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• Roadside cover from £5.49 a month** We get to most breakdowns in 60 mins or less• Our patrols fix 4/5 breakdowns on the spot*At least 10% of new customers pay this for single-vehicle Roadside (Basic). ^Find the same cover cheaper on theaa.com within 7 days & we'll beat it by 20%. T&Cs here. BY ANDY ENRIGHTIntroductionThe late-shape Jeep Grand Cherokee has had some adjusting to do. Whereas the old model traded blows with the Range Rover as the plushiest 4x4 you could buy, the current car has seen the Lexus RX300, the BMW X5, the Mercedes M-Class, the Volvo XC90 and latterly the Porsche Cayenne and Volkswagen Touareg all eclipse its position, ensuring that competition is hotter than ever before. This market focus on new metal has helped used buyers because, to a certain extent, many customers have taken their eye off what made the Grand Cherokee such a hit in the first place and some notable used bargains are out there to be had. For little more than the price of a Suzuki Grand Vitara you can now find yourself behind the wheel of Jeep's finest.ModelsModels Covered:Second generation - 1999-to date (4.0 6cy St Wagon 5dr [Limited] / 4.7 8cy St Wagon 5dr [Limited, Overland] / 3.1TD St Wagon [Limited] / 2.7 CRD [Limited])HistoryAlthough the basic look remained recognisably Grand Cherokee, the 1999 revision to the range was pretty far reaching. The gas-guzzling 5.2 and 5.9-litre V8 were consigned to history, replaced by a more responsible 4.7-litre engine that was in any case usefully punchier than the outgoing 5.2. The 4.0-litre six-cylinder engine carried on much as before although power was boosted to 188bhp - up from a previous 174. The 3.1 turbodiesel was also carried over, although this was replaced in 2001 by a massively superior 2.7-litre CRD common rail unit.Other changes wrought during the 1999 relaunch included modernising the automatic transmission, offering more sophisticated all-wheel drive systems and styling the cabin to bring it up to the sort of standard that demanding European customers required. This was in addition to the mild exterior restyle that saw a bigger passenger cell, more luggage room due to relocating the spare wheel, the fitment of clear-lens headlamps and a shapelier grille. The Overland V8 flagship model debuted at the end of 2001 featuring an uprated 4.7-litre engine. 60th Anniversary limited edition models were launched in 2001.What You GetJump inside the second generation Grand Cherokee and you'll find more luxury, thanks to greater headroom in the wider cabin. Legroom is also increased, though taller drivers may still complain of a lack of rearward seat travel. Remember too that, unlike many of its rivals, the Jeep doesn't have the option of a third row of seats.Unlike the Discovery, it's not primarily aimed at the family market - which may explain the relative lack of oddment holders and storage cubbies around the cabin. Still, as far as equipment levels are concerned, you'll want for nothing with virtually everything you can imagine fitted to the leather-lined 4.0-litre petrol and 2.7-litre CRD diesel models, though the V8 betters them with a 10 CD autochanger and a power sunroof.Jeep have also got around to putting fingertip controls for the excellent stereo on the steering wheel - or, more accurately, behind it. It's the final touch to a smartly styled display spoiled only by the imitation wood liberally placed around the dashboard.It's the clever little touches that will stick longer in your mind, however. The infra-red rays that read your body temperature, then set the climate control to the correct level. The removable load platform that provides an ideal picnic base. The his-and-hers remote entry keys that memorise each driver's individual favourite settings for the seat, mirrors and radio. The electric rear tailgate glass that retracts so that you don't have to lift open the tailgate when you want to chuck in a bag full of sports gear.What You PayPlease fill in the form here for an exact up-to-date information.What to Look ForAs with any used 4x4, check for signs of heavy off road use. Few Grand Cherokees will have done much more than climb a grass verge but you can never be too careful. Oil leaks and worn rear shock absorbers have been known.Replacement PartsAs you might expect for a car of American origin, parts are not particularly cheap. However, there is a well-established