

CONQUEROR

We could personally get by in a two-seater, but always seem to fall for full-size seven-passenger SUVs. Maybe it's our years loading a band into a sedan. Maybe it's for magazines by the ton. Maybe it's the times six other people do come along. Maybe it's all the years driving full-size 4x4 pickups, crossed with A/C for Arizona's climate.

Dodge Durango is equally at home in refined or rough conditions, much like its five-passenger cousin Jeep Grand Cherokee, and similarly offers performance models—the 5.7L HEMI R/T and upcoming 6.4L HEMI SRT 392. Durango was born during the DaimlerChrysler days and quietly shares some basic bones with the Mercedes-Benz GLS, but at a fraction of purchase, service and parts costs.

Now built in Michigan, the first Durangos were built in Newark (New-ark), Delaware, appropriately the home of equally tough and talented George Thorogood. We flew east to Newark (New-erk), NJ recently, with lots of miles and lots of people on

our agenda over four nights. For our time there, we scored an all-wheel-drive Dodge Durango GT.

At \$37,495 RWD (\$40,095 AWD), the GT falls dead center in a lineup that runs from the \$29,995 SXT to the \$40s for Citadel and R/T models, soon also to \$62,995 for the 2018 Durango SRT 392. GT hits a value point—leather (just not Nappa like pricier models), lesser audio but with upgrades available, and so on. Ours stickered at \$49,065, at which point our eye might wander to the R/T with 5.7L HEMI. But FCA is masterful at model, feature and price positioning within a tight value range.

Do you need a big 4x4 on a beautiful fall weekend back East? For *Escape From Newark Airport*, it was a winner. We picked up our Durango and were immediately in the real world shown below. The first few miles took an hour, but the Durango conquered all. And we were soon miles away, autobahn-cruising on wooded Interstates.

Durango (and smaller Journey) sales are booming. We're not surprised. Dodge Durango belongs on anyone's short list. ■ —Joe Sage

