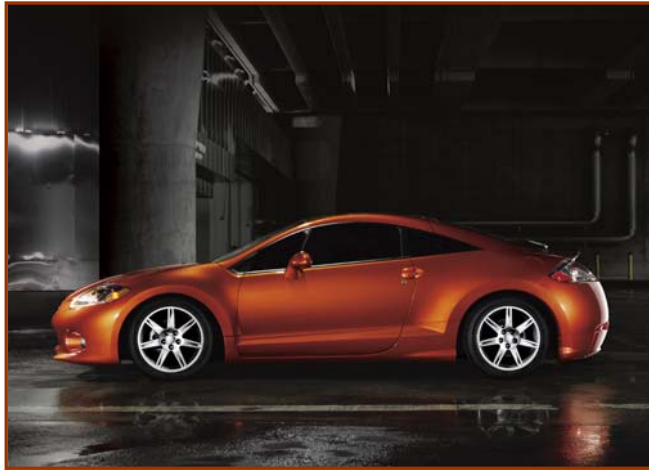


2006 MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE GT



The brand new Eclipse is more eye-catching than the old model, but it's the increased width that is most noticeable. This front-wheel-drive sports car is available in a 2.4-litre four-cylinder GS and 3.8-litre V6 GT.

Interior and trunk

Although the car is low to the ground, it's relatively easy to access the snug front seats. Depending on the occupant's size, seat comfort ranges from very good to average. Taller and larger people will find the upper seatback narrow. The driving position is very good, but would be even better if the steering column telescoped in addition to tilting. With the sunroof, headroom can be a bit tight for taller occupants. And there isn't a lot of footroom on the passenger side. The passenger-side seatback does not automatically return to its initial position after folding it to access the back seat.

You need to be very flexible to get into the back seats. The bench is only big enough to accommodate children or very small adults, and only when absolutely necessary. The rear seatback splits 50/50.

The hatch opens wide but the trunk is very small, especially if you've got the subwoofer installed. Trunk liftover is high.

Convenience and safety

The interior is carefully appointed with good quality materials. Road noise is noticeable. Total storage space leaves something to be desired, as does the positioning of the cup holders right behind the shifter. There are no grab bars.

The controls are well placed but a number of them are not lit at night. The air conditioning/heating system works well and offers a good range of intermediate settings. An earsplitting 650-watt sound system comes as an option.

As the gas tank cover is virtually horizontal, it should be lockable to keep troublemakers from opening the cover and the gas cap—you can imagine the possible damage this could cause in the rain or snow.

In terms of safety, the Eclipse comes with two headrests (not high enough for taller people), two front airbags, two side airbags, two curtain airbags, and four-wheel ABS disc brakes. Visibility is good except to the rear corners, and it's hard to judge distances to the rear when backing up. The rear wiper, which only operates in intermittent mode, leaves one area uncleared on the right side. The sideview mirrors are positioned too far back on the doors, which makes it hard to see behind you. The headlights are good.

Engine and transmission

The new 3.8-litre V6 generates 263 horsepower and 260 pound-feet of torque. Needless to say, with that many horses under the hood of a 1,575 kg car, acceleration and pickup are swift and instantaneous at all times. The engine revs up easily and seems to get its second wind at around 3,500–4,000 rpm. It emits a constant, satisfying growl. Torque is generous even in low gears, which means the driver isn't always downshifting.

The well-geared six-speed manual transmission is precise, easy and fun to use, and has minimal shifter travel. The clutch is smooth and relatively light.

On the road

For a sports car, the independent suspension delivers wonderfully smooth handling. On uneven surfaces, the ride can get firm but never jarring. The ride is a pleasant surprise for this type of car. It offers the same high-caliber, downright excellent handling, regardless of the pavement quality. You have to push the car pretty hard before you notice any understeer.

The power steering is well calibrated, stable, precise, and quicker than average. It transfers some road feel. The turning circle is a bit wide, but normal for a vehicle of this size with very wide tires. The brakes are powerful and do not fade after several high speed emergency stops.

Our inspection of the Eclipse at a CAA-Quebec Technical Inspection Centre showed that the underbody is robust and very well protected against corrosion. However, you cannot check the wiper fluid level, and there is a large 86 cm x 14 cm opening under the front bumper where debris could get in and damage components of the air conditioning and cooling systems.

Conclusion

This new Eclipse has a lot more appeal than the previous generation. In addition to offering better performance, the GT version is comfortable and well equipped. Moreover, as with all Mitsubishi products, this car is covered by a generous warranty.

PROS: Powerful and supple V6, pleasing manual transmission, smooth ride, handling, comfortable front seats, generous warranty.

CONS: Road noise, visibility to the rear and rear corners, uncomfortable and hard-to-access rear seats, small trunk, sideview mirrors positioned too far back, insufficient storage

2006 MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE

Engine: 16-valve, 2.4-litre 4 cyl.; 24-valve, 3.8-litre V6

Horsepower: 162 hp @ 6,000 rpm; 263 hp @ 5,750 rpm

Torque: 162 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm; 260 lb-ft @ 4,500 rpm

Transmission: 5- or 6-speed manual; 4- or 5-speed automatic

Suspension: fully independent

Brakes: 4-wheel disc

Length: 456.5 cm

Width: 183.5 cm

Height: 135.8 cm (18-in. wheels: 136.6 cm)

Wheelbase: 257.5 cm

Weight: 1,485 to 1,605 kg

Tires: P255/50R17; P235/45R18

Towing capacity: not permitted

Air bags: standard front plus two side and two side curtain

Fuel consumption (with V6 engine and manual transmission):

Transport Canada rating:

City: 13.3 L/100 km (21 mpg)

Highway: 8.1 L/100 km (34 mpg)

Test result: 11.5 L/100 (25 mpg)

Test temperature: 5°C to 14°C

Fuel tank capacity: 67 litres

Type of fuel: 4 cylinder: regular gasoline; V6: premium gasoline

Acceleration:

0-100 km/h: 7.1 seconds

60-100 km/h: 4 seconds

Competition: Acura RSX, Ford Mustang, Hyundai Tiburon, Toyota Celica

Warranty:

- Full basic coverage: 5 years/100,000 km
- Powertrain: 10 years/160,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited kilometrage
- Emissions control system: 5 years/100,000 km (full coverage);
8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module).

Factory replacement parts:

- Rear bumper: \$474
- Brake pads: \$81
- Front fender: \$293
- Front brake disk: \$132
- Muffler: \$351

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, male or female driver 30 to 40 years old): \$1,183 to \$2,283

Price according to trim line:

- GS: \$25,498
- GT: \$32,998

Main options:

- Upgrade package: \$3,000 (GS); \$4,200 (GT)
- Automatic transmission: \$1,200
- Aero kit: \$2,456

Price as tested: \$37,298

Freight and preparation: \$995

Dealers: Quebec: 16 Canada: 55

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