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New Mitsubishi Shogun Sport seven seater SUV – First Impressions

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Latest Mitsubishi Shogun Sport.

...tried and tested by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

A new tough Mitsubishi Shogun Sport is being launched into the booming SUV sector, and the only European country to get it is the UK.

Unlike most of today's 4x4s/SUVs/Crossovers on sale, the Shogun Sport is a no nonsense hard-core five door SUV with seven seats, a large 3,100 kg (6,834 lb) towing capacity and impressive off-road abilities. A two-seat commercial version will be added to the range



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shortly.

Why only on sale in the UK? Mitsubishi Motors have a long heritage of supplying robust and capable 4x4s since their Shogun models were first introduced in 1983. Now the Shogun has ceased production so a replacement 4×4 flagship model is needed for the UK market.

That replacement is the Shogun Sport and it's only built in Thailand as a right hand drive vehicle. It is built on the same production lines as Mitsubishi's award-winning L200 Double Cab pick-up models.





The new Shogun Sport five-door, seven-seat SUV is based on the platform of the L200 Double Cab pick-up but uses coil spring rear suspension for ride comfort rather than the pick-up's leaf spring system.

Available in Grade 3 and Grade 4 specification levels the Shogun Sport is priced at £37,775 and £39,775 respectively. They are covered by a five year/62,500 mile warranty. Mitsubishi offer a PCP finance deal with a £1,000 deposit contribution. An example is £440 a month for three years with a 10% deposit.

Rob Lindley, the recently appointed new managing director for Mitsubishi Motors in the UK said at the media launch this week "We had to fill the gap in our model range for customers who need a serious 4WD passenger vehicle for towing and off-road use and those who want a modern SUV, particularly among those living in the countryside. We saw this model on sale in Australia and because that is also a right hand drive market it suited our requirements so it made sense to bring it to the UK."

"To make this possible we have had to put it through stringent UK IVA (Individual Vehicle Type Approval) testing rather than the current EU Type Approval programme as it will only be sold in Europe in the UK market. The changes needed were only minor and included fitting different EU-compliant lights and adding further undersealing for the chassis and body to meet our current five year/62,500-miles and 12 years anti-corrosion perforation warranties.

He added, "A previous generation Japanese built Shogun Sport model had been sold in the UK from 2000 to 2007 accumulating 18,500 sales, and it is still widely used today as a rugged utilitarian vehicle with more than 12,000 still on UK roads."

"It is important we can offer the new Shogun Sport to existing Shogun customers now that model has ceased production, also it will appeal to current Outlander diesel customers looking to upgrade and to L200 Double Cab customers with changing family or business needs. It will also attract conquest customers who have the need for a large heavy duty



rugged and reliable 4WD vehicle, customers who want a roomy vehicle but not a 'Chelsea Tractor' and customers seeking value for money with a high quality well equipped product."

"In the first full year of UK sales I estimate we will sell between 3,000 and 3,500 units, around 35% will be fleet buyers and 75% of customers are expected to choose the top Grade 4 specification model. It was important that we kept this version below £40k so it didn't attract the added VED road tax supplement of £310 annually from years two for five years. Competitors I see as the Kia Sorento, Hyundai Santa Fe, Toyota Land Cruiser, the Land Rover Discovery Sport and SsangYong Rexton."

Styling wise the Shogun Sport is big and butch with an overall length of 4,785 mm (15.70 ft), it's 1,815 mm (5.95 ft) wide, 1,805 mm (5.92 ft) high with a long wheelbase of 2,800 mm (9.19 ft). With 218 mm (8.58 in) of ground clearance it has a 30-degree approach angle and 24-degree departure angle for off-road driving, it can handle side slope angles of up to 45-degrees and has a wading depth of 700 mm (27.56 in). The maximum braked towing weight is 3,100 kg (6,834 lb) with a towball nose weight of 125 kg (276 lb).



The front face of the new model uses Mitsubishi's latest 'Dynamic Shield' aerodynamic design with its prominent iconic Mitsubishi three diamonds badge centrally mounted in the grille which is flanked by sleek lights. To the side are muscular wheelarches to accommodate the wide front and rear tracks and 18-inch alloy wheels shod with chunky all-terrain tyres. At the rear is a wide tailgate. LED lighting is used front and rear. The tailgate gives access to a wide boot and load area. The boot/load capacity ranges from 131 to 1,488 litres (4.63 to 52.55 cu.ft) depending on the chosen seating configuration of seven seats in three rows. There is 1,000 mm (3.28 ft) width between the wheelarches, enough to carry a Euro pallet and with the middle and third row of seats folded flat there is a load length of



1,827 mm (2.71 ft).

The interior spec is high even for the base Grade 3 level, with all versions having leather upholstery for the seven seats. Up front there is a cockpit design with a tall centre console incorporating the usual large touchscreen with easy to use separate temperature controls beneath that. The downside is the centre console leading through to the two front seats, with the gear selector and off road control dial, is wide so it might be a bit restrictive for space for larger front seat occupants. Otherwise the rest of the interior is roomy with easy but high access. The touchscreen uses a Smartphone-Link display for the audio with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The downside is the sat-nav function uses a cable link to your mobile phone which isn't user-friendly, a dedicated sat-nav system would be much better for most people. Another issue is that in-line with Thailand production the wiper and indicator control stalks are positioned on opposite sides to those we find with EU-compliant models, annoying but you learn to live with it.

