



# Coming Back

## The Mitsubishi Mirage returns to Canada

Story and photos by Benjamin Yong

It's been awhile since people have heard the name Mitsubishi Mirage, but after a long hiatus and some confusion over what the three-diamond brand was going to call its new sub-compact, the Mirage is back for 2014.

There are those who say the styling of the reimagined five-door looks dated, and although not exactly cutting edge, it certainly is more appealing than its Dodge Colt-badged predecessor in Canada. The Mirage has a short, flattened face with a tiny slit for a grille and flared



lower corner garnishes on the front bumper for a little bit of added attitude. A rear roof spoiler is also standard.

The opaque head/tail lights and body-flush door handles are slightly old school, but I like the latter's ease of operation compared to other designs. We tested the SE trim in Thunder Grey that includes fog lights and tiny 14-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels; a bevy of other wildly-named colours are available, like Kiwi, Plasma Purple, Infrared and Sapphire Blue.


The seats in the Mirage are equally as funky, finished in a purple and black checkerboard fabric, and are comfortable during long trips. The SE adds height adjustability on the driver's seat via a knob located

on the side, rather than a traditional lever. Tilt steering and power windows (front only) are available on all models.

The plentiful application of economy plastic across the dash is broken up by "high-gloss piano black trim" surrounding the also-standard MP3-capable audio player and climate controls. If you prefer simplicity over complication, you will appreciate the basic layout of the dash where everything is placed logically. Elsewhere in the cabin, I discovered only a single one-size-fits-all cup holder in the centre console, and it's missing overhead grab handles as well as a place to plug in an iPhone or other USB-powered device.

Equipped with a 1.2-litre engine, the Mirage makes a modest 74 horsepower and a matching 74 lb-ft of torque, but only weighs 930 kilograms (SE with the Continuously Variable Transmission option). Even with a full complement of passengers, I found the car still accelerated adequately. Handling is nimble thanks to its light weight and short 2,450 mm wheelbase, which allows for a tight 4.6-metre turning radius. Start-ups are on the rough and noisy side, and once you get going, road noise is an issue due to a lack of sound insulation.

Highlights are the safety features that include seven airbags, stability and traction control and the Reinforced Impact Safety Evolution (RISE) body structure offering increased energy absorption in the event of a collision. And there's the fuel economy that is manufacturer rated at 5.3 L/100 km in the city and 4.4 on the highway for the CVT transmission. After flogging our loaner over a distance of 289 km, we still managed to get a combined 6.5.

Starting at \$12,498 the Mirage is priced right, but it has its work cut out for it as it aims to take on more expensive but better-equipped vehicles like the Nissan Versa Note and Mazda2. Nevertheless, we're glad to hear the name uttered once again. 

### SPECIFICATIONS

Base price (MSRP): .....	\$16,758
Type: .....	five-door, five-passenger hatchback
Layout: .....	Front engine, FWD
Engine: .....	1.2L 3-cylinder
Transmission: .....	CVT
Power: .....	74 hp @ 6,000 rpm
Torque: .....	74 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm
Curb weight: .....	930 kg
Brakes: .....	front disc, rear drums with ABS
Fuel Efficiency: (L/100km, city/hwy): .....	5.3/4.4