

New Jeep Wagoneer for 2013? Go to the end of the page for more.



1963 Wagoneer
(Jeep image at allpar.com)

While most people think of the Wrangler as the prototypical Jeep, many grew up with a very different icon of Jeep: the Wagoneer. This large go-anywhere wagon predated American Motors, and was made well into the Chrysler Corporation era.

Driven by families, chief executives, foresters, and many others, the Jeep Wagoneer provided a high degree of creature comfort for a vehicle that could traverse a stream or boulder field. An American Range Rover, the Wagoneer carried strong Jeep engineering under its skin.



The Jeep

Wagoneer also spawned one of the most popular Jeep vehicles ever made — the Cherokee. Cheaper than the Wagoneer itself, the Cherokee was launched in 1974 as a lower-cost alternative, with a lesser degree of luxury and just two doors; the different name allowed Wagoneer to continue in its upscale path. In 1977, the Cherokee became a low-end Wagoneer with either two or four doors.

The Wagoneer itself developed from early wagons, such as the Utility Wagon. The wagons were brought out in 1946, and kept roughly the same design, other than the addition of four wheel drive in 1947, until their final days. The Station Wagon (rear wheel drive), Utility Wagon (four wheel drive), and

Panel Delivery (steel in place of side windows) were closely related and remained in the Jeep lineup until 1965.

For many years, the Wagoneer would be sold side by side with a nearly identical looking pickup, the Gladiator. Eventually the Gladiator name would be replaced by the simple appellation “Jeep truck” or “J series truck.”

The first Jeep Wagoneer: 1962

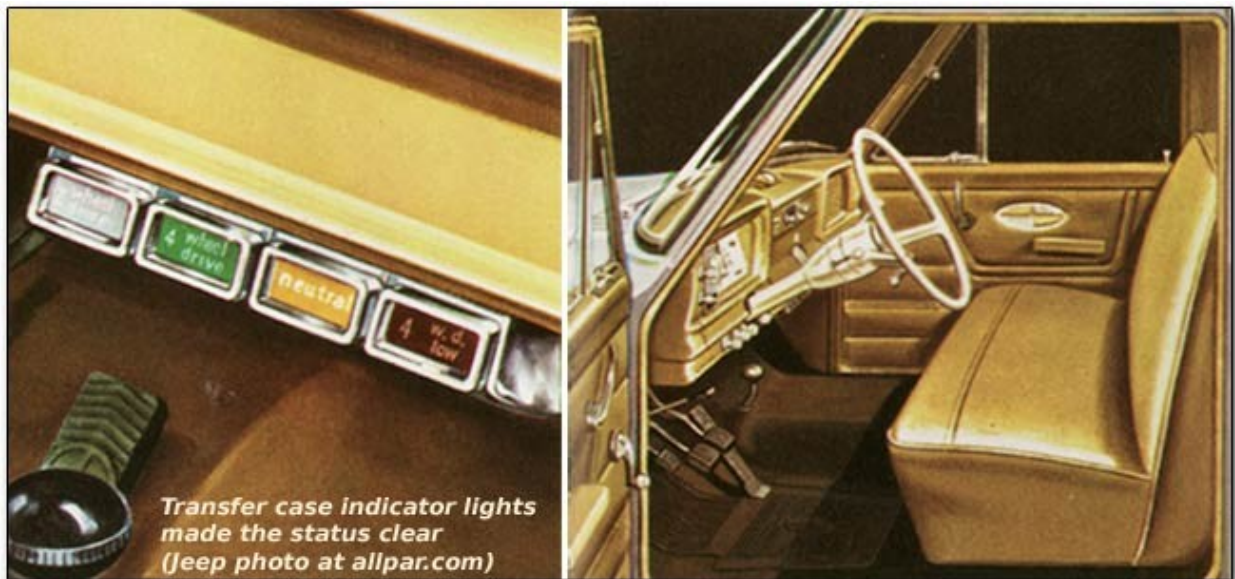




The first Jeep Wagoneer was brought out in 1962. Jeep advertised it as having the biggest cargo area and largest tailgate opening of any wagon in its wheelbase class; it could handle seven foot long ladders, lying flat. It also had the lowest tailgate of any four wheel drive wagon for easy loading.

A four cylinder was standard on the early Wagoneer, with an optional six cylinder; both came with alternators, which were still fairly new tech. Oil changes were advertised as being needed only at 6,000 mile intervals, with major lubrications spaced at 30,000 miles, a substantial savings over most vehicles of the time.

