



RENAULT

PRESS RELEASE

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Renault Mégane II is here!

The new Renault Mégane II will be launched in New Zealand on October 1st. It arrives with the triple accolades of 2003 European Car of the Year, the only 5-star Euro NCAP safety rating in its class and the best selling car in Europe for the first 6 months of 2003



The Mégane II hatchback and Sport Hatch pave the way for a complete renewal of Renault's product line-up in the C segment.

Built on the new C platform — jointly developed by the Renault-Nissan Alliance — Mégane II constitutes a major commercial, financial and industrial challenge underpinning Renault's profitable growth strategy.

With the arrival of Mégane II, Renault adds a new string to its bow: the individual hatchback. It can be summed up in three words: compact, expressive, dynamic.

Mégane II's distinctive design gives it plenty of character. Mégane II is a pleasure to drive, as its styling suggests. Mégane II also offers innovative comfort features and an intelligent approach to travelling pleasure which Renault introduced on higher-segment models.

The Mégane II hatchback and Sport Hatch were developed in just 29 months — Renault's best-ever development time. The engineering phase was significantly shortened and the production preparation phase halved. And no concessions were made on the different stages of approval.

Renault achieved this high level of performance through a new managerial approach, involving the factories from the very start of the programme. Profitability was therefore given a considerable boost.

Renault invested a total of 2.1 billion Euros, with nearly half devoted to industrial investment in Palencia, Spain — readied to produce the hatchback and the Sport Hatch — as well as at the plant in Douai, France, which will manufacture the hatchback and the new Scénic at a later date. The third plant, in Bursa, Turkey, will produce the Mégane saloon

Mégane II will be the first model to use the C platform, the second common platform developed alongside Nissan. Designed for C-segment models of both Renault and Nissan, the C platform will account for over 25% of all Alliance production by 2006, i.e. approximately 1.8 million vehicles. Mégane II was devised right from the start as an international programme and will be distributed in 75 countries.

Based on a completely new platform, Mégane II has new front and rear suspension systems, combining precision with highly effective isolation of noise and vibration. For complete driving control in all circumstances, the road-going behaviour of Mégane II is superior in terms of both roadholding and braking.

The variable assist electric power steering heightens driving precision with characteristics tailored to every need. Cockpit-style ergonomics have been developed to make the driver feel part of the car.

Powerful assertive design

Mégane II lends its powerful, expressive design to a three-door Sport Hatch and a five-door hatchback, both of which share the same assertive character. Mégane II stands out as a distinctive product in a segment of mainly look-alike cars.



It appeals to the emotions without sacrificing functionality and practicality. It is an energetic car that makes no secret of its sporty personality, particularly in terms of the cockpit, while actively promoting driving pleasure. Its robust design is rounded out by an attention to detail that is evident in the trim quality, fit and finish and flush body panels.

The interior is a lesson in modernity, sobriety and ergonomics. It is the first volume-produced car to feature Touch Design, an illustration of the care and attention that went into its design. Mégane II is governed by the concept of "ease of use", which determined each decision during the development phase.

The reinforced structure of Mégane II, coupled with energy absorption and programmed crumple zones, guarantee optimum deformation in impacts. Mégane II offers a host of occupant-protection features with the third-generation Renault System for Restraint and Protection (SRP3), designed to offer maximum protection to all occupants equally. The Mégane II Sport Hatch achieves a world first by incorporating Renault's latest safety advance, an anti-submarining airbag in the front seats.

Mégane II combines Renault's knowhow in the area of comfort with an intelligent approach to travelling pleasure. It features innovative layout features, including a panoramic sunroof and a double floor. Mégane II is also big on simplicity, with a new Renault card providing keyless entry and go, as well as ease of use — the fuel filler flap has a built-in cap.

