


[LOGOUT](#) | [EDIT PROFILE](#) slpdesign99

 SEARCH [Web](#)
[NEWS](#)
[CAR REVIEWS](#)
[VIDEOS](#)
[BUYING](#)
[FORUMS](#)
[WIN](#)
[EVO ST](#)

Car Reviews: evo Car Reviews

Daihatsu Sirion Rally 2 & Rally 4

Rating: ★★★★★

After a decade away, Daihatsu returns to the weirdo hot hatch party

By Richard Meaden

October 2002



If you're a hot hatch fan with an elephantine memory, you'll no doubt recall the feisty Daihatsu Charade GTi. Powered by a gruff, three-cylinder turbocharged engine and with a chassis capable of delivering enough lift-off oversteer to keep a Porsche 911 veteran's arms twirling, the Charade gained something of a cult following back in the late '80s.

That eccentric, rough-around-the-edges hatch was Daihatsu's last serious foray into the UK enthusiast market, but now there's a pair of spiritual successors that prove there's still a slightly bonkers side to the usually worthy Japanese manufacturer's character. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the Daihatsu Sirion Rally 2 and Rally 4!

Granted, many of you probably wouldn't know a Sirion if you were mown down by one, but that hasn't stopped the IM Group (UK importer of Daihatsu, Isuzu and Subaru) from taking it upon itself to embark upon a tuning regime any Gran Turismo combatant will be familiar with. (In case Kazunori Yamouchi's living room classic has passed you by, it involves returning home from the pub, firing up your Playstation 2, selecting the least likely machinery from GT3's formidable inventory and attempting, against the odds, to tune it up for battle.)

With the help of Bedfordshire-based Auto Image Limited, Daihatsu UK's technical department set out to extract more power and enhance the cornering and stopping ability of the already zingy 1.3-litre Sirion. To their dismay they discovered that conventional high-tech tweakery wasn't the answer, as any fiddling with the ignition timing or fuelling was eventually compensated for by the Sirion's HAL-like ECU.

With silicon trickery failing miserably, Daihatsu and Auto Image maximised the Sirion's potential by fitting a free-flow air filter and a reprofiled exhaust camshaft, which works with the Sirion's standard DVVT variable valve timing system to deliver earlier and more prolonged lift. The result is a hard-won increase in power and torque, from 101bhp and 88lb ft to 107bhp at 7100rpm and 94lb ft at 6000rpm. With the same power for both front-wheel-drive Rally 2 and all-wheel-drive Rally

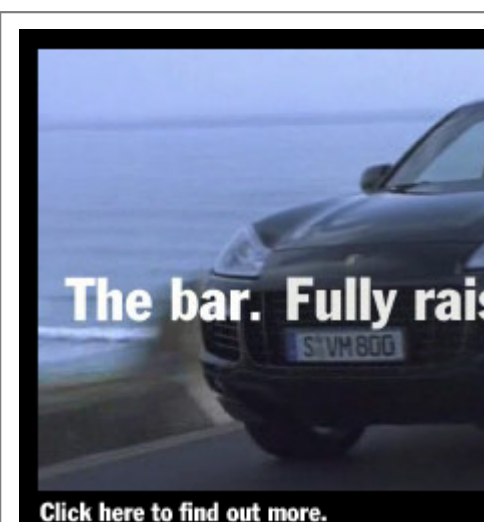
[EMAIL TO A FRIEND](#) [PRINT THIS](#)


EVO RATING

- + Revvy engine, surprising amount of 1
- Most would still prefer a used Saxo V

EVO SPECIFICATIONS

Engine:	In-line 4-cyl, 1
Max power:	107bhp
Max torque:	94lb ft
0 - 60mph:	8.
Top Speed:	115m
Price:	£99
On sale:	


[Click here to find out more.](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

4, it's the lighter Rally 2 that is unsurprisingly the swiftest, with a very respectable 0-60mph time of 8.1sec and a top speed of 115mph. The Rally 4 follows with 8.9sec and 112mph.

To sharpen the handling, a set of 15 per cent stiffer and 20mm shorter springs have been fitted, together with good-looking seven-spoke 15in alloys wearing 175/55 tyres. For increased bite and resistance to fade, the brake pads have been updated, while a short-throw gear linkage makes the shift more snappy.

As you can no doubt tell from the power and torque figures, you need to thrash the poor little Sirion within an inch of its life. But having bombed around some of Bedfordshire's finest B-roads, not to mention terrorised members of the MG Owners' Club at a Bedford Autodrome trackday, there's no-one more surprised than me to say the Rally Sirions are unlikely but entertaining machines.

Weapon of choice is the Rally 2. It feels faster in a straight line, and come the corners there's more throttle adjustability than the heavier (900kg against 850), less nimble Rally 4. There's less roll than you'd expect from such an upright looking hatchback, and although there's still limited feel and modest turn-in by, say, Mini One standards, there's a neutral balance and poise that allows you to maintain a surprising pace. The brakes are strong and remarkably fade free and, though noisy, the free-revving engine (the Sirion uses a more highly tuned version of the Toyota Yaris's powerplant) has an unburstable feel and a strong top-end yet can also return 55mpg.

With ABS, air-conditioning, a CD player and a five-year warranty as standard, the £9995 Rally 2 and £10,995 Rally 4 offer a lot of fun for not a lot of money. Quite who's going to buy either of them is hard to say, especially when there are some seriously capable used hot hatch icons, such as the 306 Rallye or Saxo VTS, for considerably less money. But, unlikely though it may sound, if you want ultimate new-car peace of mind and a sprinkling of evoness on a tight budget, a Sirion Rally 2 or 4 is genuinely worth a look.

➤ MORE CAR REVIEWS

EVO CAR REVIEWS

- ▶ Audi TT Roadster
- ▶ Lingenfelter Corvette Z06
- ▶ New Boxster S
- ▶ Lambo LP640 Roadster
- ▶ BMW Z4 M Coupe
- ▶ BMW 335d
- ▶ Alfa GT Q2

[See all evo Car Reviews](#)

LONG TERM TESTS

- ▶ Nissan 350Z Roadster
- ▶ VW Golf R32
- ▶ Jaguar XK
- ▶ Ford Mustang GT
- ▶ Subaru Impreza WRX
- ▶ Vauxhall Astra VXR
- ▶ Skoda Octavia vRS

[See all Long Term Tests](#)

CAR GROUP TESTS

- ▶ Ten worst cars tested
- ▶ Fastest ever track test
- ▶ Cooper S v Clio 197
- ▶ Battle of the Sixes
- ▶ Elise v Elise
- ▶ Mercedes Promotion
- ▶ Lambo v Ferrari

[See all Car Group Tests](#)

DAIHATSU SIRION OFFERS:

[Daihatsu Sirion for Sale](#)

[Find a Used Daihatsu Sirion for Sale at Car](#)