

Towing the Line



PROS 'N' CONS

- Versatile
- Well built
- Comfortable
- Good for towing
- Sluggish acceleration

FAST FACTS

Max speed: 123 mph
 0-62 mph: 11.1 seconds
 Combined mpg: 39.2
 Engine: 2179cc, turbo diesel
 Max. power: (bhp): 154 at 4400 rpm
 Max. torque: (lb/ft): 280 at 2000 rpm
 Max. towing weight (braked) 2000 kg
 CO2: 189g/km
 Price: £28,999 on the road

Mitsubishi Outlander 2.2 Di-D GX4 SST

By Tim Barnes-Clay, Motoring Writer

www.carwriteups.co.uk Twitter: @carwriteups

THERE ARE 4x4s and there are hardcore mud-pluggers. Mitsubishi's Outlander falls somewhere in-between. The SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle) crossover is too handsome and well-mannered to be hammered across fields, rocks and hills every day, but it is more than capable of handling slippery winter roads and muddy fields with ease. It is also robust and powerful enough to be used as a decent towing vehicle.

Based on the same new platform as the even better looking ASX, the well-built Outlander bridges the gap between Mitsubishi's conventional passenger cars and its hardcore off-roaders, like the Shogun and L200. Practical, versatile, sleek, dynamic, rewarding enough to drive and fun, the Outlander is as perfect for the school run on road as it is for gobbling up luggage and venturing off the tarmac occasionally.

With a new efficient 2.2-litre turbo diesel engine the Outlander offers respectable, although not mind-blowing, performance - it takes a yawn-inducing 11.1 seconds to get from a standing start to 62 mph. That said, you won't be buying a vehicle like this to see how fast it can get off the lights. Fuel economy and low emissions are excellent - I got around 39 mpg out of the SUV over the week I drove it. The new diesel engine also brings with it a choice of two six-speed gearboxes - there's a manual, or the quick, slick Twin-Clutch Sports Shift Transmission (TC-SST) which was fitted to my GX4 press demo.

The Outlander's off-road capabilities are thanks to its All Wheel Control (AWC) technology. The system is designed to allow the Outlander to perfectly tackle all weathers - providing maximum traction, safety and stability in snow, on ice, in heavy rain, on mud, or simply to find the most possible grip in the dry. AWC oversees the operation of the electronically-controlled 4WD system, the ABS braking with Electronic Brake Distribution and the high-tech Active Stability and Traction Control systems. These systems give the Outlander great composure and offer you fabulous security and great sure-footedness. Operating the system

couldn't be easier, with a rotary controller allowing you to toggle between three settings in an instant: 2WD, using only front wheel drive, for maximum fuel economy on dry paved roads. 4WD, shifting 30 percent of available torque to the rear wheels for added traction on slippery surfaces. And LOCK mode, with torque shifted to the rear wheels up to 50 percent on demand, for extreme weather or unanticipated terrain.

Aesthetically, the Outlander looks good from the outside. A bold, distinctive Jet Fighter grille and headlamps make it stand out from its crossover competition. A sleek profile, boldly flared wheel arches and LED wrap-around tail lights further enhance its visual appeal. Practical touches such as its integrated roof-rails and its very useful split tailgate make you like the Mitsubishi even more. Inside, the Outlander has a sporty elegance; soft padding around the centre instrument panel and door trim as well as silver accents either side of the audio system and along the door panels help create a high quality ambience.

Behind the wheel the Outlander has a commanding driving position, yet because of its excellent manners and road holding the Mitsubishi feels more like a conventional car. The hooded instrument binnacle, within which nestle dials taking inspiration from motorcycle design, creates the perfect driving environment, offering first rate visibility. Comfort behind the multi-function steering wheel is good, being adjustable for both rake and reach, while rear seat passengers benefit from leg and headroom. And there's the 'Fold2Hide' third row of seats, which simply fold out from beneath the floor to create an extra pair of seats (with integrated head rests), allowing seven to travel in comfort and style effortlessly. And, with the rear seats folded, the Outlander offers a maximum of 1,691 litres of luggage space - easily enough to pack in two mountain bikes.



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