The rear wheel drive model used an independent front suspension, with protected torsion bars and enclosed axle shafts; the rear used leaf springs. While the Jeep Gladiator pickups, similar in most respects to the Wagoneer, had a unique 4x4 system with an independent front suspension, the 4x4 version of the Wagoneer used leaf springs in both front and rear, at least according to their factory brochures. In any case, the rear used variable-rate leaf springs. These were the first off-road vehicles to have independent front suspensions, a thread that would not be picked up again for many years.



Both rear wheel drive and four wheel drive models were sold; they were marketed not as trucks or utility vehicles, but as

station wagons (well into the 1970s) with room for six, or 1,200 pounds of cargo. Narrow windshield pillars aided forward and side vision, as did high seats. All but the rear quarter windows rolled down, including the tailgate window — for which an electric window was also available. The doors opened wide, a full 82 degrees, for easier access; and the openings were straight, without doglegs. Finally, unlike many competitors, all the 4x4 controls were consolidated into a single lever, with a clear set of indicator lights to tell drivers where they were.



The Tornado overhead-cam six was standard on Wagoneers; it was the only overhead cam engine made in America, and had domed pistons, large valves, and closed crankcase ventilation.

Power output from the 230.5 cubic inch engine was 140 hp at 4,000 rpm and 210 lb-ft of torque at 1,750 rpm, making it roughly equivalent to contemporary the [225 cubic inch slant six](#) from Chrysler Corporation.

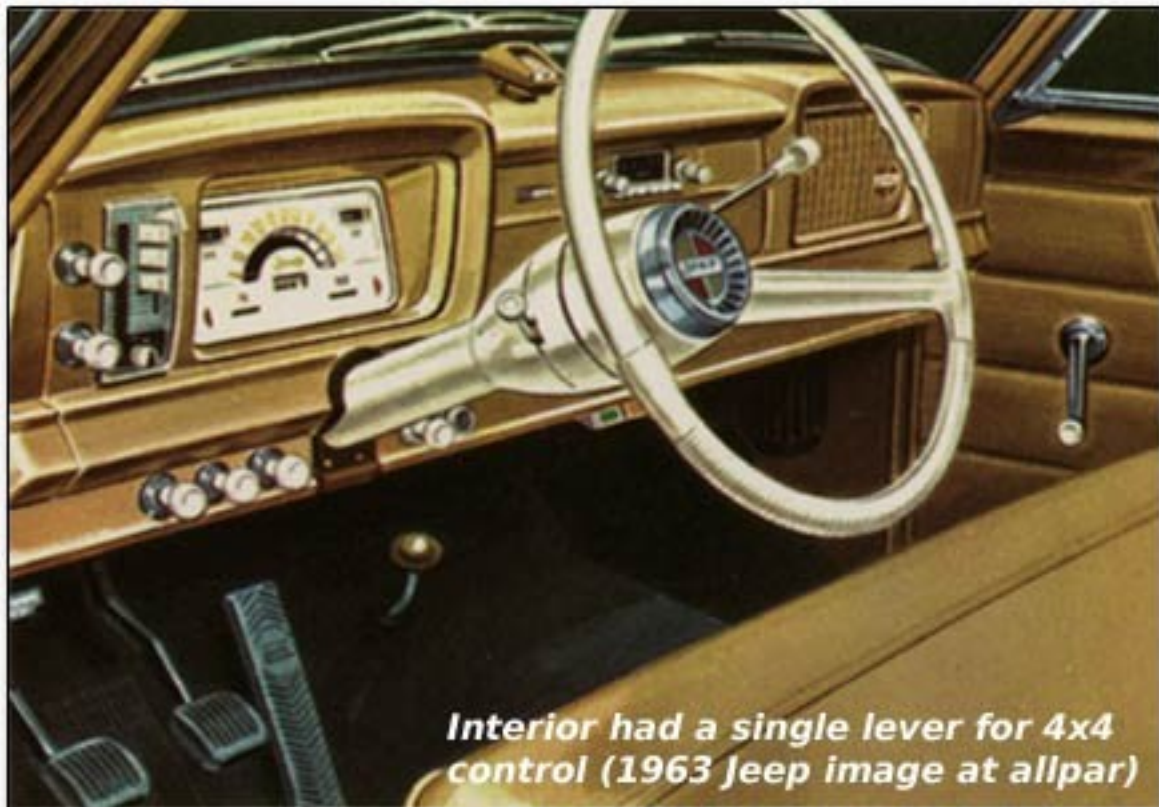


For 1964, buyers could get a lower-compression six with just 110 hp, but this engine did not last long.



