SOFTWARE & TECH

# 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante

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## Introduction: Rediscovering the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante

At the dawn of the new millennium, the automotive landscape was bustling with sedans that promised comfort, reliability, and a touch of luxury without the hefty price tag. Among them, the **2001 Mitsubishi Diamante**stood as a quiet contender—a full-size front-wheel-drive sedan that aimed to blend Japanese engineering with a premium driving experience. While it never reached the iconic status of some Toyota or Honda models, the Diamante earned a loyal following for its smooth ride, spacious interior, and distinctive design. Today, the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante remains an intriguing option for used car buyers who value comfort and value over badge prestige. In this article, we'll explore every aspect of this often-overlooked sedan, from its design and performance to its reliability and place in the used car market.

## Overview of the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante

The Mitsubishi Diamante first debuted in the early 1990s as a luxury-oriented alternative to mainstream sedans. By 2001, the model was in its second generation, which had been introduced in 2000. The 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante was available in two main trims: the base ES and the higher-end LS. Both trims came equipped with a **3.5-liter V6 engine**—a hallmark of the Diamante's commitment to smooth power delivery. The car was built on the Mitsubishi PS platform, shared with the Galant, but featured a longer wheelbase and more upscale appointments. For 2001, Mitsubishi also offered an all-wheel-drive version in some markets, though the front-wheel-drive layout dominated North American sales. The Diamante was positioned against competitors like the Toyota Avalon, Nissan Maxima, and Honda Accord V6, offering a softer ride and more interior space than many rivals.

### Generational Context

The second-generation Diamante (codenamed F30) arrived in 2000 with a more rounded, aerodynamic body than its predecessor. The 2001 model year saw minimal changes—mostly color updates and option package tweaks. This generation lasted until 2004 in the US, after which Mitsubishi discontinued the nameplate. Understanding this context helps buyers appreciate the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante as a well-sorted, mature design that avoided early adopter issues often found with brand-new platforms.

## Design and Exterior Styling

The 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante featured a sleek, understated silhouette. Its exterior design was characterized by smooth curves, a prominent front grille with chrome accents, and integrated fog lights on LS models. The roofline gently sloped to a short trunk, giving it a quasi-coupe appearance despite its substantial dimensions. Overall length measured about 194 inches, with a wheelbase of 108.3 inches—providing generous rear legroom. The standard alloy wheels on most trims were 16 inches, though some LS models rolled on 17-inch rims. Paint options ranged from conservative shades like Sterling Silver and Midnight Blue to bolder choices

such as Rio Red. While not flashy, the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante aged gracefully, and well-maintained examples still look presentable on the road today.

### Exterior Features by Trim

- ES (base): body-colored bumpers, automatic headlights, intermittent wipers, and 16-inch steel wheels with covers.
- LS (upgrade): chrome grille, power sunroof, heated side mirrors, rear spoiler (optional), and 16-inch or 17-inch alloy wheels.
- All-wheel drive (limited): badge differentiation and slightly raised ride height.

The aerodynamic design not only improved fuel efficiency but also reduced wind noise, contributing to a quiet cabin—a key selling point for the Diamante's luxury aspirations.

## Interior and Comfort

Step inside the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante, and you're greeted by a surprisingly upscale cabin for its price class. Soft-touch materials covered the dashboard and door panels, and the LS trim added leather upholstery, woodgrain accents, and heated front seats. The front seats were wide and plush, offering excellent long-distance comfort. Rear-seat space was abundant—three adults could sit without squeezing, thanks to the flat floor and generous knee room. The trunk offered 14.7 cubic feet of capacity, adequate for luggage and groceries, though the opening was a bit narrow.

### Technology and Convenience Features

The 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante was well-equipped for its era. Standard equipment included power windows, power locks, cruise control, tilt steering wheel, and a basic AM/FM stereo with cassette player. The LS trim upgraded to a six-disc CD changer, premium Infinity sound system, automatic climate control, and a driver's memory seat. Notably, the Diamante lacked some advanced safety tech that later became common, but for early 2000s standards, it was competitive. Owners appreciated the intuitive layout of controls and the high-quality cloth or leather materials that resisted wear well over time.

## Performance and Engine Options

Under the hood, every 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante came with the same **3.5-liter SOHC V6 engine** (6G74), producing 205 horsepower and 231 lb-ft of torque. This engine was known for its silky smoothness and quiet operation—ideal for a luxury cruiser. Power reached the front wheels (or all four in AWD models) through a four-speed automatic transmission with overdrive and a Sportronic manual-shift mode on LS trims. The transmission shifted smoothly, though some drivers found it slow to downshift when passing.

