

THE AFFORDABLES

BMW's most affordable car takes on the mighty Japanese SUV. Are they a match or just worlds apart?

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THE BMW X1 MADE ITS entry into the Indian market a few months back and took the competition by storm with a price tag that would challenge most of the SUVs in the local market. However, the X1 we tested initially was the diesel top end variant and what really comes in at the cheap tag is the petrol version. It was not for very long that we would stay away from testing the real cheap German and it finally happened as we decided to pitch it against a Japanese competitor. So, the

scene was set with the X1 1.8i taking on the Outlander 2.4.

DESIGN AND STYLING:

The X1 is German and the Outlander a Japanese. Everyone knows it and the design and styling prove it. While the X1 is more on the subtle and classy side, the Outlander poses to be a little on the aggressive side. X1, by its name, falls in the X family of BMWs that is essentially an SUV family. However, make it stand next to a Swift and it's not even noticeably taller. I would rather call the

X1 an estate than a softroader SUV. On the other hand, the Outlander looks much bigger and it definitely is. The Evo X lookalike nose makes it even more desirable. For me, the Outlander scores over the X1 from the outside.

From the inside though, the X1 spells its European character. Simple, yet it's top-notch quality, fit and finish put the X1 a level above the Outlander.

However, being the cheaper version amongst its siblings, this one misses out on pure leather upholstery. Outlander's interiors are very basic. But small things ▶





NEED TO KNOW

MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER 2.4 AT

PRICE Rs 23.9 lakh (OTR, Pune)

ENGINE 2360cc, 170PS, 226Nm

TRANSMISSION Six-speed automatic, all-wheel drive

PERFORMANCE 11.8 secs 0-100km/h, 186km/h top speed

FUEL EFFICIENCY 8.15kmpl (overall)



1 Paddle shifters for the CVT in Outlander are a good feature

2 Four-wheel drive is another feature of the Outlander, which is absent in X1, that will appeal to off-road enthusiasts

3 The 2.4-litre engine in the Outlander is bigger and more powerful and torquey than the one in X1. Thus, it also takes the Outlander to 100km/h quicker than the X1

4 Sporty metal pedal gives a good touch to the Outlander



like the rally type accelerator and brake pedals add sportiness to it. Overall, the X1 clearly stands out to be the better one from inside. Space wise though, the Outlander feels roomier than the tight cabin of the X1.

ENGINE AND PERFORMANCE:

The X1 1.8i, not being truthful to its name, is powered by a 2.0-litre engine. The 150PS of peak power and 350Nm of peak torque help the X1 get to 100kmph from standstill in 12.61 seconds. It's not typically a powerful engine and thus isn't excitingly fast. The peak torque coming in at a lowly 3,600rpm tells us of its strong mid range, which gives the car a fairly good pull in the city traffic.

The Outlander is powered by a 2.4-litre engine that makes 170PS of peak power (20PS over the X1) and 226Nm of peak torque (26Nm over the X1). This helps the Outlander to reach 100kmph from standstill in 11.79 seconds (0.82 seconds quicker than the X1). The even stronger

part of Mitsubishi is its pull in kickdown from 40kmph to 120kmph, which takes 12.11 seconds against X1's 16.28 seconds. Also, the Mitsubishi's engine feels more refined than that of the Beemer.

DRIVE AND HANDLING:

The differences in the acceleration figures are meagre and the outright performance hardly matters. What really makes a difference is how the cars drive in daily use and that sets these two apart and how! The X1 is a typical BMW with firm suspension and heavy steering that is evident during every second of the drive. In fact, even at parking speeds, the steering feels so heavy that you wonder if it really is power assisted. On bumpy surfaces, the stiff suspension upsets the drive comfort.

The Mitsubishi is far softer than the BMW. Even its pedals are light to operate which make it an easy drive around the city. However, at higher speeds, the soft suspension and taller

body add a little roll to the Outlander and make the drive a tad floaty, which is completely absent in the X1. After all, stiff is not always bad.

FEATURES AND EXTRAS:

The X1, along with its BMW tag, brings along a host of features that add safety and comfort to the drive. Six airbags, brake-assist, ABS, integrated side-impact protection, Dynamic Traction Control and Dynamic Stability Control keep the car safe. The X1 misses out on the trademark iDrive though and instead gives a simple audio system. The BMW X1 gives a miss to the four-wheel drive system too and settles with just the rear wheel drive.


The Outlander stays on the lower side with respect to safety features with just two airbags and no traction control. There is no park assist too in the Outlander. On the positive note though, it comes with an option to shift between two-wheel drive and four-wheel drive





that gives it the essential off-road ability. Another small yet good feature on the Outlander comes in the form of the paddle shifters for its CVT.

VERDICT:

Looking at the X1 and Outlander overall, there is only one thing that puts the two cars so close to each other and that is their outright performances. However, everything else is a world apart. While the X1 is a classy European, the Outlander is an aggressive Jap. The X1 boasts of high safety while the Outlander concentrates on being an SUV. The X1 is a pain to drive with its stiff character while the Outlander feels easy and comfortable. BMW delivers excellent handling at high speeds while the Outlander feels hesitant in doing so. X1 is more of an estate while Outlander stands as a tall and strong off-roader. So what's the verdict then? Of course, if you want a BMW badge on your car and that too at just Rs 27.8 lakh, while compromising on space and comfort and if you don't care much about taking the dusty path, then X1 is for you. If you are more of the SUV guy with serious interests in off-roading, then the Mitsubishi has to be your pick. And of course, don't forget that it's almost Rs 4 lakhs cheaper than its German nemesis! 

GASHA'S PERSPECTIVE

OUTLANDISH, OR MAYBE NOT

It's a known fact that SUVs have a bigger and better road presence than a puny hatch or a long-legged sedan. Also, the tall-boy design lends better visibility on road and thus boosts the confidence of the species that we call 'short women'. But who are we kidding, we all know how women love to look down at the world and an SUV is the apt machine for that. Looking at the cars under the radar, both X1 and Outlander offer a stable ride, each with their characteristic attributes. While X1 being a typical Beemer is on the stiffer side (with its suspension and heavy steering), the Outlander feels soft. The stiffness shows when one has to struggle with the steering wheel in order to make it obey the driver's commands (after doing which I have bigger biceps now). A bane on city roads, but a boon on highways. And quite contrary to it, the Outlander's softness makes it a pleasure to drive in and around city. The privilege of being a proud owner of the latest offering from the German auto giant, that too at such a humble price tag, gives the X1 an edge over its rivals. Impeccable looks, quality and most importantly the brand value makes it the most obvious choice. Run-flats are a life saver for a woman driving alone and having an unfortunate encounter with a flat tyre in the wee hours, but a spare wheel is always welcome. The X1's cabin has a rich feel to every knob and handle, something which the Outlander fails to keep up with. Bottom-line, X1 is shorter than the Outlander, a bit of a rock to move in traffic, but is a jewel in a woman's kitty, her pride and her neighbour's envy.

