Mitsubishi L200 Barbarian – Road Test

Published: October 13, 2017

Author: David Miles

Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/mitsubishi-l200-barbarian-road-test/



David Miles (Miles Better Motoring) reviews the Mitsubishi L200 Barbarian SVP Double Cab Pick-up

The award winning Mitsubishi L200 pick-up range is now into its fifth generation and the line-up includes Single Cab, Club Cab and Double Cab versions with UK prices starting from £18,500 excluding VAT as they are classed as commercial vehicles.

The latest addition to the best selling line up is the limited edition Barbarian SVP Double Cab which becomes the range flagship with prices from £28,479 excluding VAT.

The SVP limited edition models, with a production run of only 250 units, are available with manual or automatic gearbox options and there is a choice of two bodywork colours –

Electric Blue metallic or Cosmos Black. The model is the first product from Mitsubishi's new SVP Special Vehicle Projects operation.

Double Cabs are the mainstay of the global pick-up market and in the UK sales of such vehicles are up by 11% for the first nine months of this year in a generally stagnant commercial vehicle market. So far this year 40,431 pick-ups have been sold in the UK with the L200 range being one of the most popular choices. Users range from the workhorse fraternity of farmers and builders, to the Police, Fire and other rescue services, the Highways Agency, also the Travelling Community right through to lifestyle activity customers. Business users in particular are attracted to them due to the lower Benefit-in-Kind personal tax rates which are about a third lower compared to a large SUV such as a Land Rover Discovery.



Built on the already high specification of the popular five seater, four door L200 Barbarian Double-Cab auto priced at £27,300, the SVP specification costs an additional £3,430 and brings even more aggressive and eye-catching styling inside and out. The standout new features include 17-inch bespoke black alloy wheels shod with knobbly BF Goodrich all-terrain tyres with prominent bespoke wheelarch extensions. At the front is a new black grille which replaces the standard shiny chrome unit and there are matching black headlamp and tail light bezels, fog lamp surrounds, roof rails and large impact absorbing rear bumper with a centre lower section step. Other added exterior goodies include shark-fin style side steps, load bed illumination, puddle lights, soft opening tailgate damper and an SVP badge on the tailgate.

Inside the SVP gains ‘six-pack’ leather seats with suede-like inserts, a limited edition number and the SVP logo are stitched into the headrests, there is front and rear foot-well mood lighting and Barbarian illuminated door entry guards.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Over and above the specific SVP specification standard Barbarian features include rain and dusk wiper and light sensors, lane departure warning, keyless entry, sat-nav, Bluetooth, Bi-Xenon headlights with integrated LED daytime running lights, cruise control, reversing camera and electrically operated driver’s seat, electric windows and heated door mirrors.

The power-unit remains the same as other L200 models with the 2.4-litre direct injection turbodiesel with intercooler four cylinder engine producing 181 hp and 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque at 2,500 rpm. There’s the option of a six speed manual or five speed automatic transmission – which has steering column mounted paddle shifters. All models have the standard fit Super Select 4WD system with 2WD/4WD and High, Low and Low Lock traction settings.

As for performance top speed is 110 mph, zero to 62 mph takes 11.8 seconds, the Combined Cycle fuel economy is 37.7 mpg, and CO2 emissions are 196 g/km with the VED commercial vehicle rate cost of £240 every year. Insurance is group 10E and the vehicle is covered by a five years/62,500 miles warranty.

Other figures of note are the L200 Double Cab’s size and carrying and towing measurements. It is a huge and striking looking vehicle with a length of 5,285 mm (17.34 ft), a width of 1,815mm (5.95 ft) and a height of 1,780 mm (5.84 ft). It has a braked towing capacity of 3,100 kg (6,834 lb) and a weight carrying payload of 1,050 kg (2,315 lb).

Those are imposing and impressive figures matched by the vehicle’s renowned strength, durability and when needed its towing performance, load carrying capacity and go anywhere off-road driving abilities.

