





# The all-new Mitsubishi Mirage

## MITSUBISHI MIRAGE

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Mitsubishi Motors has completely re-examined the small car concept to bring a logical, down-to-earth product with the value and reliability for which the Japanese company is so renowned.

The all-new Mirage launched this month (March 2013) looks cute enough from the outside, but the inside of the vehicle is where it impresses. The airy and comfortable cabin has admirable legroom in the back and front and cocoons you in a well-designed and above all, safe, setting.

Indeed this is where the Mirage will get the

attention of parents desperate to ensure their kids are well protected in what will undoubtedly be the school-run motor. The car is constructed using Mitsubishi's 'RISE' safety body design - Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution - and involves the use of an extraordinarily strong monocoque structure made from ultra-high tensile steel. The body is designed to ensure maximum crash protection from all angles and directs impact forces away from you, your passengers, and the car's extremities. Because the Mirage is so new it doesn't have a Euro NCAP rating yet, but impact testing in Japan shows the car has

the highest collision safety among its class.

The Mirage comes in three trim levels – imaginatively named 1, 2 and 3 – and is powered by lightweight and compact petrol engines capable of 106-112mph. In the UK there are two alternatives: a thrifty, 1.0-litre on Mirage 1; and a 1.2-litre three-cylinder engine for Mirages 2 & 3. Auto Stop & Go for extra fuel efficiency is fitted to the 1.2-litre engine. The Mirage 1, 2 and 3 are available with a five-speed manual transmission while a CVT auto option is offered on the top-specification Mirage 3.

In addition to auto stop & go; a regenerative braking system; a high-efficiency

alternator; intelligent battery sensor and 165/65R14 low-friction tyres, the Mirage has an 'Eco Drive Assist' display in the instrument cluster which gives an indication of how economically you are driving. This all helps to ensure a possible 60+mpg across the range.

Vitaly, the Mirage is the only model on sale in the UK where every car in the line-up emits 100g/km CO<sub>2</sub> or less, meaning no road tax or London Congestion Charge. Priced between £8999 and £12999 the Mirage forms part of a major product offensive that will undoubtedly see the Mitsubishi line-up go from strength-to-strength in 2013.

# The new **Audi A3 Sportback**



**T**he new Audi A3 Sportback is longer and more athletic than ever.

The design with the three side windows is crisp and concentrated. The unique element at the front of the car is the distinctive, stone grey single-frame grille with its angled upper corners. The lower edges of the headlights taper off and on S line models they are equipped with xenon headlights and LED daytime running lights.

At the back, the split rear lights underscore the width of the Sportback. The adaptive brake light, which pulses at high frequency during hard braking, is stock. A razor-sharp crease sets off the diffuser and, depending on the engine, the exhaust system which projects from it ends in one or two tailpipes on the left side of the motor.

The Audi A3 Sportback is quiet, thanks to components such as a noise-insulating windscreen that helps to mute interior noise levels. The cabin is marked by a clean and light design with an arch running below the windscreen, reminiscent of larger Audi models. The orderly ergonomics are a classic Audi strength, and are characterised by a multi-media operating system with

its power-retractable monitor. Its terminal is located on the console of the centre tunnel, which is flanked by high knee pads. A button for the electro-mechanical parking brake replaces the handbrake lever – another adoption from the bigger Audis.

In the driver's seat you sit behind an elegant steering wheel which, depending on the version of car, has three or four spokes, a flat-bottomed rim, multifunction buttons and shift paddles. The sizeable dial instruments can be easily read and the recently developed front seats offer superior support. Thanks to a 58 millimetre increase in wheelbase length, the A3 Sportback has good rear seat space too, with easy access for three adults. It also offers more head room than its precursor.

SE and Sport models, come with cloth seats while S line versions upgrade to a mixture of Biathlon cloth and leather. Equipment levels mirror the three-door A3 across the three SE, Sport and S line specification levels, but the more family-oriented Sportback also adds rear electric windows and child locks in each case. Highlights common to all include alloy wheels, air conditioning, Audi

Music Interface iPod connection, a Driver Information System, a Bluetooth mobile phone interface with voice control and a multi-function steering wheel.

The boot offers 380 litres of space in the basic configuration - 10 litres more than its predecessor. This expands to 1,220 litres with the seats folded. The load floor is flat and the



opening between the wheel wells measures 100 centimetres. The base can be inserted on two levels, and the supports on which it rests are marked with small LED lights. The rear seat can be folded down in a 60:40 split or as a whole. Handy hooks for bags and tie-down rings are also standard.