dealer network so it should be reasonably easy to track spares down. A clutch assembly is around £400. Front brakapads are around £40, a full exhaust about £700 (with the catalyst) and an alternator around £300.On the RoadAll models feature decent performance, with the uprated 4.0-litre making rest to 60mph in 10.9s on the way to 117mph. If you like your speed, however, don't drive it after trying the potent V8 (8.3s and 122mph) which blasts past slower-moving traffic with all the assurance of a BMW 540i or an AMG Mercedes. There's a penalty to pay at the pumps, however, with a 13.6mpg urban return (or 18.1mpg on the EC combined test cycle). The 4.0-litre isn't much better. The diesel reaches 60 in 11s and goes on to 113mph; the 29.1mpg combined use consumption figure should bring a smile to your face when refuelling. If consumption concerns you, try the 2.7CRD diesel, an engine 20% more fuel efficient than the 3.1TD it replaced, averaging an impressive 29.1mpg. Shaving two and a half seconds from the 3.1TD's sprint to sixty, the Grand Cherokee CRD manages the benchmark in 11 seconds and can comfortably cruise at over 110mph where conditions permit. The five-speed automatic transmission will be familiar to those who own an E or M-Class Mercedes, so no complaints on that score then. The less said about the clattery 3.1TD the better.These figures are comparable with the competition, however, and in most cases there you can't enjoy all the performance because the car's likely to be swaying through the corners like a Channel ferry on a choppy sea. This is an area in which the latest Grand Cherokee excels. Despite what the marketeers will tell you, it's hard to imagine that anyone would mistake it for a luxury saloon on anything but a motorway. Having said that, it's now probably best of breed in terms of the 4x4 market with rolls and wallow exceptionally well suppressed.So then, we have a car perfectly suited to buyers looking to make the jump from standard saloon to off roader: a vehicle described by one magazine as "more of an estate car on tiptoe than a fully-fledged 4WD off-roader." You can understand the sentiment but, in reality, statements like this do Jeep's engineers an injustice. No estate car could perform the kind of feats off road that the Grand Cherokee takes in its stride.Much of this raw ability comes courtesy of Quadra-Drive, a 4WD system that drives the car forward even if only one wheel has grip. The importers fit it as standard on all UK Grand Cherokees and having tried it, I can understand why. Tough off road sections that would have rivals sliding and scrabbling are performed without drama in the Jeep. It's only when you get out afterwards that you realise what has been achieved.OverallAlthough the second generation Grand Cherokee is a good deal plusher than its predecessor, the competition took a huge swing upmarket, effectively demoting the Jeep from a Range Rover rival to a Discovery challenger. From being in a class of two, the Grand Cherokee suddenly found itself flailing in a market where many rivals were offering similar propositions. Visit the training ground of a Premiership football club in 1997 and it would have been awash with Grand Cherokees. These days it's more likely to be BMW X5s and Lincoln Navigators that sit cheek by jowl with the usual Ferraris and Porsches. Whilst you'll no longer be the apex predator in the 4x4 pool, at least this means that used, low-mileage Grand Cherokees are an affordable way to land an excellent luxury sports utility vehicle. Bargains are rare in this sector, but this could be one of them. Insurance costs are also higher than you would have to pay on a contemporary Land Rover Discovery, but servicing costs are pretty much par for the course for a big 4x4.However, if you need unscheduled maintenance, prepare for a big bill. Although Warranty Direct tells us labour rates at Jeep dealers are only a little above average, average bills for Jeeps are among the highest of all makes', even above those for Land Rovers.Because this is a genuine off-roader, a diesel engine is the obvious choice. However, the only diesel worth considering - the 2.7-litre unit from Mercedes - didn't arrive until the end of the 2001. It's far better than the thirsty, unrefined 3.1-litre unit that it replaced.On older cars, you're better off with the 4.0-litre petrol engine. Not only is it better than the diesel, it's also cheaper to