Far from conforming to the traditional values of the C segment, Mégane II stands out for its expressive design which Patrick le Quément, Senior Vice President of Renault Corporate Design, summarises: *"The understated dimensions of the boot, the subtle yet clearly affirmed shoulders, the rounded, flush-fitting wheel arches... all these elements come together to form a compact whole that smacks of agility and control."*

The architecture of Mégane II can be considered triptych-like: a tapered front end, a spacious cabin and a vertical rear end leading into the protruding boot. The front radiator grille, with its two horizontal bars, gives extra width while creating a backdrop for a new interpretation of the brand's redesigned visual identity. The sculptural, penetrating bonnet is extended on either side by the wings with their sharply outlined crests to confirm the resolutely sporty character of Mégane II. The diamond logo provides a focus, positioned at the top of a triangle and resting on the Mégane name.

The first words that spring to air on discovering Mégane II are robustness and quality. The emphasis is clearly on superior fit and finish. Clean-cut lines, precision assembly and flush-fitting panels define this car.

Inside the cabin, the double floor has been chosen to create an uncluttered space with fitted seat runners and a discreet central tunnel. Viewed from the outside, Mégane II comes across as a compact vehicle, suggestive of agility and excellent road-holding. It sits squarely, thanks to its wheelbase — the longest in its category — wide tracks, short overhang and the "corner position" of its broad wheels.

The sporty personality of Mégane II is another instantly apparent defining feature, particularly well illustrated by the Sport Hatch version of which Patrick le Quément says: *"It's as though it were in starting blocks, raring to go."* Antony Grade, Vice President of Car Design Programmes, adds: *"Mégane II is like a 'second skin' in which the driver feels in control."*

Slip into the driver's seat, and the comparison that springs to mind is that of a cockpit, in particular with the aviation-style parking brake. The driver's environment is dedicated to driving pleasure: designed with the driver in mind, but not to the exclusion of the other occupants, the different instruments are deliberately grouped together.

The instrument hood with its two humps and the cylindrical dial housings could have been borrowed from the world of motorbikes. The driver area is one of the focal points of Mégane II, exemplifying as it does the car's sporty and masculine dimensions. Not that Mégane II is limited to these two values. It plays on contrast, blending a more urban style with the looks of a touring model.

Modernity and sobriety best define the interior of Mégane II. The instrument panel marries simple forms with pure lines. Mégane II is the first volume-produced vehicle to

feature Touch Design, introduced with the Talisman concept car and proof of the care Renault has devoted to its design. Superbly ergonomic, made from materials whose appearance and feel inspire contact, each choice was driven by the desire to create controls that fit instinctively in the hand, feel good and whose use is second nature. Touch Design controls do not just correspond to a function: they are developed with pleasure in mind. This same intention is repeated in the shape of the gear knob and the satin finish of the door handles. Designed in this spirit, the parking brake becomes a particularly identifiable and comfortable element. The flush-fitting radio facades, air-conditioning controls and stowage all fit perfectly within the interior space, examples of technical elements whose design encourages more intuitive use.

Designed for optimal user comfort, Mégane II offers the ultimate in ergonomics in which logic and emotion play an equal part. The instrument panel display in particular reflects this approach. Each of the choices that culminated in Mégane II were working towards the same goal: simplicity of use. In a world in which cars are becoming increasingly complex objects, engineers and designers worked together to make Mégane II more intuitive and easier to apprehend.

To distinguish Mégane II from the other hatchbacks in its segment, Renault has put together inventive combinations of colour and trim. The new grained texture of the instrument panel enhances its appearance and feel, while its slush plastic covering was chosen for an exceptional quality of interaction, and for its soft and pleasant feel. Following on from Espace IV, the choice of textile goes against the grain as velour, the traditional symbol of luxury, has been replaced by fabric for a more sporty personality. New upholsteries make their debut, such as crushed honeycombed fabric, recognisable by its sportswear, high-tech aspect.

The launch of the second alliance platform

Both the hatchback and Sport Hatch versions of Mégane II are built on a platform – the C platform – that will later be used by Nissan. It follows on from the B platform for small cars, which Nissan was first to use with the Nissan Micra which it launched in Japan in early 2002. The C platform is the second to be jointly developed by the Renault-Nissan Alliance. It has been designed to adapt to the new generation of Nissan C-segment vehicles by 2004/2005, placing it at the heart of the economies of scale from which the Alliance will benefit when purchasing shared parts, equipment and industrial tools. From the outset, Nissan contributed to the cost of engineering for this new platform. The C platform will also combine with the new engines that both Renault and Nissan can use to equip their vehicles.