1965 Jeep drawing: Wagoneer Custom Station Wagon (at allpar.com)

The 1965 Jeep Wagoneer was advertised as being “the only four wheel drive station wagon with the stylish appearance and luxury manners of a modern family car!” That was certainly true, at least in the United States; it could boast of variable-rate rear springs, servo-type drum brakes, and an optional GM automatic transmission, not to mention the usual power steering and power brakes. The four wheel drive control used a simple lever, without requiring a stop, and lit an indicator lamp when active.



The steering was improved for 1965 to cut driver effort. More significantly, a brand new 327 cubic inch “Vigilante” V8 was added, pumping out 250 horsepower (gross) at 4,700 rpm and 340 lb-ft of torque at a low 2,600 rpm. The V8 came with a 60 amp-hour battery, steel-backed bearings, hydraulic lifters, full

pressure lubrication, and overhead valves; it ran on regular gas. The Tornado Six was still standard.

Midyear in 1965, the new Super Wagoneer was added. It had the appearance which would be available to Grand Wagoneer buyers through to 1991. The two styles of Wagoneer would be sold side-by-side, with the “old” look continuing until the end of 1970.

After 1965, Jeep started to rationalize the product line; many different models were being sold, all with low volumes. For 1966, most rear drive Wagoneers were dropped. More unpopular models were dropped again in 1967; but a luxury model was added in 1968, making *two* Wagoneers selling at over \$6,000 (when you could buy entry level cars at \$2,000.)

<i>1970-1986: the AMC years</i>

AMC bought Kaiser-Jeep in 1970 but made few changes, other than dropping the traditional “base model” grille from the Wagoneers, giving them all the look of the high-end models. AMC would go through the Jeep line and winnow out slow sellers and unreliable parts for years, adding more popular

packages and raising the brand's sales; their efforts would culminate in the XJ Cherokee and, under Chrysler, the Grand Cherokee, replacing the Wagoneer. But that was far in the future.



1972 brought a moderate restyling, with color-keyed interiors, chair-height seats, new fabrics, and a “cleaner” exterior look. All Wagoneers got larger clutches and brakes, and higher-capacity models were available. Jeep advertised the 4.2 liter straight six as being the largest standard engine in the 4x4 wagon field, albeit not the most powerful. Optional engines were the 304 cid V8 and the 360. The six put out 110 hp (net) at 3,500 rpm and 195 lb-ft of torque at 2,000 rpm; the 360 V8 put out 175 hp (net) at 4,000 rpm, with 285 lb-ft of torque at

2,400 rpm. The 304, in between, was rated at 150 hp and 245 lb-ft of torque.

Even in 1972, nine years after the Wagoneer's launch, Jeep could claim one of the highest ground clearances in its class, coupled with the lowest entry and loading heights.

For 1973, AMC brought improved instrument panels with more padding, and more efficient oil and ammeter gauges. More exciting to Jeep enthusiasts was the debut of Quadra-Trac, a full time four wheel drive system, sold with the 360 V8 and automatic transmission; an optional low range unit was available.

The Jeep Quadra-Trac system was considerably more advanced than most competitors' designs; it used a unique, controlled-slip third differential to automatically distribute power between front and rear axles, minimizing the possibility of skids and loss of control. There was no need to engage hubs or shift levers. An optional low range was available for low-speed, high-power-demand situations.

1974 brought the new Cherokee, a two-door wagon version of the Wagoneer. The Wagoneer grille was modernized, and Quadra-Trac was made available to six cylinder buyers.

AMC used its own V8 engines in the Wagoneer, with a choice of the 360 or 401 cubic inch powerplants; electronic ignition was new for 1975, included in all vehicles. *Road & Track* took the 4,760 pound (as tested) truck, with the AMC 360, from 0-60 in 11.9 seconds; the quarter mile took 18.8 seconds with a trap speed of 75 mph. Gas mileage was 12 mpg in their tests. The truck had .583 g of lateral acceleration, and could stop from 60 mph in 185 feet, similar to many cars of the period.



The Wagoneer and Cherokee shared the same dimensions and wheelbase, but the Wagoneer had substantially better trim, including a woodgrain instrument panel.

