

# MITSUBISHI L200 SERIES 5

By Jim Mc Cauley



Despite their wide range of vehicles and environmental leadership in hybrid technology, pick-up trucks remain fundamental to Mitsubishi Motors. They have specialised in them for 33 years and the previous generation L200 model won more awards than all of its competitors put together. Now the 5th generation model is building on that success with a lengthy list of 'Best in Class' achievements including fuel efficiency, performance, emissions, manoeuvrability and carrying capacity.

While the latest model inherits the DNA of its predecessor, it is essentially all-new from the ground up with improvements in 330 areas. This includes a lighter but stronger chassis with greater torsional rigidity and a world first for a pick-up – an all aluminium engine which provides a weight saving of 30kg.

Appearance-wise, the new model features a rounder and smoother body with a commanding road presence and a clear corporate identity that relates to the other model ranges. In recent years the pick-up truck has evolved to cover everything from commercial to private and recreational use and there has been considerable diversification in what customers look for in this type of vehicle. The L200 Series 5 embodies the comfort of a passenger car with the functionality, strength and reliability of a pick-up, and this is reflected in both the styling and performance.

Power output in this new engine is 178bhp, and in the benchmark test of 0-62mph, it pares a full two seconds in manual form off the previous model, recording just 10.4 seconds. But it is



about more than that with a smoothness and refinement more in keeping with an SUV. In the case of the test vehicle, this was fitted with the optional 5-speed automatic which handles its 430Nm of torque with ease. For the driver, there is the option of manual override with steering column mounted paddles as well as a 'Sport' setting in automatic which essentially holds the gears for longer and provides faster changes.



For normal road use, the switchable all-wheel drive system may be kept in two-wheel drive with the option to switch to four-wheel drive while on the move at speeds up to 62 mph. For off-road use the system can be locked in low four-wheel drive as well.

Even with an empty load bay, ride on the open road is settled with less roll through corners than before. Also contributing to the improved driving experience is the clear all-round vision and higher geared steering which now takes just 3.8 turns lock to lock, and offers quicker response.

Overall cabin insulation has been improved which adds to the long-range appeal of the vehicle, with a range distance of 685 miles given without the need to refuel.

Off-road, and its long development provenance through four previous generations shows its capabilities, with maximum approach and departure angles of 30 and 22 degrees respectively, supported by 205mm ground clearance.

For the passengers, improved cabin space offers larger front seats with 'memory foam' and on the top specification 'Barbarian' model these are also power adjustable and heated. Rear seats provide good accommodation for three passengers with the additional comfort of backrests reclining to 42 degrees.

With regards to the vehicle's work abilities, it has the largest carrying potential of any pick-up with a combined load bed capacity and full towing capability of 4.1 tonnes.

While the commercial owner may be tempted towards the range-opening '4Life' model, the test vehicle was in top 'Barbarian' trim with luxury detailing adding to the comprehensive specification standard across the range. All models come with front, side, curtain and driver's knee airbags while handling safety is taken care of by Mitsubishi's active stability and traction control, electronic brakeforce distribution, hill start assist, trailer stability assist, and cruise control with adjustable speed limit.

In addition, the top of the range model also benefits from exterior trim upgrades, low level courtesy lighting, bi-xenon automatic headlights, rain sensing wipers, DAB radio with Bluetooth connectivity and 7-inch infotainment touch screen. The 'Barbarian' also receives upgraded 17-inch alloys, lane departure warning system, reversing camera and soft opening tailgate.

As well as the performance and refinement advantages of the new engine, it also shows improvements in economy and emissions averaging 42.8mpg with the 6-speed manual gearbox and 39.2mpg with the automatic 'box. Emissions drop from over 200gms/km for the Series 4 range to the lowest in class of 173gms/km for the manual Series 5 and 189gms/km for the automatic, putting them in Tax Bands H and J respectively.

Overall, Mitsubishi have continued to develop the L200 in terms of appearance, performance and working ability while enhancing its refinement to widen its appeal for lifestyle owners and meet the demands of agricultural and industrial users.

The 2016 Series 5 model is available in twin-cab body only and maintains its competitive pricing with the range opening at under £20,000 and low insurance grouping of 10E. The top specification 'Barbarian' model is listed at £28,838 in manual form and at £30,518 as tested with the automatic transmission. The range comes with a 5-year / 125,000 mile comprehensive warranty, 12-year anti-corrosion perforation cover and 3-year pan-European roadside, home and accident assistance.

(Driven February 2016)