Given its modular nature, the platform can provide the basis for numerous chassis with reduced front and rear overhang and wide wheel arches, allowing a broad variety of bodies that will in particular respond to demand for 4WDs and sport utility vehicles (SUVs). By 2010 Renault and Nissan will be assembling clearly differentiated product ranges using 10 joint platforms, and will share eight engine families.

Also by 2006, the Alliance has set an annual production target of 1.8 million vehicles using the C platform, in addition to 1.7 million per year using the B platform. Renault and Nissan vehicles that will be assembled on these two platforms are expected to account for over half the two brands' future production volume.

Wide engine and transmission range

The engine range at launch comprises two units: 115bhp 1.6 16V VVT and 136bhp 2.0 16V VVT. These engines are equipped with 16 valves and variable inlet valve timing (VVT) for the benefit of ease of driving and a reduction in fuel consumption.

Other features common to all engines include 16-valve cylinder heads with twin overhead camshafts, and special tubular (hollow) camshafts in order to save weight (400g saving per camshaft). Roller-type cam followers and hydraulic lash adjustment allow valve train friction to be reduced by 50%. These engines combine easy and pleasant driving with lower fuel consumption and therefore also reduced CO₂ emissions. All of these petrol engines are equipped with a drive-by-wire throttle linkage operating through a motorised throttle valve for more precise control of the engine to the benefit of ease of driving. All these petrol engines comply with the Euro 3 (Euro 2000) emission requirements.

The 1.6 16V (K4M) engine, which appeared in 1998, has been extensively developed for its application in Mégane II. Apart from a new engine management computer and a new throttle valve unit for improved operating stability, the 1.6 16V engine is now equipped with variable inlet valve timing. Its operation is fully variable through a range of movement of 45° of crankshaft angle. This continuously variable operation results in improved performance, fuel consumption and ease of driving for each engine operating point, from idling to maximum power. The addition of variable inlet valve timing results in an increase in torque of 3 to 8% at intermediate engine speeds, while increasing maximum power by 5bhp.

The 1.6 16V (K4M) engine in Mégane II thus develops 83kW (115bhp) at 6,000rpm and provides a maximum torque of 152Nm (15.8m.kg) at 4,200rpm. To the benefit of ease of driving, 90% of the maximum torque is available between 2,000 and 5,750rpm. In use, this 16-valve engine with variable inlet valve timing is as lively and pleasant, and very uniform in its response with no flat-spots at low or medium speeds. Its increased output has made possible the use of higher gearing which limits the fuel consumption to 6.8 litres/100km (163g of CO₂/km) in the European combined cycle while retaining full performance. The combination of performance and fuel economy of Mégane II 1.6 16V makes it one of the most competitive products in its segment. The new valvetrain incorporates a device to reduce acyclical camshaft movement, thus improving reliability and reducing noise by lowering the drive belt tension. Noise levels are also lowered by a new air intake system and more compact accessory drive arrangements.

The 2.0 16V (F4R) engine in Mégane II is a latest-generation unit with improved efficiency and acoustic comfort. While it retains the variable inlet valve timing system of the previous generation, this engine is equipped with a new engine management computer and a new motorised throttle valve assembly to optimise ease of driving. The new combustion chamber and air intake system bring additional gains in terms of ease of driving and the reduction of fuel consumption with 8.0 litres/100km (191g of CO₂/km). This engine develops 98.5kW (136bhp) at 5,500rpm and a maximum torque of 191Nm (19.8m.kg) at 3,750rpm. In order to offer great flexibility in use, 90% of the maximum torque is available from 2,000rpm. Together with the new six-speed gearbox with its short and close-spaced ratios, the 2.0 16V engine provides Mégane II with both ease of driving and high performance.