buy, although you may be put off by the fact that you'll struggle to manage 20mpg. Even so, it's good enough to make the 4.7 V8 seem a pointless expense.The impressive levels of equipment across the range mean you'll never feel short-changed with a Grand Cherokee, and early cars came only in lavish Limited trim. This remains the trim to choose on any age of car, even over the Sport and luxury Overland (with leather seats and CD multichanger), which joined the range later. The Jeep Grand Cherokee is a popular vehicle. Read on to learn whether this popular vehicle should top your to-buy list this year.This article applies to the Jeep Grand Cherokee WJ (1994-2004). You may have been told mileage is important when it comes to purchasing a used vehicle. However, this is not entirely true. How much mileage a car is less important than how well it has been maintained through the years. And the only way to determine if a vehicle has been properly maintained is to check its service history, which you can do by visiting a local Jeep dealership or certified mechanic. Here is your no-nonsense guide to buying a Jeep Grand Cherokee WJ. Buying Advice The Jeep Grand Cherokee is a reliable vehicle that can achieve well over 300,000 miles on the road (easily). Because it is one of the few vehicles on the market today that can be purchased with 100,000+ miles already on the odometer and still last, it is universally considered a good buy. To protect your investment, it's recommended that you don't wait to make needed repairs. Keep an eye out for your head gasket and transmission, as well as have your vehicle tuned up every 30,000 miles for optimum performance. Figure 1. 1994 Jeep Grand Cherokee. Engines The 1994-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee has two main available engines: 4.0L "Powertech" I6, which achieves 15 MPG city/21 MPG highway (2WD) and 15 MPG city/20 MPG highway (4WD) and has a towing capacity of 5,000 lbs. 4.7L "Powertech" V8, which achieves 14 MPG city/19 MPG highway (2WD and 4WD) and has a towing capacity of 6,500 lbs. Both engines perform well and achieve relatively equal gas mileage. The 4.0L is durable and easy to repair. The 4.7L, on the other hand, offers incredible power and features a stronger transmission with a greater towing capacity. Figure 2. This is a 4.0L engine. Best Aftermarket Upgrades Aftermarket upgrades are some of the easiest ways to improve the look of your Jeep Grand Cherokee WJ. The most common exterior modification is a lift. Sizes include 0-3", 4", 4-6" and long-arm suspension. Prices range from \$500 to \$1,500+. Aftermarket steel bumpers and tow hooks are also highly popular with Jeep owners. Figure 3. This is the kind of height a lift can achieve. Common Questions What are the best ways to rejuvenate a Jeep Grand Cherokee? It's recommended that you tune up your Jeep every 30,000 miles to improve gas mileage and extend the life of your vehicle. How does gas mileage differ between the 4.0 WJ and the 4.7 WJ? The gas mileage is pretty even between the 4.0L "Powertech" I6 and the 4.7L "Powertech" V8. You won't notice a significant difference when comparing the two vehicles. What options are available? The 1994 Jeep Grand Cherokee WJ comes with a number of options, including but not limited to, skid plates, rear tow hooks, upcountry suspension and rain sensing wipers. Packages include: Towing package and smokers' package. Common Issues Cracks in the Head Gasket If your head gasket cracks, you'll immediately notice a change in the way your vehicle performs. Engine misfires as well as oil and coolant leaks are common symptoms of a cracked head gasket. Because your engine is likely to overheat whenever your vehicle is in use, it's recommended that you have a cracked head gasket replaced immediately to prevent further damage. Rusted Engine As your engine ages, it can become corrosive and worn down. Rust can play serious havoc with your cylinders, making it necessary to either remove the rust, if possible, or replace your engine altogether. Check engine mount nuts and bolts for rust regularly, and keep your engine block clean using a professional-grade engine cleaner. Broken Gas Cap A broken gas cap can cause your check engine light to display on your dashboard. Use an on-board diagnostics tool to check your vehicle codes if the problem does not go away after replacing the cap. Related Discussion Cherokee Buyers Guide - CherokeeForum.com