

4WD BUYERS GUIDE

MITSUBISHI CHALLENGER

MEDIUM WAGON

The reintroduced Challenger uses the new Triton ute powertrain and chassis, with a coil-sprung live rear axle that has standard differential lock. With Super Select 4WD drive-train and stability and traction control as standard, the new Challenger is one of the best specified medium wagons in the marketplace.



We took two new Challengers on our 2010 Camper Trailer Torture Test (see [Camper Trailers](#) on this site) and found the new wagons very capable on and off road machines. We've tested the Mitsubishi Pajero, Challenger and Triton in on and off road conditions before, but not all together and not with loaded camper trailers bobbing along behind.

The Tritons and Challengers were powered by 131kW/350Nm 2.5-litre engines that couple to older-generation auto boxes that have an upper torque limit. While our test drivers appreciated the ease of towing provided by the autos they all expressed a desire for the missing 50Nm that the manual transmission models score.

The two 147kW/441Nm, 3.2-litre Pajeros on the Torture Test easily outperformed the 2.5-litre machines – no surprises there – but didn't use any more fuel in the process. In fact, the Pajero/Challenge Camper combination turned in the best fuel consumption of all six vehicles, with an overall average of 12.4L/100km. The Pajero/Kimberley – the second heaviest combination with the heaviest ball load – returned 14L/100km.

The Challengers and Tritons returned a collective average of 14L/100km, with the Triton/Heaslip combination at 15L/100km and the Triton/T Van combination at 13L/100km.

The safety benefits of traction and stability control on the Challengers were obvious in the mud, rock-hopping and bulldust sections of our test and we doubt we'd have managed the mud run into Bedourie without these aids.

Although the Triton GLXR and the Challenger share the same chassis, powertrain and front independent suspension and body panels they differ in rear bodywork and suspension. The Triton has leaf springs, like most utes and the Challenger has the same live rear axle, but with coil-sprung suspension. The Pajero has independent coil-sprung suspension front and rear.

When we've tested these Mitsubishi models as solo vehicles the ride and handling differences were quite marked, with the Pajero having car-like qualities and the Challenger not far behind. The Triton's leaf-sprung rear end has been noticeably firmer and more jittery than the coil-sprung wagon suspensions. However, with camping loads on board and trailer nose weights as well, the ride differences were far less noticeable and three Mitsubishi models handled rough roads and off road conditions with relative ease.

Previous Models

The Challenger was discontinued in 2006, but there are quite a few in the used market.

Part-time 4x4 operation, V6 petrol power and five-speed manual or four-speed auto boxes were available.



Bush Modifications

Older Challengers can benefit from suspension modification and traction aids, such as locking rear diffs. New models have good ground clearance out of the box and great traction aids. All Challengers need snorkels to avoid water entry.



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