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Quickies – Short, sharp evaluations...just for you!

September appears to be the month for catching up with old friends. Mitsubishi has taken September 2007 as a time to bring updated models and series upgrades to the market. First up this month is the Colt Plus. Famed for the remote hatch (full) opening the Colt Plus earned plaudits in 2005 when it launched. The (slightly) revamped Series II Colt Plus looks identical on the outside with minor upgrades on the inside. The engine is the same; the transmission has changed. Is Series II a better car? Find out quickly...

Mitsubishi Colt Plus

Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Motor Corporation, Tokyo, Japan

Engine: 1,499cc

Gearbox: 5 speed CVT

Retail Price: NZ\$ 23,990.00

Tested: September 2007



THE TECHNICAL THINGS...



The Facts:

1499cc, 4 cylinder, in-line. 78kW (up one) @ 6000rpm
143Nm (+2) of torque at 4000rpm. 5 speed CVT – distinct gear changes are felt, as opposed to “no change” acceleration.

Slight power improvement is enhanced by the engine mapping helping the rev range and making changes slicker and more ‘car’ like. The CVT box is quieter than before and the 6 speed sports mode is dropped – quietly.

How Big? 4.18m long, 1.68m wide (excluding mirrors) and 1.55m tall. (identical)

Wheels/Tyres: Those 14” rims are still there, albeit with enhanced covers that make them look better. 175/65R14 rubber fitted. Spare is space saver – previously full sized.

How Heavy: 1,070kg. Tow Capacity: 400kg un-braked – the Colt Plus is not approved for braked towing.

Brakes: Ventilated discs, front and drum rear.

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Suspension up front is Macpherson strut with coil springs and stabiliser bar. At the back, rigid torsion beam axle with coil springs and stabiliser bar.

The Fuel Facts...

- Colt Plus has a 45 litre tank. Mitsubishi states fuel economy of 5.6 L/100km, the Road-Tests.com achieved an indicated 5.9 L/100kms. Good for those who want to know how far a tank will go: 700km or thereabouts.
 - CO₂ emissions are stated as 134gm/km. Every 15,000km Colt Plus drives it will pump out a tad over 2.0 tonnes of carbon gas. Environmentally Mitsubishi are getting there.
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IT GOES LIKE...?

This is not a car that will light up tyre marks on the road. Well maybe. The previous version certainly not, Series II could do. That's as far as we go on that front.

There is a discernable difference in the performance of the two models. This latest iteration has better response, swifter changes up through the gears, more stable acceleration and, above all, is not a car that is searching for a gear to engage.

OK we take *all* cars to the performance ground and Colt Plus SII is no exception. How'd it go? On the performance ground the car took 58% to reach 100kph and four up 60%.

The first Colt Plus was a bit loose in the steering department, this version is more precise and feels better for it.

Ride is little changed, the car is designed to be a softly sprung city runabout and appeal to those with small families (both numerically and size) and the older generation.

Brakes are good – then again Mitsubishi has always produced good stopping power.

All up the Colt Plus is a nicely rounded package which meets all expectations.

AND THE STYLING / DESIGN

The same rounded shape is dominant, some detail changes to the grille and doors. The front end has always been shared with the standard Colt, only from the 'B' pillar back does the significant change apparent.

Interior design is almost identical, again some minor tweaks.

In all the Colt Plus original design worked – why change a good thing for the sake of it?

AND THE INSIDE?



The inside is light, airy and extremely functional. The combination of seat fold, drop, flatten etc. makes this a car for all challenges from shopping to DIY and beyond.

Lots of space and leg room in the car, plenty of cubbyholes and bins to hold your bits and pieces. Drinks holders are in doors.

The original piece de resistance the one touch folding rear seats are still there, thankfully,

making life just that much easier.



The centre dash unit houses the usual functions, air-con, sound system, couple of cubbyholes and the Hazard Warning Light button. The surround is now brushed metal highlight. Instrument pod is the dials, with speedo, revs and the fuel/temperature in one (right) dial. Bright warning lights and gear indicator finish the package.

Emphasis appears to be more on the practicality – indeed the brochure has two pages devoted to it – along with the interior space, which is excellent for a small car.

The opinion of the Road-Tests.com team is that the inside is tidier and more stylish than the previous model, albeit that the functionality has remained more or less the same.

There is no doubt that this is a handy package, the remote opening hatch remains attractive to many – the best bit is the button to close it on the inside of the door; push and walk away.

AND IT NEEDS TO IMPRESS....?

Many a fleet manager will look at Colt and probably go no further, ignoring the thrifty excellence of the MIVAC engine and the immense practicality of the load space. Not for them is the impression.

Private buyers – and in particular the ladies – will look further than standard Colt, be impressed and begin the decision making process. There are not many cars in the class that can boast these features at this price point. In short, one primarily for the ladies, but also for the older generation and the more, er... adventurous guy.

AND THE SAFETY ELEMENTS...?

EuroNCAP and ANCAP 4* rating.

Air Bags; front and side giving four bags worth of protection minimum requirement for 4*

Vehicle Electronics: ABS with EBD supports the braking system. Power steering is very good.

Others: collapsible steering column and pedal box, crumple zones front and rear, child seat anchors are fitted in the rear of the vehicle. Pretensioner seat belts with load limiters, round off the safety features.

The Summary and the Decision:

THE SUMMARY...

Improvement? Yes indeed, over the previous model. By how much? Not as much as we thought but there is a significant improvement. Sadly this will likely be missed by many. As a small practical and useful car there are few that could beat the Colt Plus.

WILL IT BE PARKED IN THE ROAD-TESTS.COM GARAGE?

No doubt that the Road-Tests.com ladies preferred Colt Plus as a handy hatch option. The blokes? Not as much. Thus for Colt Plus the decision of the Road-Tests.com team remains as “not this time”.

Which unfortunately for Mitsubishi probably reflects the decision of many potential buyers. What would we say to potential buyers? Look longer and harder at this car, particularly the ladies, as there is more to it than being a simple Colt.

How We Conduct Road-Test.Com Tests...

In a phrase...with tenacity and time. The tenacity comes with our recognition that we go after the small things, as well as the large. Things that are understandably overlooked when buying for oneself but do affect the fleet-owner manager juggling the needs of multiple drivers. Things such as how much interior storage, etc. Time, is the time we are given to do that. We have the vehicles we test for at least a week—not a day or a drive round the block! And, yes, that does give us time to for all the Road-Tests.com team to sample the vehicle.