

2004 MITSUBISHI LANCER RALLIART

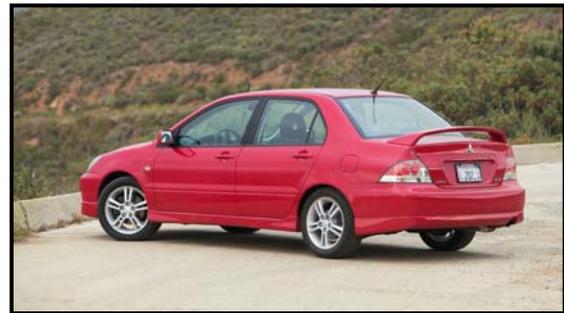


The Lancer family includes a new member for 2004, the sporty Ralliart, available in sedan and station wagon versions. Similar in size to the Civic and the Corolla, the front-wheel-drive Ralliart is powered by a new, 2.4-litre, four-cylinder engine.

Interior and trunk

The cabin is easily accessible. The front seats are snug and very comfortable, but shorter drivers may not be able to adjust their seat high enough. For everyone else, the driving position is very good. There is no adjustment for lumbar support.

The rear bench provides comfortable seating and ample head and leg room for two adults. The 60/40 split-fold seatback provides access to a roomy trunk (except in vehicles with the optional base speaker). The trunk-lid opening is small, and the hinges can squash things placed underneath.



Convenience and safety

The cabin is well finished throughout, and soundproofing is good for a sporty vehicle. Storage compartments, few in number and small in size, are not this vehicle's strong point.



Instruments and controls are very well laid out, but only the driver's power window control is lit up at night. The heating system works fairly quickly, but the air distribution between floor and windshield could be better, or at least easier to adjust. With the lever in the Heat/Defrost position, there is too little air or heat at floor level. The rear defroster elements should cover a bigger area of the window.

Safety-wise, the Ralliart comes with dual front airbags, two side air cushions that are standard in the station wagon but optional in the sedan, good visibility on all sides, big outside mirrors, and locking front head restraints

that adjust fairly high. There are no head restraints in the back. The headlights are weak, especially in high-beam position.

Engine and transmission

The 2.4L, 4-cylinder engine develops 162 hp and 162 lb-ft of torque. It has electronic valve control that changes the cam profile at 3,500 rpm, which improves performance at both ends of the rev band and provides lively, almost instant acceleration at all speeds. Smooth and progressive, the engine will run at 1,500 rpm in fifth gear with nary a peep. It meets NLEV (National Low Emission Vehicle) standards.

The five-speed manual gearbox is well-gearred and easy to shift, and has a progressive clutch.

On the road

The Ralliart rides firmly and quite comfortably. However, on sharp bumps and cracks the suspension reacts harshly because of the 50-profile tires. The ride is typical of a sporty vehicle, and the Ralliart is definitely a sporty vehicle. Quick and agile, it has a mean grip and is stable and neutral in corners.

The power steering is well weighted, stable, precise and quick. Its turning circle is rather long, however, and it has little road feel. Braking is powerful and fade resistant.

An inspection at the CAA-Quebec inspection centre showed that the Ralliart is well assembled. However, the accelerator linkage is not protected from dirt, and the areas above the muffler and the gas tank are not rust proofed.

Conclusion

The Ralliart is sure to please people looking for a sporty, practical vehicle. Both the sedan and station wagon versions offer the balanced, fine-tuned engine, steering and suspension performance essential to driving pleasure.

FOR

Engine power and flexibility
Pleasant manual transmission
Lively steering
Road holding
Powerful brakes
Enveloping seats

AGAINST

Small trunk opening
Long turning circle
Weak headlights
Not enough storage compartments
No head restraints in back
Air distribution

2004 MITSUBISHI LANCER

Engine: 16-valve, 2.0L 4 cyl.; 16-valve, 2.4L 4 cyl.

Horsepower: 120 hp @ 5500 rpm; 162 hp @ 5750 rpm

Torque: 130 lb-ft @ 4250 rpm; 162 lb-ft @ 4000 rpm

Transmission: 5-speed man.; 4-speed auto.

Suspension: fully independent

Brakes: disc/drum (4-wheel disc: LS Sportback and Ralliart)

Length: 458.5 cm (station wagon: 460.5 cm)

Width: 169.5 cm

Height: 137.3 to 142.5 cm depending on model

Wheelbase: 260 cm

Weight: 1,225 to 1,380 kg

Tires: P185/65R14; P195/60R15; 205/50R16

Towing capacity: Non recommended

Air bags: standard front plus side air bags standard on Sportback Ralliart, optional on Ralliart sedan

Fuel consumption (2.4L engine and manual transmission):

- Transport Canada rating: city: 10.1 L/100 km (28 mpg); highway: 7.4 L/100 km (38 mpg)
- Test result: 10.5 L/100 (27 mpg)

Fuel tank capacity: 50 litres

Acceleration: 0-100 km/h: 8.1 seconds 60-100 km/h: 6.5 seconds

Competition: Chevrolet Cavalier and Optra, Chrysler Neon, Ford Focus, Honda Civic, Hyundai Elantra, Kia Spectra, Mazda3, Nisan Sentra, Pontiac Sunfire, Saturn SL, Subaru Impreza, Toyota Corolla, Volkswagen Golf and Jetta

Warranty:

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

Factory replacement parts:

Rear bumper: \$1,043

Front brake disk: \$152

Brake pads: \$70

Muffler: \$297

Front fender: \$286

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, female driver or male driver 30 to 40 years old): \$708 to \$990

Price according to trim line:

ES: \$15,998

LS: \$20,478

O-Z: \$20,098

Ralliart: \$21,988

Sportback LS: \$20,998

Sportback Ralliart: \$24,198

Main options:

Automatic transmission: \$1,020

Option packages: \$760 to \$1,975

ABS: \$730

Sunroof: \$1,170

Price as tested: \$24,328

Freight and preparation: \$995

Dealers: Québec: 16; Canada: 50

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