Whether it's the urban jungle, the real-life jungle, the desert or the Australian Outback or most probably the country estate or even a posh boating marina, Double Cabs meet most needs, some more practical than others.



The L200 Double Cab with its new high quality flagship SVP spec is an odd match because it comes with heavy duty knobbly tyres ideal for severe off-roading, but the overall enhanced interior specification with leather upholstery and plush carpets is most suited to the lifestyle market. It's true that that the extra grip supplied by the BF Goodrich tyres will be appreciated by farmers, boat and caravan towers, surfing dudes and other sporting types, the downside is that these tyres provide an even firmer and noisier ride than other versions. The coarser treaded tyres I would have thought more suitable to more basic spec versions

where dirt and mud carried into the vehicle would be less harmful to the high spec SVP interior. Still they do look good and that seems to be what matters to macho lifestyle customers.

These Double Cab type vehicles, and there are many brands on the market already and Fiat, Renault and Mercedes joining them, do not have the predictable road holding and compliant ride of a large 4WD SUV and they are a handful to drive and park in the congested urban jungle. What they do offer is seating for five people, huge load carrying space and a tough towing capacity. The more upmarket high specification versions such as the L200 SVP are proving to be a popular alternative to the fully-kitted but now defunct Land Rover Defender.



The L200 Double Cab in particular I know from past experience in many parts of the World is an extremely capable off-road vehicle. It will cope with deep mud, soft sand and deep

water, it will clamber over rocks and tows like a train.

In more easy-going environments such as UK roads the versatile vehicle takes up space on our congested roads, it rolls more during cornering on the chunky tyres and whilst they give excellent grip away from the tarmac, on-road cornering grip is not brilliant, especially on wet surfaces. The handling is fidgety on rural roads and the chunky tyres also give more road roar at motorway cruising speeds. The standard road tyres for most users are a better option but are not part of the SVP spec. The ride is bouncy but better when a load is carried – which compresses the suspension and adds more overall stability.



The well-proven 2.4 litre turbodiesel engine is strong thanks to the 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque. It can sound a bit agricultural on start-up but essentially it is a commercial vehicle so it lacks some of the refinement in the powertrain department compared to an SUV.

During my week long driving spell for local in-town, rural winding roads and a longer motorway driving, the overall fuel consumption was 26.1 mpg for lightly loaded road use, too far from the official Combined Cycle 37.7 mpg figure.

VERDICT

The fifth generation Mitsubishi L200 Double Cab Pick-Up range didn't really need an expensive further flagship addition but it keeps the range market-fresh in an increasingly competitive market sector. The SVP variant does have minority appeal and its limited edition production numbers reflects the likely UK demand.

For: Hard core fashionable top selling Double Cab with even higher specification, huge towing capabilities, plenty of load carrying capacity, great off-road performance, lots of street-cred for some types of customers, low company car tax costs.

Against: Expensive especially if VAT is added for retail customers, firm and bouncy ride when unloaded, knobbly tyres detract from the on-road handling, real-life fuel economy was too far below the official figure.



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

Mitsubishi L200 Barbarian SVP Double Cab automatic.

Price: £30,730 (Commercial vehicle on the road price excluding VAT).

Engine/transmission: 2.4 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel with intercooler, 181 hp, 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque at 2,500 rpm, five speed auto, 2WD/4WD/High/Low and 4WD Low/Lock modes.

Performance: 110 mph; 0-62 mph 11.8 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 37.7 mpg (26.1 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 196 g/km, Commercial Vehicle VED road tax £240 every year, BiK company car tax CV rate £3,170 equals a cost of £634 a year for 20% tax payers and £1,218 for 40% tax rated employees.

Insurance Group: 10E.

Warranty: Five years/62,500-miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 5,285 mm (17.34 ft), W 1,815 mm (5.95 ft), H 1,780 mm (5.84 ft), payload 1,050 kg (2,315 lb), braked towing weight 3,100 kg (6,834) lb, four doors/five seats.