Wagoneers were increasingly purchased by wealthy people who liked the rugged appearance as well as the comfortable, spacious interior; at least one insider claimed that dealers wanted Jeep to raise the price of the Wagoneer so it would increase its “snob appeal!” Had AMC executives done so, it’s quite possible the Jeep Wagoneer would have achieved the status of the Range Rover, while the Cherokee continued to sell with the aura of its more expensive brother.



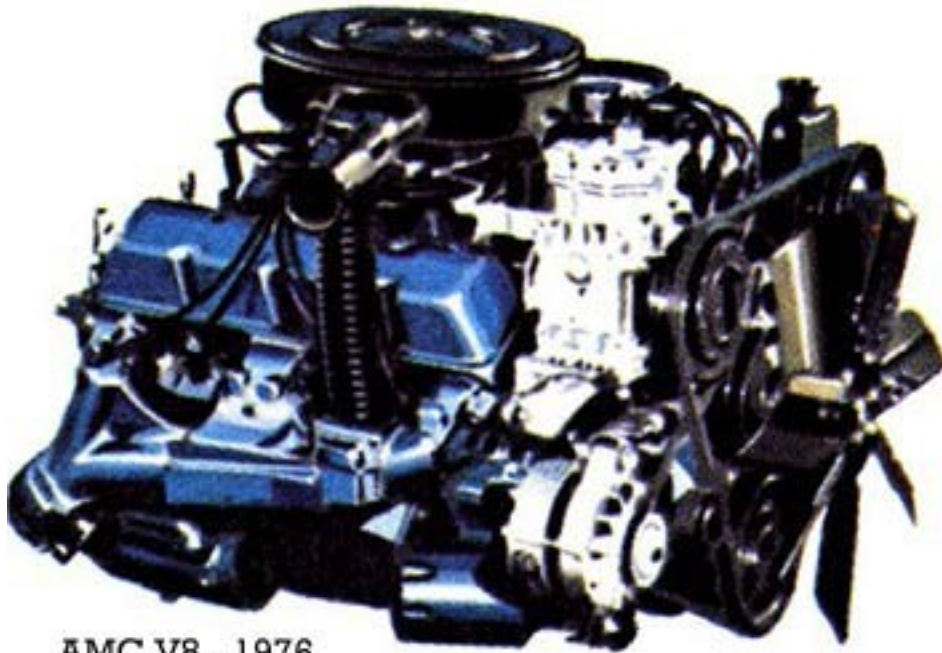
The Cherokee’s and Wagoneer’s features included a standard floor mounted shifter for the three-speed manual transmission, steel top and headliner, electronic ignition, full floating hypoid open end front axle, multi-leaf springs, a 22

gallon tank, roll-up tailgate window, front bucket seats, energy-absorbing steering column, day/night rear-view mirror, padded sun visors and dashboard, and folding rear bench seat. New for 1975 were quieter mufflers and an increased gross vehicle weight of 6,025 pounds.

1976 saw an upgraded frame with splayed side rails allowing more widely spaced rear springs for greater stability; stronger crossmembers and box section rail construction; new multi-leaf springs and shocks for a smoother ride; and new body hold-down mounts to minimize vibration and noise. The windshield washer was improved; and a new forward pivoting front passenger seat was added to help rear passengers get into the two-door vehicle.



1976 Cherokee-
Wagoneer frame
AMC drawing at allpar.com



AMC V8 - 1976

The base engine on Cherokee was the 258 cubic inch straight-six, but the 360 (with a two or four barrel carb) and 401 V8s were also available, and the three-speed manual could be upgraded to a four-speed with the 360 engines. (Wagoneer, as the luxury pick, was only available with a V8 and automatic.)

QuadraTrac™ automatic four wheel drive, made by Warner Gear, was only available with an automatic transmission (made by General Motors). As with the Wrangler, the Cherokee used recirculating-ball steering, a full floating hypoid open-end front axle, front and rear leaf springs, and a full frame. The QuadraTrac system cost just \$150 more than

the two-speed Dana 20 part-time 4x4 transfer case. The front axle was a Dana 44; GM (Saginaw) power steering was included. According to *Road & Track*, disc brakes were made standard in 1974, and the turning circle was slashed from 44 to 38 feet.