Revamped transmissions and an all-new six-speed manual transmission

The manual and automatic transmissions in Mégane II have been developed with the aim of exploiting all the potential of the engines. For the sake of ease of use, the entire Mégane II range uses hydraulically operated clutches which ensure excellent vibration

isolation and constant pedal load over time. The 1.6 16V petrol engine benefits from a new generation five-speed manual gearbox designated JH. With a two-shaft layout, this unit has a torque capacity of 160Nm.

Developed from the well-proven "J" series of gearboxes, the Mégane II unit has been optimised to improve efficiency and gearchange quality. This gearbox is now equipped with double-cone synchronisers with ball bearings on the first two gears, and cable operation. These two features allow selector travel to be reduced (to about 25mm) with less load and increased precision of selection, to the benefit of driving pleasure. A new reverse gear brake has also been developed, halving the load needed for engagement.

A new six-speed manual gearbox designated "ND0" of Nissan origin is fitted to the 2.0 16V engine. This is intended to cover the torque capacity range from 200 to 300Nm which is tending to become more widely encountered in this market segment. This new gearbox, with a shaft layout, is notable for its compactness due to its low height, and for its lightness (47.5kg). Considerable work has been done on gearshifting quality, to achieve very high levels of both precision and lightness of shifting. Selector travel is particularly short, making for even more precision and better guidance. The sixth gear brings many advantages and allows the potential of the high-range Mégane II engines to be exploited to the full. Response is improved in each of the intermediate gears while fuel consumption and noise level are reduced in motorway driving. Gear ratios have been adapted to each engine with shorter and closer ratios for more dynamic driving with the 2.0 16V engine.

Mégane II is also available with automatic transmission in the form of the four-speed Proactive unit (DPO), now equipped with a flick-shift sequential selector. This four-speed transmission, controlled by nine auto-adaptive laws, is offered with both engines. With the flickshift selector, the driver can decide on the timing of each gearshift with a single movement of the lever, having first moved it across the gate from the "Drive" position. In this mode, in order to protect the mechanism, any upward or downward selection at an unsuitable engine speed is overridden. When slowing down, the ratio best adapted to the speed is automatically engaged regardless of the mode selected. It is therefore impossible to end up with the engine either overspeeding or running at less than normal idling speed.

In Mégane II, the Proactive automatic transmission includes developments such as a new computer which optimises dialogue between engine and transmission to smooth gearshifting. Very compact, the Proactive transmission is lightened when fitted to the 1.6 16V engine thanks to the use of an aluminium differential casing.

New platform and suspension design

The key to active safety, roadholding is one of Mégane II's strong points. The new platform and its new suspension design guarantees stability regardless of the type of road surface, side winds or even during braking. Important work has been carried out on the filtration of noise and vibration and on feedback from the road to achieve a higher level of driving precision and to make the car more responsive. With increased suspension travel – with front suspension bump travel of 75mm compared with 58mm in Mégane – and optimised damper settings, Mégane II provides ride comfort which is firm, yet supple. The stiffer anti-roll bars and wide tracks ensure roadholding of the highest level. Mégane II is characterised by high natural stability and dynamic behaviour which remains neutral and predictable even in extreme situations.

The new suspension systems for Mégane have been developed to combine precise stability with noise and vibration filtration. The **front suspension** uses MacPherson geometry with a rectangular lower arm which ensures the decoupling of lateral and

longitudinal forces. This makes it possible to achieve high transverse stiffness, which improves roadholding, while absorbing longitudinal forces for the sake of comfort. The front suspension is carried on an isolated subframe which also contributes to comfort by preventing the transmission of vibration. The **rear suspension** consists of a programmed- deflection torsion beam system plus coil springs. The profile of the flexible cross-beam incorporates an anti-roll bar for optimum control of body roll. The attachment points of the beam are outboard, which allows them to be ideally placed just ahead of and within the wheel axis. This positioning ensures optimum stability. The choice of stiffness of the beam and of the flexible mountings was the result of a careful study to achieve the highest level of vibratory and acoustic comfort.

