Mitsubishi ASX

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Kim Henson samples the latest SUV from Mitsubishi…



The crisply styled front end of Mitsubishi's latest ASX.

The latest, revised incarnation of Mitsubishi's ASX is aimed squarely at the very popular 'crossover' market, which includes models such as the Hyundai ix35, Kia Sportage, Nissan Qashqai, Skoda Yeti, Suzuki SX4 S-Cross and Subaru XV.

Mitsubishi expects to sell around 4,500 examples in the U.K. in 2014.

The original ASX was developed from the company's Concept-cX, unveiled at the 2007 Frankfurt Motor Show. The latest line-up has been simplified, and at the same time a range of improvements has been implemented, including (for example) updated styling and better soundproofing for most versions, plus heated, electrically-adjustable front seats.



The rear three quarters view of the ASX shows the wide rear doors, which provide easy access for passengers.

To help save fuel and emissions, the weight has been reduced in a number of bodywork components (plastic front wings are used too) as well as in some interior fittings, and regenerative braking is incorporated. In addition, low voltage LED rear lamps are fitted, also low viscosity engine and transmission lubricants have been adopted, plus, on the 1.8 Di-D turbo diesel version, a closed flow particulate filter.

The platform of the ASX is derived from that of the Outlander, Lancer and Evolution X, all praised for their competent dynamic performance.

Buyers can choose from three trim levels (2, 3 and 4); even the entry-level '2' version comes complete with aluminium alloy road wheels, remote control keyless entry, air conditioning, a hands-free Bluetooth system and 'Mitsubishi – Active Stability and Traction Control' (M-ASTC). All benefit from a five star Euro NCAP safety rating, with a host of safety-related features, including seven airbags. The body shell has been produced incorporating Mitsubishi's 'RISE' ('Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution') approach.

The comprehensively-equipped, range-topping ASX 4 features a panoramic glass sun roof, making the interior bright and cheerful even on very dull days. At night this roof set-up is notable for its LED mood lighting.

There's a choice of three power units. The 1.6 litre petrol version provides 115 bhp and a five speed manual gearbox, driving through the front wheels only. The 1.8 litre Di-D turbo diesel offers 114 bhp and a six speed manual transmission, with the option for buyers of two or four wheel drive. For those preferring automatic transmission, this comes in a new variant in six speed form, hand-in-hand with the new Outlander's 2.2 litre 16 valve twin overhead camshaft turbo diesel motor, mated to a four wheel drive set-up.

Four wheel drive versions employ Mitsubishi's electronically operated 'All Wheel Control' (AWC) system, incorporating three modes to match traction control with driving conditions and/or the driver's preferences. A simple press on the 4WD button changes mode when required.

The centre differential features an electronically-controlled coupling that, through the control system, determines optimum front-to-rear torque split for the prevailing circumstances.

Two wheel drive is selected for normal motoring (helping to give optimum fuel consumption). Next there's 4WD AUTO, which progressively and automatically varies the amount of torque delivered respectively to the front and rear wheels. For particularly difficult conditions, 4WD LOCK is selected, transferring to the rear wheels approximately one and a half times the amount of torque, compared with that provided by the 4WD AUTO setting. This greatly improves traction.

ON THE ROAD

I sampled the 1.8 litre Di-D turbo diesel model, with ASX 4 trim level. So, among all the other goodies, the test car featured the panoramic glass roof, which certainly lightened my spirits on an overcast day.

The engine performed willingly, smoothly and quietly, and the ASX provided a comfortable ride, even over indifferent road surfaces. I liked the slick-changing six speed gearbox too.

The engine pulled strongly from low speeds, and when cruising the motor was turning comparatively slowly (thus saving fuel and engine wear). At 60 mph in top (sixth) gear, just 1,600 rpm were required.

I thought that the facia was well laid out and the instrumentation easily assimilated at a glance.

I found the seats comfortable and supportive, and both head and leg room in the rear compartment were noted to be generous too.



Rear seat occupants have plenty of leg and head room, except with the front seats in their rearmost positions.

I was impressed too by the roomy load compartment, accessed from bumper height. When required, the rear seats can be folded on a 2:1 basis, so that required variations between passenger and luggage carrying are easily catered for.

Since there is no spare wheel, there are additional storage spaces beneath the normal floor of the boot; handy for keeping a variety of items.

Fuel consumption promises to be very good. The official figures show a ‘Combined’ figure of 55.4 mpg for 1.8 litre two wheel drive versions, while for the equivalent four wheel drive variant, the figure is 54.3 mpg).

VERDICT

A good looking vehicle with excellent performance credentials; it’s also comfortable, spacious and highly practical. The ASX feels solid and well-built too.

In due course we hope to bring you a full road test, based on a longer time with the car.



Aluminium alloy road wheels feature on all ASX versions; this is the top-line ASX 4.



The electrically-adjustable heated front seats (leather-trimmed on the ASX 4) are comfortable and supportive.



The facia is functional and well-designed. On the ASX 4, a rear parking camera and a large-screen, clear satellite navigation system (in addition to a CD/radio with MP3 compatibility) are standard fittings.



The load compartment is roomy and flat-floored, and there’s a two-thirds:one-third split folding seat arrangement.



In the absence of a spare wheel, beneath the boot floor there’s additional handy storage compartments.

TECH SPEC IN BRIEF

MITSUBISHI ASX 1.8 D-iD

Engine:
1798 16 valve four cylinder, twin overhead camshaft, turbocharged and intercooled

Power:
114 bhp @ 3,500 rpm

Torque:
300 Nm (221 lb.ft) @ 1,750 to 2,250 rpm

0-62 mph:
2WD 10.2 sec; 4WD 10.6 sec

Top speed:
2WD 117 mph; 4WD 115 mph

Fuel consumption:
('Urban'): 2WD 44.8 mpg; 4WD 44.1 mpg
('Extra Urban'): 2WD 62.8 mpg; 4WD 62.8 mpg
('Combined'): 2WD 55.4 mpg; 4WD, 54.3 mpg

CO2 emissions:
2WD 134 g/km; 4WD 136 g/km

'On the road' price:
ASX 4 1.8 4WD £22,499

(Prices range from £14,999 for the ASX 2 1.6 petrol, to £23,899 for the ASX 4 2.2 diesel auto).