

Consumer Guide December 1988 – Plymouth Reliant

Plymouth Reliant America

What's New

The K-car station wagon has been discontinued, leaving 2-and 4-door sedans that are little changed from '88. The optional 2.5-liter 4-cylinder engine gets a slight horsepower boost, to 100 from last year's 96. Bright paint has been added to such underhood items as the dipstick and power-steering reservoir cap to aid in service identification. Chrysler says the front-suspension also has been slightly modified to reduce harshness and improve isolation from road noise. The base engine is a 93-horsepower 2.2-liter four. A 5-speed manual transmission is standard with the 2.2; a 3-speed automatic is optional with the 2.2 and required with the 2.5. Front bucket seats are standard. An optional front bench increases seating capacity to six and is available only with automatic transmission. New options include a 4-speaker stereo system. Reliant and the



Plymouth Reliant 4-door

identical Dodge Aries, now in their ninth season, were enrolled in Chrysler's "America" program last year. The program is designed to make these front drive compacts more affordable by cutting production costs and by offering only a single trim level with limited options.

For

- Value
- Passenger room
- Fuel economy

Against

- Handling
- Engine noise (2.2)

Summary

Reliant's main weapon is price, and it's a mighty weapon. Start with a base sticker of \$7495. Even though it's up \$500 from '88, you still get a roomy sedan that holds five adults and a fair amount of luggage. For another \$2500 or so you can add the 2.5-liter engine for satisfactory acceleration, air conditioning, power steering, tinted glass, AM/FM stereo radio, a center console, dual outside remote mirrors and a few appearance items, such as sport wheel covers. That's around \$10,000, still cheaper than many subcompacts, plus you get Chrysler's competitive warranties against powertrain defects and rust. Of course, K-cars were introduced eight years ago, and though their front-drive platform spawned a host of Chrysler products, it's been surpassed by more refined, newer designs. Don't expect the workmanship or quality of materials to equal that of a Mazda 626 or Toyota Camry, to name two. Don't anticipate the ride and handling of a Honda Accord LXi, either. Still, equipped right, the affordable Aries or Reliant is acceptable for basic family transportation. We recommend the 2.5; it's stronger and quieter than the standard 2.2-liter engine, doesn't get weak-kneed with the air conditioner on, and still returns reasonable fuel economy. The bucket seats are more supportive and comfortable than the front bench. And, driveability is better with the automatic transmission; the 5-speed suffers notchy shift action.

Specifications

	2-door notchback	4-door notchback
Wheelbase, in.	100.3	100.3
Overall length, in.	178.9	178.9
Overall width, in.	67.9	67.9
Overall height, in.	52.5	52.5
Front track, in.	57.6	57.6
Rear track, in.	57.2	57.2
Turn diameter, ft.	34.8	34.8
Curb weight, lbs.	2317	2323
Cargo vol., cu. ft.	15.0	15.0
Fuel capacity, gal.	14.0	14.0
Seating capacity	6	6
Front headroom, in.	38.2	38.6
	2-door notchback	4-door notchback
Front shoulder room, in.	55.0	55.4
Front legroom, max., in.	42.2	42.2
Rear headroom, in.	37.0	37.8
Rear shoulder room, in.	58.8	55.9
Rear legroom, min., in.	35.1	35.4

Powertrain layout: transverse front engine/front-wheel drive.

Engines

	ohc I-4	ohc I-4
Size, liters/cu. in.	2.2/135	2.5/153
Fuel delivery	TBI	TBI
Horsepower @ rpm	93 @ 4800	100 @ 2800
Torque (lbs./ft.) @ rpm	122 @ 3200	135 @ 2800
Availability	S	O

EPA city/highway mpg

5-speed OD manual	25/34	
3-speed automatic	24/30	23/28



Plymouth Reliant 2-door