New families of tyres were developed to achieve an optimum trade-off between minimum rolling resistance, leading to lower fuel consumption, and maximum grip. By comparison with the previous generation of tyres, rolling resistance has been reduced by 5% with optimised braking characteristics. These tyres were also developed with the aim of providing the driver with excellent feedback of road information.

The wheels are generously proportioned, with diameters of 15, 16 or 17 inches and wide tyre section (195mm minimum). The tyres optimise behaviour and safety through the transmission to the surface of the high braking torque of Mégane II. The braking system was dimensioned according to the most severe criteria in order to provide the driver not only with maximum efficiency but also a feeling of power and response which remains constant even during repeated applications.

The four discs are of large diameter (260 or 280mm ventilated at the front according to engine, and 240mm at the rear) and increased thickness (22 or 24mm according to version). The 11-inch brake servo provides a maximum pressure within the circuit of 115 bars compared with 90 bars in the previous generation. The deceleration ability and fade resistance of Mégane II braking system has been dimensioned for a stopping distance of 38 metres during 10 consecutive stops from 100 to 0kph.

Mégane II is equipped with the latest generation Bosch 8.0 ABS system with EBD to allow the potential of the rear brakes to be fully exploited. To optimise stopping distances, Emergency Brake Assist intervenes according to the speed of operation of the brake pedal, to increase braking load and maintain it at the maximum set by the ABS system. A standard feature of Mégane II is that whenever the system is activated, the hazard warning lights are automatically switched on.

Electric power steering

Mégane II is equipped as standard with electric power-assisted steering in which the degree of assistance varies according to the speed. This steering system is adapted to the various versions in the range with the adoption of specific operating criteria associated with the weight on the front suspension and the type of engine. The variable assist electric power-assisted steering in Mégane II allows the car to be positioned precisely with minimum effort. The load increases with the speed of the car, without any discontinuity when moving from one level of assistance to the next. This function allows it to offer both:

- steering which feels extremely pleasant when manoeuvring in town, with a very high level of assistance. Combined with the reduced turning circle of Mégane II (10.5m between kerbs), its manoeuvrability thus almost matches that of a small car
- maximum driving precision at higher speeds due to the progressive reduction in the degree of assistance. The feeling of stability around the straight-ahead position is thus improved, together with the awareness of steering load when entering a corner.

The result is optimum steering feel for the driver with the right degree of assistance in all circumstances. To improve the comfort and pleasure of driving, this power-assisted steering incorporates positive self-centring: this involves the return of the steering wheel to the straight-ahead position and offers good steering feel thanks to a linkage between the steering column and the rack which isolates parasitic inputs.

The variable assist electric power assisted steering confers an average fuel consumption saving of 0.2 litres/100km in a normalised cycle, compared with a variable assist hydraulic system. This saving is primarily due to the fact that the electrical system operates only on demand, unlike hydraulic technology, which requires pressure to be maintained in the circuit at all times.

Mégane II's driving position has been designed to offer the driver a made-to-measure fit. The steering wheel has a smaller diameter (370mm) but a thicker rim, and is perfectly in line, providing excellent grip. The steering column is adjustable over a wide range for both height and reach (+/-20mm in height and +/-25mm in reach).

For additional comfort, especially on long journeys, the driver is provided with a large, flat footrest. Feedback during driving is an important factor. The seat in particular plays the role of a sensory transmitter, while isolating the driver from parasitic phenomena.

Class leading standard specification

Standard specifications from 1.6-litre versions upwards include 6 airbags (driver and passenger front airbags, front side and full length curtain airbags), ABS brakes with Brake Assist, Automatic headlights, Automatic windscreen wipers, Automatic dipping rear vision mirror, Air-conditioning and a CD player.

The 2.0-litre 5-door adds climate air-conditioning, alloy wheels and a leather covered steering wheel. For a \$3000 premium the "Plus" specification is available that includes leather upholstery, 17" alloy wheels and a 6-CD indash stacker.

The 2.0-litre Sport Hatch has 8 airbags – adding anti-submarining airbags under the front seat cushions – leather upholstery, 17" alloy wheels and a 6-CD indash stacker.