Options included the usual CB radio; AM/FM with quadrophonic sound (new for 1975); a center armrest; cargo area carpeting and insulation; electric window defogger (new for 1975, and only available with the power window option); luggage rack; power rear window; heavy duty springs and cooling system; 62 amp alternator and 70 amp battery; heavy duty shocks; rear Trac-Lok differential; tinted glass; free wheeling hubs; cruise control; tilt-wheel; front power disc brakes; power steering; AM radio; and various convenience features. A front push bumper, snow plow, front power take-off, and trailer towing packages were also available - as was an 8,000 pound winch.

The Jeep Wagoneer had standard features including a GM automatic transmission, power steering, power disc brakes, and an upgraded interior. The Quadra-Trac system was

standard, with a low range optional. The 360 two-barrel engine provided power even in base trim.



The Cherokee was a big seller by big-Jeep standards in 1976, with over 18,000 sold compared with 16,520 Wagoneers. That was far better than 1975, when nearly 13,000 Cherokees and under 10,000 Wagoneers were sold, but still nothing compared with Big Three sellers like the Duster and Nova. Times would change, favoring Jeep.

1979-1986

In 1977, both the standard and optional gross vehicle weights were increased for higher capacity.



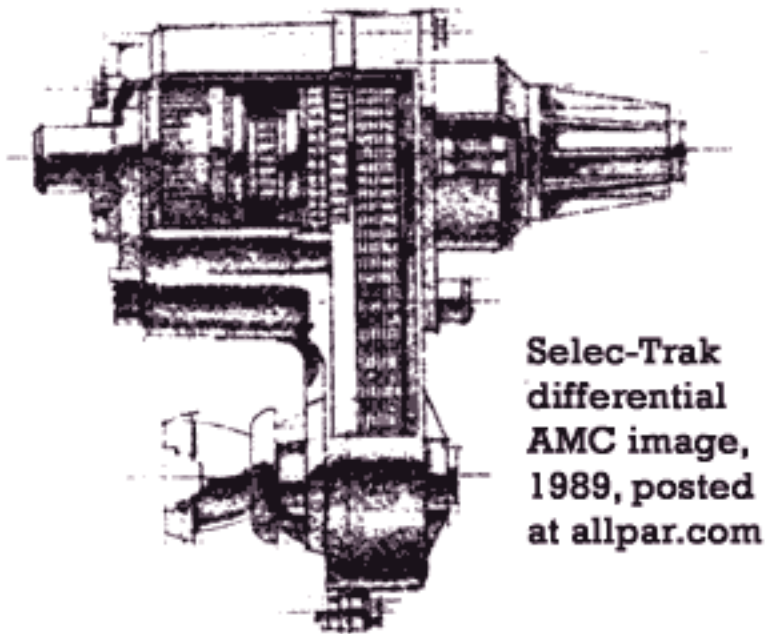
In 1978, a midyear special edition Wagoneer Limited was produced with a luxury interior, more sound insulation, and woodgrain exterior trim; a new Golden Eagle package was also added.

In 1979, the Jeep Wagoneer Limited was added to the top of the line.

1980 brought a delayed reaction to the fuel shortages of past years and re-increasing gas prices, with QuadraTrac getting viscous drives instead of cone clutches; many other drivetrain changes were made to conserve fuel and cut weight. This continued in 1981 with a lightweight, plastic grille, standard front air dam, and low-drag brakes. Selec-Trac was standard.

For 1982, new luxury editions named Custom Wagoneer and Wagoneer Brougham were added, and Wagoneer Limited was substantially upgraded with luxury equipment. Limited buyers got bucket seats with leather trim, a center armrest, and unique door panels; leather-wrapped steering wheel; extra thick carpeting; woodgrain overlay on the lower dash; wide woodgrain side and rear; roofrack; bright drip rail overlay; aluminum wheels (still 15 x 7); a tire upgrade; various moldings; standard air conditioning; a retractable cargo cover; power windows and locks; cruise; tilt wheel; FM stereo; the visibility group; electric remote control mirrors; bumper guards; six-way power front seats; and a rear window defogger.





1983 continued

with few changes; the Wagoneer was available only in the Brougham and Limited models. A 4.2 liter six or 5.9 liter V8 were available, both with two-barrel carbs; the V8 was not available in California; and automatic transmissions were standard. The Wagoneer Six was rated at 18/23 mpg, the V8 at 13/18 mpg.

The Cherokee was sold in two-door base, Pioneer, Chief, and Laredo models, with the standard 258 cid (4.2 liter) six or 360 V8, both carrying a two-barrel carb; gas mileage was 18/24 for the six, 14/20 for the V8 (presumably tested with the four-speed manual). The V8 was no longer available in California.