Audi is offering the new A3 Sportback with a choice of TDI and TFSI engines. They combine multiple efficiency technologies – direct injection, turbocharging, innovative thermal management and a start-stop system. Fuel consumption has been reduced

on average by around 10 per cent compared with the previous model. The newly developed 2.0 TDI 150PS version can reach 62mph from rest in 8.4 seconds and continues to a top speed of 133mph. Combined fuel economy is 67.3mpg, corresponding to CO2 emissions of 108 g/km. The 1.4 TFSI accelerates from zero to 62mph in 9.3 seconds on its way to a top speed of 126mph. Combined economy is 53.3mpg, which corresponds to 123 grams of CO2/km.

The majority of engines in the new Audi A3 Sportback are mated to a smooth manual six-speed gearbox whilst steering is aided by sensitive and highly efficient electro-mechanical power steering. Strong brakes provide the stopping power and electronic stabilisation control gadgetry includes electronic limited slip differential, which helps you when cornering. If a wheel on one of the axles spins, the electronic limited slip differential brakes it slightly, causing the car to turn slightly into the corner. Reassuring stuff.

The new Audi A3 Sportback is a quality piece of kit, no matter which version you choose. It's available now priced from 19,825 on the road.

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## CITROËN C5 EXCLUSIVE HDi 200 6-SPEED AUTO SALOON

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The latest C5 has its share of positives. The seats are plush and the Citroën's electronically controlled springing and damping give a hovercraft-like ride.

The economical HDi 200 engine on the flagship Exclusive model is joined to an effortless six-speed automatic transmission, and with its laminated side windows the French motor is a quiet and agreeable place to be too.

Maximum speed is 143mph and 0-62mph comes in 8.3 seconds, but the C5 is content to sit at 60-65mph on the motorway – it never pressures you for more. Nevertheless, the power is there if you need it, and when you do, it kicks in well, leaving other cars to suck up your twin-turbo emissions.

There are better looking executive-wheels on the market but with the Citroën's excellent ride comfort and its fuel efficiency (up to 47.9mpg, which is pretty good for an automatic)



it's rather bland appearance can be forgiven.

Into the bargain, if you buy a C5 the chances are it won't get pinched. The French car has a long list of security devices fitted, including: a perimetric and volumetric alarm, a transponder immobiliser, deadlocks and remote control central locking. Maybe car theft is worse on the continent?

To sum up, the Citroën C5 is a fine vehicle in many ways, but slightly below par in others. Basic things such as minuscule buttons for the radio and sat-nav - and less than logically placed kit disappoint (where is the cup-



holder, for instance? Oh yeah, hidden deep inside the centre armrest). With these irritating little hiccups it's hard to give good reason for the Exclusive HDi 200 Saloon's near £30k price-tag. If I were you I'd wait 18 months and get a used one – then you really will be getting a lot of car for your cash.



### FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 143 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.3 secs
- Combined mpg: 47.9
- Engine: 2179 cc 16 valve 4 cylinder turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 200 at 3500 rpm
- Price: £28,765 on the road



## DRIVEN: ŠKODA RAPID 1.6 TDI ELEGANCE

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This motor is more budget than bling; but that in itself is no problem.

The new hatchback from ŠKODA has space for five-up and, in 1.6 TDI guise, can extract up to 64.2mpg out of a tank. Also, with emissions of just 114g/km, the car is cost-effective to run as a company vehicle.

When it comes to thrills and spills the ŠKODA Rapid isn't really quite as speedy as its name suggests. The oil-burner under the bonnet of the Czech-made motor powers it from rest to 62mph in 10.6 seconds and upwards to 118mph. It's fairly slow going, and with only five gears it's annoyingly easy to crunch the gearstick up into a non-existent sixth cog.

As well as the less than prompt performance the Rapid feels skittish at motorway speeds and the steering is too light to inspire

confidence. The plastic trim is disappointing compared with, say, the more executive-focused ŠKODA Superb but, in its favour the flagship 'Elegance' grade, on test here, does come stacked with kit.

Key features include cruise control; electrically heated door mirrors, multi-function steering wheel controls, Bluetooth and air conditioning. It's easy to get comfortable behind the wheel too; the height adjustable seating and adaptable reach/rake steering column makes this possible.

If you opt for the Elegance model you'll also benefit from 16-inch alloys, cornering front fog lamps, rear electric windows, and chrome interior detailing. But no matter which variant of the Rapid you drive, you'll find access to the boot easy and the load space square and practical in this, the seventh car in ŠKODA's award-winning range.

Crucially, With Benefit in Kind (BIK) ratings from only 14 percent, the ŠKODA Rapid is expected to provide a shot in the arm

to the brand's rapidly growing fleet sales. On-the-road pricing starts from £12,900 for the Rapid 1.2-litre 75PS in entry level S trim, rising to £17,850 for the Rapid 1.6 TDI CR 105PS in flagship Elegance spec.



### FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 118 mph
- 0-62 mph: 10.6 secs
- Combined mpg: 64.2
- Engine: 1568 cc 16 valve 4 cylinder turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 103 at 4400 rpm
- Price: £17,850 on the road