gravel or adverse off road conditions. In 4WD Lock mode 1.5 times the torque is delivered to the rear wheels to further improve traction and directional stability both on and off road.

Powering my 1.6 litre turbodiesel model was a four cylinder DI-D direct injection unit with 114 PS (112 bhp) and with a healthy amount of torque of 270 Nm (199 lb ft) developed from 1,750 rpm. Drive is through a six-speed manual gearbox which provided positive and accurate gear changes. Top speed was a modest 111 mph and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time was 11.5 seconds, again a modest figure but workmanlike.

Only under hard acceleration did the engine note get vocal, most of the time it worked away without fuss and felt pretty refined and responsive. As for fuel economy, the official Combined Cycle figure is 56.5 mpg with the 4WD configuration with CO2 emissions of 132 g/km, not class-leading it has to be said. During my extended test driving, and at this point I should say in fairness, my test car was so new as 2017 model vehicles are only just available, it had only 80 miles on the clock when delivered so it felt pretty tight - but it still retuned an overall average of 46.7 mpg. The VED road tax costs are £130 every year if bought before April this year when prices and tax bands change. After that it goes up to £200 for the First Year rate and then £140 for subsequent years. Company car drivers will pay 26% Benefit-in-Kind tax now and 28% from April. Insurance is Group 18.



VERDICT

If this was an end of term school report I'd say, the 2017 Mitsubishi ASX 4 1.6 diesel 4WD is much improved in most areas; not top of the class, still some improvement needed but overall well done.

For: Improved in most areas for the 2017 model year, more equipment, better quality interior, smart front end looks, comfortable ride, good fuel economy potential.

Against: Wind and road noise intrusion, improvements and extra kit have of course pushed



up the price as has the lower value Pound, lacks an electrically heated windscreen, city emergency braking and blind spot monitoring functions now fitted to other similar competitors.

Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

2017 Mitsubishi ASX 4 1.6 diesel 4WD manual.

Price: £24,959 as tested.

Engine/transmission: 1.6 litre, four cylinder, direct injection turbodiesel, 114 PS (114 bhp), 270 Nm (199 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, six speed manual with on demand 4WD.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 11.5 seconds.

Top speed: 111 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 56.5 mpg (46.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 132 g/km, VED £130, BIK company car tax 26%.

Insurance Group: 18.

Warranty: Five years/62,500 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,355 mm (14.29 ft), W 1,810 mm (5.94 ft), H 1,640 mm (5.38 ft), boot/load space 419 to 1,193 litres (14.8 to 42.1 cu.ft), braked towing capacity 1,400 kg (3,086 lb), five doors/five seats.



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