Based on Cherokee gas mileage, the "automatic transmission penalty" was roughly 1 mpg for the six and 2 mpg for the V8.

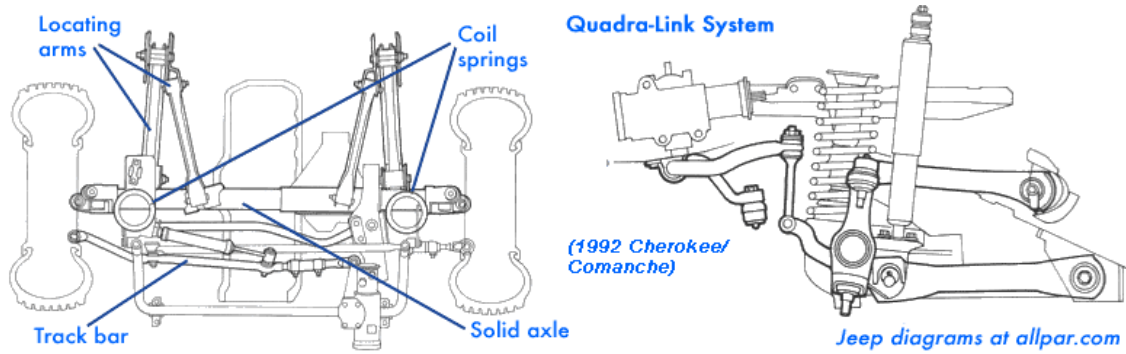


The XJ Wagoneer and traditional Grand Wagoneer





In 1984, a new line of downsized XJ-body Cherokees was introduced, and Wagoneer was made a trim level of this line. Jeep sales nearly doubled with the addition of the XJ series, which provided a good deal of room without the weight; it used traditional rear leaf-springs with a new front suspension. Dubbed Quadra-Link, the new XJ used coil springs with leading links and a track bar, to provide a combination of ruggedness off-road and a relatively smooth ride on-road, with decent cornering. The new XJ beat the Blazer and Bronco II in gas mileage and in horsepower-to-weight ratio, not to mention ground clearance, cargo room, seating, and number of doors. Part of the trick was their new “UniFrame” suspension — essentially a unit-body system where the frame was welded to the body shell to make one solid unit, saving weight and increasing stiffness.



Pulling a trick out of the [Plymouth Fury](#) book, Chrysler put the standard Wagoneer on the brand new Cherokee body, while keeping the old Wagoneer body for the Grand Wagoneer, body code SJ (Senior Jeep).



Thus, from 1984 onwards, Grand Wagoneer continued with its 1963 body, and a new grille; while Wagoneer shared the XJ

body with the mainstream Cherokee, a recipe for higher sales and profits. The trick would only end in 1991 when both Wagoneers were dropped.

In 1986, Jeep compared its products with competitors, putting up the XJ Wagoneer against the Buick Electra four-door wagon and Volvo Turbo Wagon. As one might have guessed, the Jeep beat both its competitors, though the comparison was made on items selected by Jeep — standard features (shift on the fly 4WD, radio, bucket seats, roof rack, system sentry, gas mileage, etc.). The Buick retailed for \$15,323, the Volvo for \$18,950, and the XJ Wagoneer for \$18,186. Of note was the gas mileage of the Wagoneer — with its gasoline four-cylinder and three-speed automatic, it matched the Buick (with a diesel V8) and Volvo (with a four-cylinder turbo and manual transmission), getting 18 city, 21 highway mpg vs the competitors' 16/23 and 17/22. Optional engines for the XJ Wagoneer at the time were the 2.1 liter turbodiesel and a troublesome 2.8 liter GM V6.



As for the Grand Wagoneer... large print declared, "Jeep Grand Wagoneer has no rival... why do you suppose it's the solitary entry in the full-size, 4-wheel drive luxury wagon class?"