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Briefly the spec list for Grade 3 version includes a reversing camera and parking sensors, touchscreen, Bluetooth, dual zone climate control, push button start, electrically operated and folding door mirrors, electric windows all round, auto lights and wipers, leather upholstery and power operated front seats. For £2k extra the expected best selling Grade 4 spec includes additions such as heated front seats, a 510W Mitsubishi sound system, headlamp washers, adaptive cruise control, Forward Collision Mitigation, Blind Spot Warning and 360-degree view camera. The added safety spec gives this grade a 38D insurance group rating instead of the higher 43D for the Grade 3 models.

The body on chassis design Shogun Sport uses most of the drivetrain aspects from the L200 Double Cab pick-ups including the 2.4 litre, DI-D all aluminium four-cylinder turbodiesel 181 hp, 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque engine, but now matched as standard with a new eight-speed automatic gearbox with auto and manual gearchange choices. The Super Select transmission includes a high/low ratio transfer box so the driver can select between 2WD



High and 4WD High modes on the move at speeds up to 62 mph and 4WD High Locked and 4WD Low Locked modes for serious off-road driving conditions. A rear differential lock adds to its off-road abilities. Hill Descent Control, Hill Start Assist and Trailer Stability Assist functions are also standard fit as are Terrain Control with four off-road settings; Gravel, Mud/Snow, Sand and Rock.

A significant change for the Shogun Sport SUV over the L200 pick-up is the use of more user-friendly and comfortable suspension. At the front is a double wishbone, coil spring and dampers set-up with anti-roll bar and a faster steering rack. At the rear instead of leaf springs and dampers is a multi-link system with coil springs, which provides a far more compliant and balanced ride than found with L200 Double Cab models. Being a tall vehicle there is some body roll during cornering but it is predictable and the steering reasonably precise and accurate

Our brief press launch test drive took in the winding Cotswold A and B roads and these rural open roads will be much better suited to this vehicle than traffic cluttered urban streets. It's a big vehicle that needs space. Off road it proved to be agile with good suspension travel maintaining the much-needed grip most of the time at each of the four driving wheels in its various off-road driving modes. Driving over a 4WD course located in a gravel quarry it coped easily with the quite severe up and downhill sections and proved its 700 mm (27.56 in) wading depth though deep water. Never once did it 'feel out of its depth' on land or in water.



But being a heavyweight 4WD SUV does have its downsides, mainly running costs. Its outright performance of a 112 mph top speed is more than adequate and it cruised effortlessly and quietly at 70 mph. The zero to 62 mph acceleration time of 11.0 seconds is also very acceptable, the 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque at 2,500 rpm gave it very good mid-range acceleration response and seemed well matched with the new eight-speed automatic gearbox.

The official Combined Cycle fuel economy figure is 32.8 mpg which in its heavyweight



sector is competitive but we only achieved 26.8 mpg during our on-road test drive. The CO2 figure is a high 227 g/km so First Year diesel rate road tax is costly at £2,070 but that reduces to the usual petrol and diesel Standard rate of £140 for year two onwards. Company car drivers will suffer the maximum 37% Benefit-in-Kind tax cost.

It might well be the case that some customers wanting a heavyweight 4WD vehicle will stick with buying Double Cab type vehicles as they are classed as Commercial Vehicles. They incur lower tax costs with an annual £250 VED road tax cost and the business user BiK rate of tax is £670 a year for the 20% tax payer or double that for the 40% tax rate.





VERDICT

Overall the new Mitsubishi Shogun Sport is impressive but taxing – not taxing to drive but taxing for running costs, but no worse than any of its other heavyweight competitors.

For: Strong, durable and very capable heavyweight replacement for the outgoing Shogun models, excellent off-road abilities, strong towing vehicle, versatile seating and load carrying options, comfortable ride.

Against: High tax and running costs, no conventional sat-nav system, wiper/indicator stalks are opposite to conventional layouts.



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

Mitsubishi Shogun Sport Grade 4, 2.4 litre turbodiesel, auto 4WD heavyweight SUV.

Price: £39,775.

Engine/transmission: 2.4 litre, four cylinder, turbodiesel 181 hp, 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of



torque at 2,500 rpm, eight speed auto, 2WD/4WD, high/low ratio driving modes.

Performance: 112 mph, 0-62mph 11.0 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 32.8 mpg (26.8 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 227 g/km, VED First Year diesel rate road tax £2,070 then Standard rate £140, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 38D.

Warranty: Five years/62,500 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,785 mm (15.70 ft) W 1,815 mm (5.95 ft), H 1,805 mm (5.92 ft), wheelbase 2,800 mm (9.19 ft), boot/load space 131 to 1,488 litres (4.63 to 52.55 cu.ft), braked towing capacity 3,100 kg (6,834 lb), five doors/seven seats.