

Understanding The Mitsubishi Evo X

One of the first things, depending on where you are in the world that may come as a surprise to you but perhaps if you're in the UK it may not be as big a surprise as others is the modification packages available through Mitsubishi UK, mainly the EVO X FQ models, as in FQ320. That is, did you know that all of the EVO X models in the UK, as sold as a factory-official car through Mitsubishi UK, actually has a modified converted, factory ECU using EcuTeK tuning software?

That package of upgrades is on all the EVO Xs sold by Mitsubishi UK. On top of that, Mitsubishi UK then offer the EVO X FQ model, and the FQ model standing for an "F-ing quick" car, has been available for quite some time now. If I remember rightly, it started with the EVO 7 and then there's the EVO 8 and, of course, the EVO 9 and now the EVO 10.

The FQ320 EVO X comes with a package of generally HKS modified components—exhaust, hard pipe inlet kit, and some other body kit styling enhancements and things like that—and then, of course, the tuned ECU to bring it all together to make it into a nice reliable package that comes with a full factory warranty guarantee through the Mitsubishi dealer network and, of course, Mitsubishi UK.

What is also a good bit of information is some of this tuning and mapping data is available through the EcuTeK ECU tuning network throughout the world and, of course, through MRT Performance here in Australia and the authorized EcuTeK partners in every state of Australia. The tuning software that is used by Mitsubishi UK is obviously the tuning software that is used by EcuTeK around the world.

Through your local EcuTeK tuner, you can get the factory ECU in your Mitsubishi EVO X converted into a fully adjustable ECU and then increase the performance. Now what will obviously vary is the level of warranty that you'll get support from your local dealer.

Be very careful when you start modifying, if you choose to modify your EVO X. Because it's a brand-new car, it uses the new Flash Can technology ECU. Gone are the days where you can do some simple modification and upgrades with hard parts and expect a noticeable improvement in performance because, really, you can't achieve that anymore particularly with these newer models.

The EVO X ECU is smart enough to realize that there's been a modification done and what it will then start doing is detuning the performance that you were looking for as a result of say, for example, a modified exhaust and ultimately you can end up with less power than what you start with, obviously, with factory-standard parts. The advantage of converting the factory ECU to an adjustable one allows that all to be brought together as a complete package, tuned and designed to work in harmony with each other.

You may be trying to decide whether you're going to go for a classic, manual transmission gear box or the semi-automatic, dual-shifting gear box. Based on our experience, you should choose carefully because if you're going to drive the car hard, early indications are that whilst the seamless-shift, semi-automatic transmission gear box is technically very advanced, the down side is it's not really up to it when it comes to taking it on the track and giving it a bit of a workout.

We've already heard some early examples of these cars with these transmissions being taken to the track and the gear box overheating and effectively putting the car into a limp mode after just a simple couple of laps. Our feedback, to begin with, is effectively to go for the conservative route with your classic manual transmission where you'd get to choose the shift gears yourself.

Obviously, that's a derivative of the EVO 9 transmission and obviously a lot of "proof in the pudding" so to speak from the previous models from a reliability point of view there. Some of the other things from feedback on the press release launch of speaking to a few test drivers, the new EVO X, technically, is a very advanced car and effectively quicker and more reliable because, obviously, that's the way technology is going, but probably not as much as a hardcore performance model as was the EVO 9 and the previous EVO models to that.

Mitsubishi, similarly like Subaru, have sort of toned down the new EVO X a little bit to reach what we believe is a broader market. It's a bit more of a gentleman's type of performance car than a previous EVO 9. I've already had several customers say to me that they believe the EVO 9 is a more fun car to own than the EVO 10. I think at the end of the day it really depends on what your angle is and what you plan to use the car for.

Now when it came to picking and choosing between the Subaru Impreza STI and the Mitsubishi EVO 9, if you're going to drive the car regularly, day-to-day, then the Subaru STI model was a bit more conservative and a bit more enjoyable to drive. If you're looking for a car that you're going to regularly take to the track, then the Mitsubishi EVO 9 was the way to go because out of the box it was more of a performance-based, hardcore car and not as broad in its appeal as to the Subaru STI model.

Based on the road test of the Subaru MY08 STI, we believe Subaru has probably broadened its appeal a little bit too much as well and lost some of its focus, i.e., the seats are not as hugging as the previous model. They're a little bit more designed for a broader-framed person so to speak. It's a little bit more dulled down.

From our indications so far, Mitsubishi have probably followed a similar route with the EVO 10. Whether that continues to be the path that these manufacturers will take in the future, I'm not really too sure. Hopefully that little bit of this information will help you make a decision on what to do to modify your Mitsubishi EVO X or to choose between a Mitsubishi EVO 10 or a Subaru Impreza STI MY08.

The EVO X, obviously, has a dramatically different engine now from the previous models. It has an all-alloy block. It runs a higher-peak boost level, in fact, a staggeringly higher-peak boost level which, again, makes it even more important to choose your modifications carefully.

Obviously, the orientation of the inlet and the exhaust manifolds on the EVO X is different to the EVO 9, having the inlet manifold at the front now with the exhaust manifold at the rear. Effectively, between the firewall and the engine is now where the turbo sits, which is the completely different orientation to the previous EVO 9 model. That's going to require a whole complete new jiggling up of, obviously, exhaust systems and components to suit that model.

Obviously, there's not a lot of carry over with the EVO 9 but, then again, we expected there's a pretty good reason why Mitsubishi had done that. From impressions, it's obviously to get the car a bit better balanced in its weight distribution because the exhaust manifold weighs more than the inlet manifold. By moving it backwards, it transfers a little bit more of that weight towards the rear of the car and in theory then obviously makes it handle better.

Again, that gives you a bit more info to compare between the models as well. I'm not going to comment on the body styling or geometry setups or seating position because a lot of that these days is more so a personal choice. Quite a few people commented, "I'm not liking the Subaru MY08 Impreza shape," but, obviously, over a period of time that tends to grow on people.

Obviously, the Mitsubishi EVO X body shape is dramatically different to the previous model as well. Now being out for a while, it's not as dramatic in its appearance. I think that's about it for now.

About the Author

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