1987-90 Jeep Wagoneers

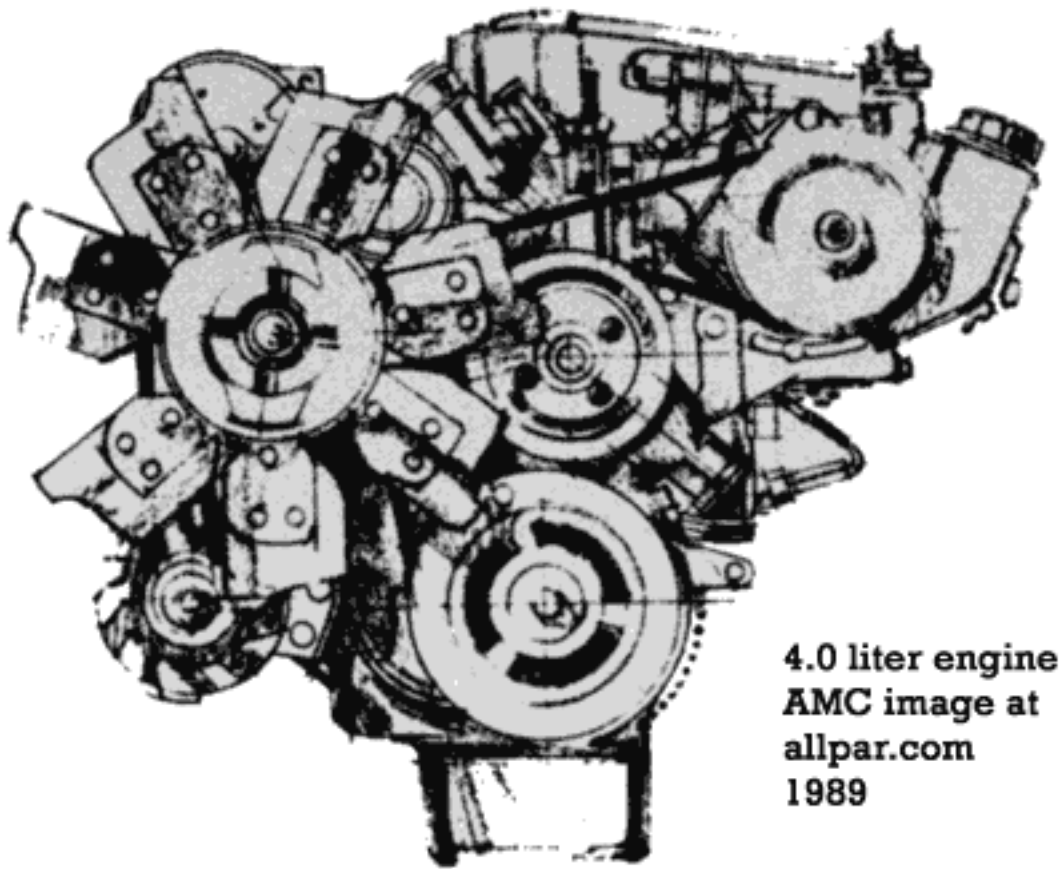


Chrysler took over AMC in 1987, purportedly to gain Jeep; they also gained the

AMC engineering system and Francois Castaing, thereby sowing the seeds of Chrysler's mid-1990s rebirth.

For 1987, the XJ Wagoneers got the new, high-tech [4.0 liter straight-six](#)— based on an old block, updated with state of the art heads, Renault-Bendix fuel injection, and electronic ignition — while the pricier, larger Grand Wagoneers got an old six cylinder (soon dropped) or the 360 cubic inch AMC V8, then producing just 144 horsepower and 280 lb-ft of torque, less than Chrysler's own V8s.

The old Jeep 360 didn't produce much more horsepower than the new 4.0 six, but it stayed in the Grand Wagoneer, presumably to avoid engineering costs for a vehicle whose days were clearly numbered. Buyers would get 16 mpg city, 20 highway in the new Wagoneer, but just 11 city, 13 highway in the new/old Grand Wagoneer. To be fair, the V8 had an extra thousand pounds or so to pull along (these gas mileage figures were rather different from those of 1983).



The excellent durability of the straight six must have made AMC engineers proud and Chrysler warranty adjusters happy. It was the most powerful engine in the Cherokee/Wagoneer's class, with 177 horsepower and 224 lb-ft of torque. The AMC four cylinder pushed out 121 horsepower and 141 pound-feet of torque - far more than the Chrysler 2.5 liter engine that was to appear in 1989, with 100 horsepower and 132 pound-feet of torque! Both used single-point electronic fuel injection.

Jeep Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer were only available with four doors and an four-speed automatic — made by Borg-Warner. The Grand Wagoneer continued its 1970s look and body; both had standard woodgrain sides (the Wagoneer had a delete option). Grand Wagoneer came with standard Selec-Trak four wheel drive, and room for six passengers, 74.5 cubic feet of cargo space (with rear seat folded).

