

THREE-ROW KING

BY JOE SAGE

We've reported on Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer through concepts, then online reveals and presentations during the lockdown era.

We were among the first to see them in the flesh, at the TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo in October 2020, but that was just a walkaround, no drive time.

They were then entered in two of our regular drive comparos in fall 2021—the NWAPA Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year Awards (a.k.a. Mudfest, in Washington State in September), where the Wagoneer won Best Full-Size Luxury Utility; and at the Texas Truck Rodeo in October, where the Grand Wagoneer won Best Full-Size Luxury SUV plus the coveted overall Title Award, 2022 SUV of Texas.

Drive time at these is brief and in specially engineered conditions. You get to test the general feel and specific capabilities, but you don't spend

much time with features and settings.

Our first chance to really engage with the new family came in February 2022, during a week with this second-level-up-out-of-four (Series II) model of the upper-of-the-two families (Grand Wagoneer vs Wagoneer). And this time, we spent plenty of time with settings and interfaces. An unusual amount of time, actually, as we'll visit in a minute.

The first item of note—and some mystery—is that Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer are brought to market with a clear announcement that they are “not a Jeep.” They do not include the “J” word anywhere on their badging. They are their own division. Or brand. Or sub-brand. *Forbes* call it a chance to “not only move Jeep upmarket, but also provide the *foundation* for an entirely new sub-brand.” Manufacturer materials provided with our

vehicle call it “a premium extension of the Jeep brand.” Yet all other OEM materials are organized as separately as, say, Dodge and Chrysler.

But then there's that seven-slot grille. Bear in mind, Ram trucks carried vestigial Dodge crosshair grilles for years, but that was evolutionary, not decided at a new birth. The vehicle's sticker does not include Jeep in the title. But then it is named, about an inch below, at the top of the specs.

It's enough to make you think this has not been completely thought through—or maybe that's intentional, so they can read the public's reaction to this and proceed based on popular usage.

Timing is everything, and the Wagoneer pair may confuse a few people by having come out at about the same time as a new generation-five Jeep Grand Cherokee (in fact, the new three-row Grand Cherokee L came out first, then the Wagoneers, then the usual two-row Grand Cherokee). Our chart shows how the Jeep has grown, with its

	JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE		
	GEN 4	GEN 5	GEN 5 L
LENGTH / WHEELBASE ..(in).....	189.8 / 114.7.....	193.5 / 116.7.....	204.9 / 121.7.....
TURNING CIRCLE ..(ft).....	37.1-38.0.....	38.0.....	38.3.....
GROUND CLEARANCE ..(in).....	8.6-10.8.....	8.4-11.3.....	8.5-10.9.....
HEADROOM (F/2/3).....(in).....	39.9 / 39.2.....	39.9 / 39.4.....	39.8 / 39.9 / 37.3.....
LEGROOM (F/2/3).....(in).....	40.3 / 38.6.....	41.3 / 38.2.....	41.3 / 39.4 / 30.3.....
CARGO CAPACITY ..(cu.ft).....	36.3-68.3.....	37.7-70.8.....	17.2-84.6.....
WEIGHT.....(lb).....	4513-5356.....	4238-5045.....	4524-5279.....
TOW CAPACITY ..(lb).....	6200-7400.....	6000-7200.....	6200-7200.....

three-row in particular bridging the gap to the size of the Wagoneer. But they are quite different in build, the Jeeps being unibody SUVs, while the Wagoneers are built body-on-frame on the Ram 1500 platform. Everything's bigger, and a practical consideration is the notably higher tow capacity of the Wagoneers (only the bigger V8, as on ours, falls slightly below 10,000 pounds).

Feature interfaces and settings are always an adventure when we have something for just a few days. Size is one way to distinguish the Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer lineup. Finishes are another. And features are another, on which this one generated a massive amount of notes, summed up by saying that far too many specifics seem to have

been made overly clever, to the point of serious distraction and inconvenience. All are interface design judgment calls, though telegraphing high value for a high price seems to be the familiar goal. On a practical level, if we could change one thing overnight, it would be to change the screens from gloss to matte—these are used outdoors. On an interface level, we would change many specifics.

The Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer family inhabits an extremely valuable yet surprisingly narrow category ruled by GM's Suburban family. Ford had attempted to conquer this with the Excursion. Wagoneer is a well-grounded badge return, strong in heritage, mission and execution. This one has the goods and may well pull it off. ■

WAGONEER AND GRAND WAGONEER	
.....	214.7 / 123.0.....
.....	38.0.....
.....	8.3-10.0.....
.....	6.4L HEMI® V8.....
.....	240 amp.....
.....	471 hp / 455 lb-ft.....
.....	10.9:1.....
.....	8-spd auto 8HP75 w ERS.....
.....	4x4, opt 2-spd on-demand.....
.....	5960-6420.....
.....	9850-10,000.....

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLYWarren Truck Plant, Michigan
 ENGINE / TRANSSaultillo, Mexico / US
 BUILD / ROWSbody on steel frame / three
 ENGINE6.4L HEMI® V8
 ALTERNATOR240 amp
 HP/TORQUE471 hp / 455 lb-ft
 COMPRESSION RATIO10.9:1
 TRANSMISSION8-spd auto 8HP75 w ERS
 DRIVETRAIN4x4, opt 2-spd on-demand
 transfer case, Selec-Terrain, Selec-Speed
 DIFFERENTIAL.....electronic limited-slip
 RING GEAR DIAMETER.....10.2 in
 AXLE RATIOS.....(w 6.4L HEMI) 3.92:1
 SUSPENSION ..F/R: Quadra-Lift air suspension
 w semi-active damping, stblzr bar;
 +R: cast alum links (tension, compression,
 camber, toe), high strength steel spring link
 STEERING.....elec rack & pinion
 BRAKESelectronic pwr: F: 14.8x1.18
 vented; 2-piston pin-slider caliper;
 R: 14.76x0.87 solid; single-piston w EPB
 WHEELS22x9 polished alum / grey pockets
 TIRES285/45R 22X: Goodyear Eagle
 Touring All-Season/Performance
 LENGTH / WHEELBASE214.7 / 123.0 in
 GROUND CLEARANCE(air: Pos#2) 10.0 in
 APPR / BRKVR / DEPART ..(air) 25.0 / 22.0 / 24.0°
 TURNING CIRCLE38.0 ft
 HEADROOM (F/2/3).....41.3 / 40.0 / 39.0 in
 LEGROOM (F/2/3).....40.9 / 42.7 / 36.6 in
 CARGO CAPACITY27.4 / 70.9 / 94.2 cu.ft
 WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION6400 lb / 51/49%
 GVWR / PAYLOAD7700 / 1380 lb
 TOW CAPACITY(w bigger engine) 9850 lb
 FUEL / CAPACITYprem 91 octane / 26.5 gal
 MPG13/18/15 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$93,995
PAINT: Velvet Red Pearl-Coat, black roof.....	595
CUSTOMER PREF PKG: interior protection pkg by Mopar®, cargo tray, all-season mats.....	395
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	2000
TOTAL	\$96,985

2022 WAGONEER / GRAND WAGONEER LINEUP

WAGONEER	4x2.....	4x4.....
5.7L HEMI V8 w eTorque Hybrid Assist (392 hp)		
Series I	\$57,995	
Series II	67,995	\$70,995
Series III	72,995	75,995
GRAND WAGONEER		4x4.....
6.4L HEMI V8 (471 hp).....		
Series I	\$86,995	
Series II	93,995	
Obsidian.....	98,995	
Series III		103,995

