

Title:

2006 Mitsubishi Raider: A Rebadged Delight!

Word Count:

610

Summary:

The Mitsubishi Raider pick up truck is a rebadged version of the Dodge Dakota. Adding its own flair and style, the truck fills an important void in the Mitsubishi line up.

Keywords:

Mitsubishi Raider, Dodge Dakota, Toyota Tacoma, Honda Ridgeline, Ford Ranger, Chevy, GMC, Nissan, GM

Article Body:

If you were to examine the new Mitsubishi Raider, your eyes would behold the unmistakable triad logo centered in the middle of its beefy looking grille. However, as you let your eyes run the full length of the truck's body and take a look at its styling cues, you would see something different, yet very familiar. Indeed, apart from some fascia, body, and cabin changes, the Raider is without a doubt a Dodge Dakota. Yes, the tables have been reversed and Mitsubishi's pick up truck is now a Dodge instead of the other way around. Beyond the obvious similarities there are some differences between the models that gives the Raider a uniqueness all of its own.

Back during the 1970s and 1980s when Chrysler needed small cars and trucks to fill out its limited line up, the company tapped its business relationship with Mitsubishi to supply what it needed. Included in the mix was a small pick up truck, most recently the D50. When Chrysler developed the midsize Dakota during the late 1980s, the need for the small Mitsubishi truck decreased and by the early 1990s the D50 was no more.

Mitsubishi for its part has long been a builder of small trucks, but as the automaker began to sell vehicles in the North American market, its line up has grown appreciably. Demand for a small Mitsubishi pick up truck dropped so the "Mighty Max" was discontinued from its line up. Eventually, the automaker decided to partner with DaimlerChrysler to sell rebadged Dakotas as Raiders.

The relationship is smart as the Raider fills a void for Mitsubishi while allowing DaimlerChrysler to keep its truck building capacity high. As odd as the

relationship may seem, Isuzu and General Motors are doing the same thing as both Isuzu vehicles sold in the U.S. are rebadged GMC trucks.

So, what sets the Raider apart from the pack, particularly its Dodge cousin? Price for one. Starting out at around \$19,000, the truck is priced as low as some of the smaller trucks on the market including the popular Toyota Tacoma. Apparently, Mitsubishi wanted to have an entry level model to meet expected demand. Yes, bare bones versions of the Tacoma can be had for much less, but that is what you get, bare bones. There is no four cylinder Raider sold, you either get a 210 h-p V6 or a beefy 230 h-p V8 to power your Raider. The V8 is especially appealing to those who tow as its pulling capacity is a respectable 6500 lbs. Tranny choices include either 4 or 5 speed automatics or a 6 speed manual tranny.

The Raider comes available as either a 4x2 or a 4x4 and with two or four door cab configurations. Seating capacity can be as high as six passengers although you wouldn't be as comfortable riding in a Raider/Dakota with six people as you would be in a full sized Ram.

What many Raider fans will like is the extra care Mitsubishi gave to the interior. Unlike the Dakota, the Raider comes with trim features more akin to a sedan than to a pick up truck. Sirius satellite radio, Alpine speakers, front bucket seats with heated leather surfaces, and power everything are some of the features that make the Raider much more than a truck.

Ten years after the last "Mighty Max" pick up trucks were sold by Mitsubishi, a new truck has entered the fold thanks to an important relationship with DaimlerChrysler. Perhaps the success of this relationship will spawn additional model sharing. Could we see a rebadged Dodge Ram soon sold as a Mitsubishi? In these days of extensive model sharing, anything is possible.