

HOT JEEP IN THE CITY

BY JOE SAGE

In the face of a burgeoning class of SUVs and crossovers, Jeep Wrangler remains pretty completely in a class all its own—somebody in the market for a Wrangler does not typically have a lot they'll cross-shop. That leaves any wish list items within this Category of One unfilled until they're filled by Wrangler. On the wish list for some has been a diesel—notably the highly successful and popular EcoDiesel engines that have made their way into Ram pickups over the last year or two. Now the EcoDiesel has made it to Jeep Wrangler.

We had already spent a couple of solid days with the new Jeep Wrangler EcoDiesel, on-road and off-, at its launch drive in southwest Utah (see full feature in our previous issue). You get a flood of information and experience at these, but what you don't get is much quiet reflection nor much serendipity, as these have two drivers per vehicle and are very carefully planned and executed. Even just a few weeks later, a full week's drive back home is always both reinforcing and enlightening.

As it turns out, we had the new Wrangler diesel for not the usual one week, but two, due to a disturbance in the Force with another scheduled vehi-

cle. We had the Jeep during the end-of-year holidays, which almost included an all-seasons, all-conditions, rocky, snowy, muddy road trip—but instead we stuck around town, also useful.

We moved to the diesel Jeep straight from an electric performance utility, knowing everything would be completely different in the Jeep, right? Yes and no. Both have degrees of utility, both differing in form and function from the most standard SUVs. Both have elements of fuel economy, arrived at different ways. Both exhibit unusually high degrees of power, again for different reasons. And both surprise their unsuspecting fellow travelers. One pricey crossover driver made a point of triumphantly pulling up next to us at a succession of red lights, gunning his engine as though he knew he could beat big boxy us. With 442 lb-ft of torque, however, we just had to leave him in the dust.

Maximum off-road chops—a given. Vastly improved highway manners—proven at the Wrangler JL launch in Tucson and again at the Wrangler EcoDiesel launch in Utah. Competitive strength in the mean streets of the northeast Valley? That's the latest checkbox checked. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	3.0L 24v 90° turbo diesel V6, compacted graphite iron block, aluminum alloy heads; chain-driven DOHC, hydraulic lash adjusters w roller fingers followover; common rail 29,000 psi, solenoid injectors; compression ratio 16.0:1; max 4600 rpm
HP/TORQUE	260 hp / 442 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	8HP75 8-spd-overdrive auto
ELECTRICAL	ALT: 180A; BATT: 650 CCA mntnce-free
DRIVETRAIN	4WD
TRANSFER CASE	RUBICON: NV2410R Rock-Trac part-time 4.0:1 low, 4.10 axle
AXLES	RUBICON (F/R): 3rd-gen Dana axles, Tru-Lok electronic locking, 3.73 ratio
SUSPENSION	F: solid axle, link coil, leading arms, track bar, coil springs, stblzr bar (electr sway-bar disconnect on Rubicon). R: solid axle, link coil, trailing arms, track bar, coil springs, stblzr bar
SHOCKS	RUBICON: high-pressure gas-charged monotube w MTV tech and hydraulic rebound stop
STEERING	14.3:1 electro-hydraulic pwr, 3.13 lock2lock
TURNING CIRCLE	(4-door) 39.4 ft
TOW CAPACITY	3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	ultra low sulfur diesel / 18.3 gal
MPG .....	.....tbd
BASE PRICE	\$41,795
PAINT: Bikini Blue Pearl-Coat .....	.....295
LEATHER .....	.....1495
TRAILER & HEAVY DUTY ELEC GROUP .....	.....795
LED LIGHTING GROUP .....	.....1045
8.4" PREMIUM AUDIO GROUP .....	.....1695
DUAL-TOP GROUP .....	.....2295
SAFETY GRP: rear park asst, blind spot, cross-path.....	.....895
ADVANCED SAFETY GRP: adptv cruise w stop, adv brake assist, full-speed forward collision warn plus.....	.....795
STEEL BUMPER GROUP .....	.....1395
SOFT TOP WINDOW STORAGE BAG .....	.....75
8-SPD AUTO w hill descent, tip start .....	.....2000
3.0L V6 TURBO DIESEL , 18.3-gal fuel tank .....	.....4000
REMOTE PROXIMITY KEYLESS ENTRY .....	.....495
DESTINATION CHARGE .....	.....1495
TOTAL	\$60,465

