

## MAZDA 323 ASTINA SP20

### 2.0-Litre Manual 5-Door Hatch

FEATURES	
BEST	WORST
Confident brake performance	Lack of driver's heel pad
Distinctive sporty appearance	Rear seat space & comfort
Performance & handling package	Sensitive throttle operation



Mazda has upgraded its range of 323 vehicles for 2001 and added a sporty SP20 version to the line-up. With individual colouring, larger two litre engine, sports interior, larger diameter wheels and tyres, and four wheel disc brakes with ABS, the newly appointed SP20 not only stands out in a crowd, it looks the part.

Aimed at the younger set looking for a smart individual hatch with above average performance and equipment in its class, the SP20 features a degree of flair and refinement that is true to its Mazda heritage.

Some competition would be expected from Toyota Corolla, Nissan Pulsar, Volkswagen Polo, Subaru Impreza, and Proton Satria that have similar type models.

Instantly identifiable by its bright 'Sunburst Yellow' launch colour, the SP20 is priced at \$28,045 for the manual version and \$29,995 for the automatic. Ten other colours will be available at a later date.

Standard equipment includes sports seats, instrumentation and interior trim, alloy wheels, climate control air conditioning, electric mirrors, remote central locking, power steering, front fog lamps, in-dash CD stacker, anti-lock brakes (ABS), engine immobiliser, height adjustable seatbelts with pre-tensioners, and dual airbags. There is no options list.

A deeper front bumper with inbuilt air-dam and low set driving lights, plus rear and side skirts, bright paintwork and exterior decals, set the SP20 apart from its other 323 family models. A blacked-out grille, larger alloy wheels and tyres and a low-to-the-ground stance, complete the SP20's image. The sporty theme continues in the interior with contrasting trim colours, sports seats, leather bound steering wheel and gear knob, plus white instrument dials with red illumination at night.

Mazda's four cylinder, two litre, DOHC, 16 valve engine provides the extra performance required for the SP20's image. Based on the Mazda 626 power unit, it is fitted with a high compression cylinder head that raises the power output from 93 to 98 kW. This power is transmitted to the front wheels through either a five-speed manual or a four speed automatic transmission.

Both front and rear suspensions employ McPherson struts with coil springs and double acting shock absorbers, combined with 'A' shaped lower control arms on the front and a multi-link set-up at the rear, both utilising an anti-roll bar. Engine speed sensed power assisted

rack and pinion steering, and sports type alloy wheels with Yokohama Advan 50 series tyres complement the suspension/steering package.

The brake system consists of ventilated front and solid rear discs similar to the 1.8 litre Astina, but with the added advantage and safety of ABS.

Space and comfort is consistent with the regular Astinas with ample room for the driver and front passenger and limited comfort in the rear. Storage space is also consistent with the rest of the model line-up.

From the driver's seat the SP20 both feels and looks the part, from the steering wheel, gear knob and seat comfort, to the clearly marked and distinctive instruments. Although the air conditioning functions satisfactorily, the degree markings on the automatic control dial do not appear to match the resultant cabin temperature. The omission of a reinforced heel section on the driver's side floor carpet will no doubt result in premature carpet wear.

Engine performance is not startling, although it is a vast improvement over its 1.8 litre Astina stablemate. When driven enthusiastically the 2.0 litre engine responds well and on the open road it is a flexible and smooth performer, although the sensitive throttle operation makes it a little fidgety and unpleasant in heavy city traffic.

While the large diameter low profile tyres and firmer suspension have stiffened up the ride comfort, the resultant benefits in handling are well worth the sacrifice while driving on good road surfaces, but may be questionable when venturing onto poorer road surfaces. The engine speed sensed steering is sharp and responsive and complements the SP20's handling package.

The anti-lock brake system functions efficiently adding an extra measure of safety to the four wheel discs, providing confident and effective braking distances. Heat build-up, is not excessive thanks in part to the large open style wheel design.

The overall result is a smart looking sports hatch with matching performance and handling.

#### SUMMARY:

The brilliant 'Sunburst Yellow' launch colour and its aggressively styled sports appearance draw immediate attention to the SP20 giving it an intended impression of an above average driving experience. For those buyers looking for a small medium hatch with performance and handling that is above average, plus the character and looks to match, the SP20 has the potential to satisfy.

### MAZDA 323 SP20 2.0 Litre Manual Hatch

#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### ENGINE:

Type ..... Four cyl., in-line, DOHC, 16 valve  
Capacity in litres..... 1.991  
Induction ..... Multipoint fuel injection  
Fuel recommendation..... PULP  
Claimed max. power ..... 98 kW at 6000 rpm  
Claimed max. torque ..... 174 Nm at 4500 rpm  
Specific power output..... 49.2 kW/litre

##### TRANSMISSION:

Type ..... Five speed manual  
Driving wheels ..... Front  
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear..... 31 km/h

**WHEELS:** ..... Alloy 6.0 JJ x 16 inch

**TYRES:** ..... Yokohama Advan 195/50R16

##### STEERING:

Type ..... Power assisted rack & pinion  
Turns lock to lock..... 2.75  
Turning circle (measured) ..... 11.2 metres

##### DIMENSIONS:

Mass ..... 1222 kg  
Length ..... 4280 mm  
Width (incl. mirrors 1885 mm) ..... 1705 mm  
Height..... 1410 mm  
Ground clearance (measured)..... 150 mm  
Seating capacity ..... Five  
Fuel tank capacity..... 55 litres

##### TOWING:

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load)..... 720 kg

##### NRMA THEFT RATING:

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) ... 63.5

**WARRANTY:** ..... Three years, unlimited km

**MANUFACTURED IN:**..... Japan

#### TEST RESULTS

##### ACCELERATION:

50 - 80 km/h (in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear)..... 5.1 sec

60 -100 km/h (in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear)..... 6.9 sec

0 - 80 km/h ..... 7.4 sec

0 - 100 km/h ..... 11.2 sec

0 - 400 metres..... 17.8 sec

##### FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Litres/100 km in city ..... 8.5

Litres/100 km on highway..... 7.1

Litres/100 km overall ..... 7.6

##### BRAKING:

Distance to stop from 80 km/h ..... 27.4 metres

##### NOISE:

Interior at constant 80 km/h..... 66.5 dB(A)

• Test vehicle supplied by Mazda Australia P/L