

CLASSIC DRIVER

Cars We Love: Jeep Grand Wagoneer

Lead

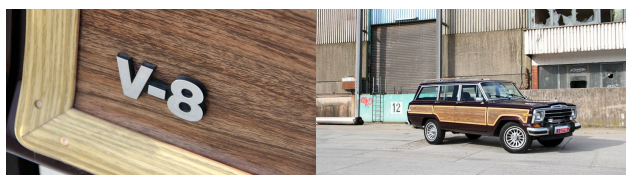
The Jeep Wagoneer inspired so much love that it continued to be built almost unchanged for 30 years. Hence we were surprised when we recently met the grande dame of all luxury SUVs and found that our photo car was only 23 years old...

Final Edition



The car shown here, an aubergine [Jeep Grand Wagoneer](#), is one of the last examples of this exceptional series of SUVs and was built in January 1991 – the last year of production of the official Wagoneer. It's not just today that the 'wood'-enhanced highway cruiser looks like a visitor from a different time zone – it must have seemed that way at the beginning of the 1990s, too. Nevertheless, market demand ensured that this visually and technically outdated SUV continued to be built over a period of many decades.

The first luxury SUV



At its launch in 1963, the Jeep Wagoneer was a sensation. SUVs were seen at that time as uncomfortable, truck-like utility vehicles with all-wheel drive – the Wagoneer, however, offered buyers the first 4x4 with luxurious amenities and a comfortable ride. The [Range Rover](#), Land Rover's response to the interest in large luxury SUVs, came seven years later. The technical highlights of the Jeep Wagoneer included a six-cylinder engine with overhead camshaft (later followed by V8 engines), power steering, automatic transmission and independent suspension.

Age with dignity



Over the decades, technology and comfort features were extended, although the basis remained almost unchanged. The concept of 'luxury 4x4' motoring culminated in the 1980 Grand Wagoneer version of the model, at a time when the Wagoneer had just survived Jeep's acquisition by AMC and still not lost market interest. AMC therefore freshened up the ageing SUV just a little, giving it a new dashboard with a revised grille and updated tail-lights. When [Chrysler](#) bought Jeep in 1987, they too changed almost nothing except the styling of the imitation wood.

No wonder that even (or especially) so young a model as that pictured here is today a coveted collector's item. For it has, despite the classic looks, every possible modern feature – including electric windows, electric door mirrors and seats, air-conditioning, central locking, immobiliser... who could say no to all that?

Photos: Jan Baedeker

Gallery

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