### Driving Impressions

The Diamante prioritized comfort over sportiness. The suspension—MacPherson struts up front and a multi-link rear—was tuned to absorb bumps and road imperfections with a pillow-like softness. Steering felt light and somewhat numb, making the car easy to maneuver in town but less engaging on twisty roads. Braking was adequate, with four-wheel disc brakes and ABS standard. Fuel economy was average for the class: EPA ratings of 17 mpg city and 24 mpg highway, though many owners reported around 20–22 mpg combined in real-world driving. The V6 engine ran on regular unleaded gas, keeping running costs reasonable.

## Fuel Economy and Reliability

When new, the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante offered acceptable fuel economy for a large V6 sedan. However, by modern standards, 17/24 mpg is lackluster. But for used buyers, the cost of fuel is often offset by the low purchase price. Reliability is a mixed bag. The 3.5L engine is generally durable, with many examples exceeding

200,000 miles with proper maintenance. Common issues include failed mass air flow sensors, failing alternators, and problems with the automatic transmission (specifically the shift solenoids). The timing belt should be replaced every 90,000 miles—a critical maintenance item, as belt failure can destroy the engine. Also, the power steering system may develop leaks. Overall, the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante can be a dependable car if service records are documented.

### Common Problem Areas to Inspect

1. Transmission Shift Hesitation: Often due to worn solenoids or low fluid. Check for smooth shifts during test drive.
2. Check Engine Light: Often triggered by oxygen sensors or vacuum leaks. A simple code reader can diagnose.
3. Suspension Squeaks: Control arm bushings and strut mounts age over time. Listen for clunks.
4. Interior Electronics: Power window regulators and LCD displays (in LS models) may fail.

Routine oil changes, coolant flushes, and transmission service every 30,000 miles help keep the Diamante running.

## Safety Features and Crash Ratings

The 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante came standard with dual front airbags, anti-lock brakes (ABS), and front seatbelt pretensioners. Side-impact airbags were not available, and the car lacked stability control—both common for its time. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) gave the 2001 Diamante a **four-star rating** for frontal driver and passenger protection, and three stars for rear passenger safety. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) rated it “Acceptable” in the frontal offset test—reasonable for its era. While not a contender against modern safety standards, the Diamante was competitive with rivals like the Avalon and Accord of the same year. For families, its large size and sturdy construction provided decent protection.

## Comparison with Rivals

The 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante faced strong competition in the full-size sedan segment. Here’s how it stacked up against key rivals:

### vs. Toyota Avalon

The Avalon offered a more refined V6 (3.0L, 210 hp), better fuel economy, and legendary reliability. Its interior felt slightly more modern, and resale value was higher. The Diamante countered with a larger wheelbase (more rear legroom) and a lower used price, plus a softer ride.

### vs. Honda Accord V6

The Honda Accord V6 was sportier, more fuel-efficient, and had a better reputation for longevity. But the Accord’s rear seat was noticeably tighter. The Diamante was the better choice for buyers prioritizing passenger space and comfort over handling.

### vs. Nissan Maxima

The Maxima’s 3.0L V6 (222 hp) was more powerful and its handling crisper. However, the Maxima’s ride was firmer and the interior less plush. The Diamante LS with leather and wood felt more luxurious, while the Maxima appealed to driving enthusiasts.

## Buying and Ownership Tips for the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante

For those considering a used 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante, here are practical pointers. First, verify timing belt service—if it hasn’t been replaced, budget around $600-$900. Check for transmission fluid condition; if it’s dark or smells burnt, walk away. Look for rust underneath, especially in salt-belt states. The Diamante’s body does not rust excessively, but rear wheel arches and trunk floors can corrode. Expect to pay between $1,500 and

$4,000 depending on mileage and condition. LS trims with the Infinity sound system and sunroof are more desirable. Parts availability is reasonable—many mechanical components are shared with the Galant and Eclipse. Insurance costs are low due to the car's age and modest value.

### Maintenance Schedule Essentials

- Oil change every 5,000 miles (use 5W-30).
- Timing belt and water pump replacement every 90,000 miles.
- Transmission fluid flush every 30,000 miles.
- Spark plugs (iridium) every 60,000 miles.
- Coolant replacement every 2 years.

## Conclusion: Is the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante Still Worth It?

The **2001 Mitsubishi Diamante**may not be the most exciting sedan, but it offers a compelling mix of comfort, space, and affordability that many used car shoppers overlook. Its plush ride and quiet cabin make it a pleasant daily driver for those who value relaxation over performance. While reliability requires attentive maintenance, a well-kept example can still serve reliably for many years. For anyone seeking a budget-friendly full-size sedan with a touch of old-school luxury, the 2001 Mitsubishi Diamante deserves a closer look. Just remember to check the timing belt, test the transmission, and you might find a hidden gem that delivers miles of comfortable motoring.


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