European Car of the Year 2003

Mégane II has won the "Car of the Year 2003" award, granted by an international jury of 58 motoring journalists. No fewer than 30 new models were competing for the award. This is the fifth time that Renault has won this honour.

The members of the jury praised the expressive design of Mégane II in what is usually a conservative market segment. They were also particularly appreciative of the new model's ride and handling qualities – dynamic behaviour, braking and comfort were all considered exemplary – and its highly sophisticated passive safety system.

Only car in its class with a 5-star Euro NCAP score

The Mégane II 5-star EURO NCAP score has confirmed Renault's supremacy in safety. With a score of 33.10 points out of 37, Mégane II is the first C-segment vehicle to achieve this level of leading-edge performance.

The Euro NCAP results show that the Renault brand has become synonymous with safety. This is particularly important as the assessment criteria adopted by Euro NCAP, for front impact in particular, cover over 80% of accident scenarios that actually occur on the road.

As with Laguna II, Euro NCAP underlined the excellent crash resistance of the structure of Mégane II. The cabin was totally intact after the impact, with no intrusion whatsoever.

In terms of occupant restraint, readings taken from the dummies following the Euro NCAP crash tests indicate that Mégane II drivers and passengers are very well protected in an impact. This is shown by the colours of the dummies after the test: mainly green (good protection) for the head and legs, and yellow (adequate protection) for the thorax.

New survival cell structure safer than ever

The completely new structure of Mégane II has been designed to be responsive in the event of impact, in other words to absorb energy and turn the cabin into a survival cell by protecting the occupants from intrusion by any mechanical components. Thanks to the use of new steels and other materials, Mégane II is particularly effective in absorbing and dissipating kinetic energy. The front, rear and side sections are all highly efficient programmed deformation zones.

The structure of Mégane II includes a high proportion of innovative materials with high energy-absorbing capacity, such as the new ultra high-strength steels (2% of the structure), very high-strength steels (10%), and high-strength steels (43%). In the event of deformation, the ultra high-strength materials offer values of stiffness three times those of conventional steels.

A laser butt-welding process during manufacturing allows the use of steels of different thicknesses, thereby allowing the optimisation of strengthening zones while retaining levels of performance and fuel economy among the best in class. In a frontal impact, the design of Mégane II ensures that the loads are distributed along three main paths.

The front structure brings several elements into play, notably the detachable front cross-member built into the bumper, the front longeron stabilised by the longeron elbow, the long pillar and the cross-member of the bulkhead, the scuttle sides and the door frames. In addition, the controlled movement of the units and components within the engine compartment allows maximum compaction of the nose section, without penetration of the cabin.

This overall control of deformation thus allows a reduction in the level of deceleration suffered by the occupants and the risk of injury which might be caused by an uncontrolled intrusion. The same strategy of compaction, programmed deformation and anti-intrusion is applied to protect against rear impact. In side impact, in order to protect the vital parts of the occupant, Mégane II is equipped with a very stiff centre pillar with programmed articulation. This mode of deformation allows the occupant to be protected by coming into contact with the padding built into the door panel while limiting intrusion into the cabin. The side zone is also made safer by doubling the thickness of the centre pillar and the roof cross-member. To this is added a mid-section strengthening ring and anti-intrusion beams in the doors.



Mégane II is equipped with the third-generation System for Restraint and Protection (SRP) first seen in Laguna II. This system combines twin-volume adaptive airbags with adaptive safety belts which for the first time incorporate double load limiters and double pretensioners for the two front seats. In addition to the 400daN load limiter to protect the thorax, a second load limiter rated at 600daN, built into the buckle pretensioner in the hatchback and into the lower section of the lap-strap in the Sport Hatch, reduces the risk of fracture of the pelvis and the iliac wings. Double pretensioners are also installed for the front seats, two pyrotechnic pretensioners in the hatchback and a pretensioner associated with an anti-submarining airbag in the coupé, to perfectly secure the occupant against the seat. An audible warning sounds if the driver forgets to secure his or her safety belt.

