

Perfect Family Crossover

Outlander PHEV Does Everything Well, Including Green Driving

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

After completely redesigning and modernizing the Outlander SUV last year, Mitsubishi followed up with a plug-in hybrid version for 2023.

In doing so, they may have created the perfect family crossover.

It's hard for me to find any faults in the Outlander PHEV after driving it for a week. Even in a market packed with great choices — the Toyota RAV4, Hyundai Tucson, Mazda CX-5 and others — the Outlander stands out for its supple driving feel, spacious cabin, brawny looks and standard third-row seat.

The PHEV version, which starts around \$40,000, makes it even better.

Like an electric car, the Outlander PHEV can run purely on electric power for up to 38 miles, according to the United States government. It's capable of using DC fast chargers for those times you want to use a public charging station.

Unlike a pure electric car, it also has a gasoline engine and 14.8-gallon gas tank that extends the range up to 420 total miles and lets you drive it like any other gas-powered car.

That means you have the benefits of EVs without the drawbacks.

You can charge it in your garage and use it like an



The Mitsubishi Outlander is now available as a plug-in hybrid with 38 miles of electric range plus a gasoline engine. With a full tank, the total range is 420 miles.

electric car for most everyday driving, but you don't have to bide your time at charging stations when you go on road trips. It's a perfect compromise, as I see things.

It's not like the Outlander makes you sacrifice anything to do that, either.

This is one of the softest riding crossovers I've driven in recent years. Its suspension soaks up bumps and potholes almost like a luxury car, and the PHEV's cabin is remarkably silent other than a high-pitched whirring sound from the electrical system when you're accelerating or braking.

It's also the highest quali-

ty cabin I've ever seen in a Mitsubishi. It feels solid and is covered in nice-feeling materials, especially in its highest trim levels. It also seems thoughtfully designed with attention to detail, something Mitsubishi products haven't been known for in recent years.

The engine and two electric motors combine to make 248 horsepower, enough for sprightly acceleration. It comes with Mitsubishi's sophisticated all-wheel traction system called Super All-Wheel Control (S-AWC).

If you want to get picky, it was a stretch cramming a third-row seat into the

Outlander. It's a tight fit for passengers in back, and it doesn't leave a whole lot of cargo space when it's deployed. Considering not all its competitors even offer a third-row seat, though, it's a nice option to have when you need seating for seven people in a pinch.

A 12.3-inch screen behind the steering wheel puts lots of customizable information in front of the driver's fingertips, and a 9-inch touchscreen is positioned at the top center of the dash to let you access smartphone functions, the navigation system and entertainment options.

An optional Head-Up

Display can project information onto the windshield, too.

To reduce the driver's workload, the MI-PILOT Assist system combines lane-keeping functions with adaptive cruise control to keep the car centered in the lane and following the speed of traffic. It can bring the vehicle to a full stop and start again in city traffic, perfect for making traffic jams more tolerable.

While it's designed for fuel-efficient driving, the Outlander is styled a lot like a gas-guzzling truck. It looks tall and boxy, with a polarizing front end that stands out compared to many of its cookie-cutter CUV competitors. Whether I love or hate the front end depends on the angle I'm looking at it from, but I'm glad Mitsubishi took a chance on being bold instead of boring.

As a whole, it's hard to find fault in the Outlander PHEV, including the price. It offers a lot of space and content for the money with everything modern families are looking for: green driving, great technology, flexible space and a feeling of quality.

Pricing starts at \$39,845 for the well-equipped base ES trim and tops out at \$49,995 for the loaded 40th Anniversary Edition model.

The regular Outlander, without the hybrid system, starts at \$27,595.

AT A GLANCE

What was tested?

2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV SEL S-AWC (\$45,445). Options: Premium paint (\$995), SEL Premium package (\$2,700), tonneau cover (\$200), welcome package (\$195). Price as tested (including \$1,345 destination charge): \$50,880

Wheelbase: 106.5 in.

Length: 185.4 in.

Width: 73.2 in.

Height: 68.7 in.

Powertrain: 2.4-liter engine plus two electric motors (248 combined system horsepower)

Transmission: Continuously variable

Fuel economy: 64 MPG equivalent

RATINGS

Style: 7

Performance: 7

Price: 8

Handling: 6

Ride: 9

Comfort: 9

Quality: 8

Overall: 8

Why buy it?

It's comfortable, quiet, spacious and runs on electric power for short trips.

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The new Outlander's interior is some of Mitsubishi's best work, comparable in quality to all the top crossovers for sale this year. A 12.3-inch driver information display behind the steering wheel is standard equipment.

That means you have the benefits of EVs without the drawbacks.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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