For 1989, the XJ Wagoneer got new colors and 15 x 7 five-spoke cast aluminum wheels (standard on Wagoneer Limited). New standard features were bright dual power mirrors, fog lamps, and tachometer, formerly options. A new four-wheel antilock brake system was optional with four wheel drive and Selec-Trac. The Grand Wagoneer had color changes (inside and out), new sun visors with covered, lighted mirrors, a new overhead console, keyless entry, an optional tailgate window wiper/washer system. A new power window system using cables was introduced as a running change. The overhead console included map lights, keyless entry receiver, storage compartment, and compass/temperature display.

For 1990, both models got a new overhead console, new colors, and rear three-point seat belts; the Grand Wagoneer also got a flash-to-pass feature on the stalk headlight control, and side-marker turn signal flashes. A four-speed Borg-Warner automatic with full-time four wheel drive was standard for all Wagoneers — the newly retagged Limited and the Grand Wagoneer. Air conditioning was standard as well.

At this point, the Wagoneers were established as luxury items. For Grand Wagoneer, buyer loyalty was 60%; 58% of buyers were college-educated, and buyers had a *median* income of \$98,200 (that’s around \$160,000 in 2009 dollars). For Wagoneer Limited, the median income was the highest of any domestic model — \$106,500 (over \$173,000 for 2009).

	1962-65				1990	
Jeep Wagoneer Specs	(4 door)	1972	1975-76	1983	Grand Wagoneer	1990 XJ
Wheelbase	110	110	108.7	108.7	108.7	101.4
Length	183.7		183.7	186.4	186.4	165.3

Front Axle Capacity	2,500		3500 / 3215	3200		
Rear Axle Capacity	3,000		3540 / 3215	3200		
Rear Axle Ratio	4.09:1		3.07 - 4.09		2.73:1	3.55:1
Effective Brake Lining Area (in)	162					
Clutch Area (in)	100.5		106.7 5		none	none
Turning Radius (4x4)	44.6	44.4	38.4	37.7	37.7	35.7
Curb Weight (RWD)	3615 (4 door)		4,475		none	none
Curb Weight (4x4)	3758 (4 door)				4,499	3,453

Max gross vehicle weight	4200 (RWD) 4500 (4x4)	5,600 0	6,025	5975	
Cargo capacity			91 cu. ft.	95.1	74.5 71.8
Leg room (F/R)			45.0 / 36.0	41.6/37. 0	41.0 / 35.3
Head room (F/R)			39.5 / 36.0	38.0/37. 2	38.3 / 38.0

The High-Output (H.O.) 4.0 engine appeared in 1991 with a revised control system and head design. The intake ports on the head were raised 1/8" to give a straighter shot into the cylinders. Along with computer program revisions this added 13 hp to the engine, thus creating the 190 hp H.O. version that was used through 2002. A power sunroof was also added to Grand Cherokee for 1991.

There were no Wagoneers in 1992. Their replacement, the Grand Cherokee, would not arrive until the 1993 model year.

For the months in between, Jeep dressed up the Cherokee Limited. Fewer than 4,000 Grand Wagoneer had been sold in 1991; there are no records of how many Wagoneer Limiteds had left the lots.

The Wagoneer had lasted for well over three decades; the 1970s - 1990s version would frequently be seen in films and TV programs. By the time it ended, the Grand Wagoneer had the oldest unchanged body style of any car made in America — a sort of American Beetle.



Grand Wagoneer came back as a trim line on the Grand Cherokee for 1993 — and only for 1993. The Grand Wagoneer was a vehicle of another time; one could argue that there was

really only *one* Wagoneer, even if the label was attached to a Cherokee and, briefly, to a Grand Cherokee.

A new Jeep Wagoneer



Chrysler is planning a new Jeep Wagoneer for the 2013 model year. A cross between the successful new Grand Cherokee and the Durango, and possibly implementing changes made by [Maserati for their version of the Grand Cherokee](#), the new Wagoneer (or Grand Wagoneer) is said to look like a cross between the original Jeep Wagoneer and the current Dodge Durango. It would be sold at a level above the current Jeep Grand Cherokee, most likely starting out at roughly the price

of the Overland, and competing directly against Mercedes' version of the Grand Cherokee, the ML.

Both Wagoneer (which will retain its traditional WS body code) and the Maserati version will reportedly be built at the Jefferson Avenue plant, which currently assembles the Grand Cherokee and Dodge Durango.