In the Mégane II Sport Hatch, Renault introduces a world-first innovation: an anti-submarining airbag to provide anti-submarining protection for the front seats. This airbag is the subject of an Autoliv patent and is supplied exclusively to Renault. Its purpose is to ensure the same level of safety for the front seat occupants of the Sport Hatch as enjoyed by those in the double pretensioner-equipped hatchback. The double pretensioners are intended to hold the front seat occupants firmly against the seats and to restrain their forward movement in the event of an impact. In three-door versions, the need to access the rear makes it impossible to house the second pretensioner on the outboard side of the front seat. Renault's engineering team has developed and perfected a way of providing the same anti-submarining function as the double pretensioner system fitted to the hatchback. This solution involves installing an airbag beneath the cushion of each front seat so that in the event of impact, the occupant is held against the seat by the buckle-end pretensioner, but also by the anti-submarining airbag which operates in two phases:

- The gas generator inflates the metallic envelope which compresses the foam of the cushion and holds the occupant against the structure of the front seat before he or she has even begun to move.

- The shape formed by the metallic envelope deforms to assume the shape of the occupant's pelvis, while the pressure within is held constant during the impact thanks to a deflation controller situated beneath the module.

The anti-submarining airbag thus maintains the occupant in a favourable position relative to the safety belt, and reduces the level of risk to the abdomen and lumbar regions, and thus the danger of serious injury.

The Mégane II Hatchback and Sport Hatch are equipped with lateral thorax airbags built into the front seats for the front seat occupants, and two curtain airbags to protect both front and back seat occupants, whether adults or children, against head injury.

Mégane II thus provides a whole series of airbags, numbering six in the Hatchback and eight in the Sport Hatch.

In addition, padding has been installed in several positions, including two large volume pads built into the driver and passenger side front carpets to protect feet, ankles and tibias, plus padding inserted within the casing beneath the steering wheel to protect the driver's knees and femurs. Also noteworthy is the deformable magnesium armature of the steering wheel, together with a passive retractable steering column which dissipates part of the energy in the event of impact. A brake pedal fold-away system has been developed in order to counter any rearward movement of the bulkhead in the most violent impacts.

The maintenance of a sufficient clearance between the pedal assembly and the lower limbs thus avoids any injury.

The use of ultra high-strength, high-strength and Dual Phase steels — the latter a type of high-strength steel available in thin sheets — has allowed the strength of the front seat frames in the event of impact to be substantially improved. Apart from adding comfort, the two front close-contact head restraints provide protection against neck injury in the event of rear impact. The rear passengers benefit in the same way, being provided with three folding integrated headrests and 3-point safety belts. The 3-point belt built into the backrest for the occupant of the centre position allows better positioning of the belt and therefore better retention. To round out the system, the anti-submarining bulge is strengthened and the anchorage straps of the safety belt buckles have been shortened and stiffened to prevent submarining and abdominal injuries. The three back seats are equipped with inertia-reel safety belts, with load limiters and pyrotechnic pretensioners for the two outer seats. The back seat backrest incorporates a framework strengthened against the intrusion of luggage in the event of an impact.

Finally, as the result of Renault's efforts in the area of child safety, Mégane II offers a three-point Isofix attachment system allowing child safety seats to be installed either forward- or rearward-facing. A third point allows the attachment, via a strap, of the upper part of the seat to the vehicle anchorage point in order to limit movement of the seat in the event of impact. This three-point Isofix system is installed not only in the two rear side seats but also in the front passenger seat. To permit this latter installation, a switch fitted to the rim of the dashboard allows the front passenger airbag, the thorax side airbag and also the outboard pyrotechnic pretensioner (in the hatchback; or the anti-submarining airbag in the Sport Hatch) to be deactivated. A warning light on the dashboard shows when these safety systems have been deactivated.

