

FROM THE INSIDE

The WG feels wider and the KJ narrower than you'd think, just going by their dimensions. Not much left legroom in either around their bulging transmission tunnels. Headroom is more generous in the Cherokee, but for all its rated load weight there isn't a lot of room to put stuff in the back.

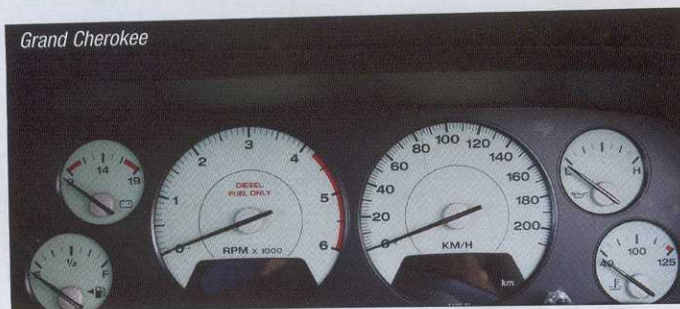
While the three petrol Grand Cherokees have different powerplants, all turbo-diesel buyers get the same engine. As you'd expect in a \$74+G chariot, the Overland has a stack of trinkets: auto pilot; electric sunroof, door locks, windows and pull-in heated side mirrors; overhead info display; speed- and rain-sensitive variable intermittent wipers (fixed variable at the back); tinted glass; airbags and convenience lamps all over the place; cushy leather seats, His 'n' Hers climate control and bright-adjustable make-up mirrors; auto-dim rear-view mirror; leather/ timber-rim steering wheel, 10-CD sound system; front and rear 12V

outlets; and pull-back cargo area cover. Not forgetting push-buttons that reset the right seat and side mirror and even radio stations, for not one but two drivers!

The Limited TD only misses out on the wood/leather steering wheel, but the Laredo has manual air-con, just the front power outlet, and no memory buttons or heated power-retracting mirrors. A real poverty pack.

The Cherokee doesn't have quite as much fruit. Even the Limited Edition has manual air-con, while the Renegade doesn't get auto pilot or the cargo blind. The Sport has fabric upholstery, and no overhead info display. But it is trendy, with lots of different plastic finishes and the nattiest doorhandles in captivity!

Coming from DaimlerChrysler's Austrian plant, the WG has an upmarket Euro feel. Nicely finished, and no rattles or squeaks. Not that the KJ's a claptrap, but "Built in Toledo" doesn't have quite the same ring to it.



Grand Cherokee & Cherokee CRDs

NEW VEHICLE TEST



Grand Cherokee



Cherokee

THE STORY SO FAR...

Jeep's been a bit slow on the uptake putting decent turbo-diesels into its line-up. Well you can hardly blame 'em – or the other US fourby makers for that matter. For years the Yanks had their 'gasoline' so damned cheap that even modern turbo-diesels didn't make a whole lotta sense. Hell, what can a TD do that a good ol' petrol big-block V8 can't? Okay, engine braking, but who needs it when you've got disc brakes as big as Texas?

That's all ancient history now. Petrol prices have been on the march in the US of A, to the point where those mutha-freakin' sparkplug V8s ain't so cheap to run any more. Not if you're talking weekends in Moab or the Catskills, anyhoo. Slowly but surely, turbo-diesels are coming out of the woodwork in the States. Maybe not for all the right reasons, but if the end justifies the means, who cares?

Mind you, the company bigwigs have taken their time getting the hang of what TDs are all about. Their first effort was a 2.5-litre indirect-injection four-pot in the old XJ Cherokee (the one with the bread-van body). Not a bad performer for its type and age, but no match for a modern direct-injection unit. Biggest problem was, like most small-bore turbos, low-rev turbo-lag, aggravated by manual-only gears.

In 2001 the XJ was replaced by the KJ. At the same time, the old TD was swapped for something more whiz-bang: twin cams, four-valves per cylinder, common-rail direct-injection and intercooler. A good thing on paper for a 2.5, but the turbo-lag and manual gearbox remained. Great for building up the left arm and leg muscles; not so great for tackling heavy traffic or going up and down hills.

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