

WHEELS

Mazda Millenia - reliable and daring

By **JIM ROBINSON**
Metroland Car Critic

The 1995 Mazda Millenia was previewed on these pages some months back being the first of an entire new wave of front-engined, V6-powered family sedans being built by seemingly everyone on the planet.

There are two versions which differ mainly with the engine. The topline car is the Miller-Cycle/Lysholm compressor-equipped 2.3-litre-engined V6 producing 210 hp thanks to what would otherwise be called a supercharger. Unlike turbos, there is no power lag so you get ummph when you want it. Known as the "S", it also gets slightly larger tires with a 10-mm wider footprint.

Mazda expects a majority of its buyers (85 per cent I believe) to go with the standard car.

Both models come equipped as standard with climate control, seat warmers, 220-lb capacity roof rack mountings, full instrumentation, dual air bags, traction control, anti lock brakes, remote mirrors with defog, and the list goes on and on. Basically, every possible option is standard except the leather and power sunroof which is part of the leather package.

The only transmission offered is a four-speed automatic with lock-up clutch giving the virtues of quiet operation and smooth shifting of power to the front-drive wheels. The greatest strides have been in terms of sound insulation and isolating. This keeps rotating masses like the engine, and wheels from intruding on the passenger compartment. In short, it is very quiet indeed inside a Millenia.

The standard engine is a 2.5-litre, twin-cam V6 of 170 hp and 160 ft/lbs of torque sourced from the MX-6 sports coupe. In terms of noise and smoothness of operation, it was already one of the best V6s in the world. Thanks to the extra care taken with the Millenia, it's even better.

Inside, you get one of those ergo-inspired instrument panels with ovoid buttons, tactile-heightening knobs and flowing character lines. It's a comfortable place to be, but after growing up with cars that had switches wherever was convenient for the designer, not the operator, it takes a little getting used to.

Truck space, well it's an improvement all out of proportion to the 929. Instead of space for maybe two duffel bags, you now have 13.3 cubic feet.

The other impression is something you don't notice until you drive another older car, and it's an almost total lack of wind noise. Several times I've mentioned lack of noise and vibration, but it's something you have to experience, and I also advise taking along a CD to try the sound system on for size.

Prices range from \$36,500 for the base car with cloth seats to the "all-singing" "S" at \$42,400. My base car with the leather package came with a list price of \$39,900.

And I better not forget to mention handling which comes into its own when asked to approach the limit. Thanks to a turning circle of just 11.4 metres and fully

independent suspension including a hefty-looking multi-link system at the back, steering and response are good. I have always found Mazda products to be sound-

ly-constructed, stoutly reliable, and always a little daring. I will mourn the passing of the 929 Serenia, but welcome the Millenia. In terms of build quality and features, it

leaves little to be desired. Now it's up to Mazda to spread the word, something it must do in the face of all that V6, front-drive competition coming to market in 1994.

HAVING TROUBLE FITTING IN? RELIEF

18
AVAILABLE
AT
THIS
PRICE



- Upgraded 1SB Pkg.
- 4.3 V6 Power
- Power Windows & Locks
- 8 Passenger Seating
- Air Cond., Cass., Deep Tint Glass
- ABS Brakes + Driver Air Bag
- PLUS MUCH MORE!

THE 1995 GMC SAFARI

\$299.
SMARTLEASE

\$21,699[†]
PURCHASE

* 36 Month Lease. Requires downpayment of \$4553 plus first+ security + taxes
† Sale price plus freight and taxes.

NOT ONLY WILL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS FIT IN YOUR NEW SAFARI. GMC SAFARI WILL FIT YOUR BUDGET. LOADED WITH FEATURES YOU'LL LOVE AND PAYMENTS THAT MAKE SENSE!

UP UNTIL DEC. 31.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NO CHARGE KEYLESS ENTRY. A \$300.00 VALUE!

SALES HOURS: MON. - THURS. 9:00 - 9:00; FRI. 9:30 - 5:30; SAT. 9 - 5:30

unionville
MOTORS
PONTIAC-BUICK-GMC

4630 Hwy. #7, Unionville (at Kennedy Rd.) 477-1666