Innovation

Mégane II incorporates major layout features which, reflecting the car's design concept, optimise access to the front seats. The double floor allows slides to be built in, thus

facilitating ingress and egress. In the Mégane II Sport Hatch, a position memory built into the slides allows unrestricted accessibility. The control lever installed high in the seat backrest also allows it to be unlatched and folded forwards, while the sliding of the seat towards the front provides maximum accessibility to the back seats. In the same way, at the rear, the building of the seat slides into the floor frees more space for the feet. In addition, the position and shape of the cant-rail creates more space for the head when entering the back seat.

The inclination of the windscreen pillars preserves visibility towards the front. The three back seats are equipped with integrated headrests which fold away into the top of the backrest to enhance rearward visibility when the back seats are not occupied.

The Mégane II front seats provide characteristics which are equivalent to Laguna II in terms of comfort. The use of a high-resilience foam creates a cocoon around the occupant. At the rear, the seat matches that of Laguna II with thick upholstery and generous sideways support. With its folding seat base, folding backrest and three height-adjustable headrests, it is extremely modular. These layout features underscore Renault's innovative design and leadership in the area of travelling comfort.

All free space has been transformed into stowage space, whether in the front and rear door panels, the front side elbow rests, the front and rear centre armrests, and even in the front footwells. Altogether Mégane II provides 44 litres of interior stowage space, a volume far greater than the standard for the class and a feature particularly popular with customers.

In the hatchback only, the lockers in the front floor provide a capacity of 3 litres, sufficient for example to accept four drink cans horizontally. Another special feature is the aviation-type parking brake, designed to free an additional 6-litre stowage space which, when closed, also serves as an armrest in some versions.

The compact layout of the air conditioning system was devised to free more space for the refrigerated glove box. This provides a volume of 17 litres, allowing a 1.5-litre bottle to be stowed end-on.

The door padding section is hollowed out to form a closed stowage capable of accommodating five CDs in each front door elbow rest. The stowages in the door panels provide capacities of 3.5 litres at the front and 3.7 litres at the rear. The hollowed-out rear centre armrest provides nearly 2 litres of stowage, two cupholders and three holders for children's colouring crayons. The removable ashtray is stowed in the centre console cupholders or in the boot bins.

The luggage space is 330 litres (VDA standard) and is very easy to load, thanks to the comfortable width between the rear wheel arches. Otherwise, the rear shelf provides a very useful stowage position for carrying tall objects. Tie-down rings are installed in the floor to allow luggage and parcels to be held in position. The space beneath the floor in the spare wheel well provides additional stowage volume.

To make on-board technology as discreet as possible, Renault conducted a far-reaching ergonomic study into the air conditioning interface. In the regulated version, the air conditioning console comprises three zones: in the centre, an LCD screen which displays the temperature; on the left, the frequently used adjustments (air recycling and integral defrosting); on the right, the specific adjustments (distribution, fan speed). Simple to use, this air conditioning conceals a high technological content which provides optimum control of thermal comfort. In addition to the usual internal and external air temperature sensors, a solar radiation sensor adapts the temperature as a function of the amount of solar radiation entering the cabin. The system can be completed by a cabin filter which prevents any pollen from entering the vehicle.

Mégane II also provides optimised airflow, heat-reflective windscreen and a “see clear” switch for rapid demisting. Its thermal comfort is homogenous thanks to a distribution system layout which optimises the supply of air to the feet of all occupants.

Thanks to multiplexing, the Central Cabin Computer is able to handle a great deal of information, allowing the introduction of all the innovations which contribute to peace of mind and travelling comfort. Via a sensor, the Central Cabin Computer automatically controls headlamp operation and the speed of windscreen wiper operation according to the heaviness of the rain.

Pricing

Megane Hatchback 1.6 16v Manual	\$29,990
Megane Hatchback 1.6 16v Auto	\$31,990
Megane Hatchback 2.0 16v Manual	\$34,990
Megane Hatchback 2.0 16v Auto	\$36,990
Megane Hatchback 2.0 16v Plus Manual	\$37,990
Megane Hatchback 2.0 16v Plus Auto	\$39,990
Megane Sport Hatch 2.0 16v Manual	\$37,990
Megane Sport Hatch 2.0 16v Auto	\$39,990

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