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The opening pages of

1987 Jeep Grand Wagoneer Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1987 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1987 only · Grand Wagoneer (SJ), Toledo-built

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1987 only. This guide does not cover other years except where differences from 1987 are explicitly noted.
- **Engine:** 360 cu in (5.9L) V8 — 140 hp; 280 lb-ft (Hagerty)
- **Transmission:** TorqueFlite 727 automatic; Selec-Trac.
- **Transfer case:** Selec-Trac (NP228 / NP229 by specification).
- **Axles:** Dana 44 front and rear (Hagerty).

1. Manufacturer history: Jeep

The SJ Wagoneer ran from 1963 to 1991 without a major body-panel change — Brooks Stevens' box outlived the company that designed it. For 1984 the Wagoneer and Cherokee names moved to the new downsized XJ platform, and demand for the big SJ kept it in production under a new name: Grand Wagoneer — the renamed flagship, carrying the specification that had defined the earlier Limited. Chrysler bought AMC in 1987 and, wisely, changed almost nothing but the build quality. In total 101,637 Grand Wagoneers were built (Hagerty). The Grand Wagoneer became the original luxury SUV in the years the market was inventing the idea — and its signature restoration task has nothing to do with metal: the woodgrain.

2. Model history: where 1987 sits

The Grand Wagoneer ran 1984–91 on the SJ platform that dated to 1963: one body, leaf springs, Dana 44s, the TorqueFlite 727, and Selec-Trac. The changes that matter are Wagoneer-trim-specific, not platform changes: the 1984 renaming and the Custom experiment, shift-on-the-fly Selec-Trac for 1985, the 1986 interior/exterior refresh, V8-only from 1987 under new Chrysler ownership, the 1988 sunroof/clear-coat/stereo additions, the 1989 console/keyless-entry/rear-wiper equipment step, carryover 1990, and the Final Edition 1991. This guide covers one year only; the register in Section 3 states exactly what this year changed.

3. What is unique about the 1987 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

- V8-only from 1987: there is no six-cylinder 1987 Grand Wagoneer. A claimed one is an engine swap or a misdated 1986 — the VIN's engine character settles it.
- The ownership year: Chrysler buys AMC/Jeep in 1987 and largely leaves the car alone (MotorTrend) — 1987 is an AMC-designed, Chrysler-sold Grand Wagoneer, and both facts belong in its file.
- Door panels are updated (Hagerty) and the woodgrained sides are revised (marque record) — the year's changes are cabin and appliqué, not metal.
- The Wagoneer name turns 25 in the 1987 model year (period histories) — the design being celebrated is the one this car still wears.

Year-change register — 1987 vs. the year before:

- NEW: 360 V8 as the sole, standard engine; updated door panels; revised woodgrain sides.
- DELETED: the 258 six-cylinder option — engine choice ends.
- CHANGED: manufacturer ownership (AMC → Chrysler, 1987); build-quality and anti-corrosion improvements follow under Chrysler.
- CARRIED OVER: the 1986-refreshed body and dash; 727; Selec-Trac; Dana 44s.

4. Technical restoration data — 1987 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

4.1 Specification table (1987)

Item	1987 specification
Transmission	TorqueFlite 727 automatic; Selec-Trac.
Transfer case	Selec-Trac (NP228 / NP229 by specification).
Axles	Dana 44 front and rear (Hagerty).
Brakes	Power front discs, rear drums.
Trim / packages	Door panels updated for 1987 (Hagerty); minor revision to the woodgrained sides (marque record). Chrysler purchase of AMC (March 1987, range guide; mid-1987, marque record) — the cars continue essentially unchanged, with improved assembly and anti-corrosion measures following under Chrysler (MotorTrend).
Production	Per-year production not stated in the sources consulted — none printed (run total 101,637).

Engines (1987):

Engine	Rating	Notes
360 cu in (5.9L) V8	140 hp; 280 lb-ft (Hagerty)	THE ONLY ENGINE from 1987 — the six is dropped and the 360 becomes standard for the rest of the run (Hagerty; Consumer Guide: 'a return to standard V-8 power (1987)').

4.2 VIN and serial decoding

Grand Wagoneer VINs are 17 characters throughout, but the FORMAT changes inside the run. For 1984–86 (Hagerty decode): 1 = USA, J = Jeep, C = multi-purpose vehicle; the fourth character is the engine (C = six-cylinder, N = V8); then transmission/transfer case (J = automatic, column shift), body style 15 (four-door Wagoneer), GVW code U (6,200 lb); the ninth character is the check digit; the tenth is the year letter; T = Toledo; then the six-digit serial. For 1987–90 the same layout continues with its year letters. For 1991 the format is restructured: the third character becomes 4, the fourth is GVW (G = 5,001–6,000 lb), fifth S (Grand Wagoneer line), sixth 5 (Grand series), seventh 8 (4-door SUV), eighth 7 (5.9L V8), check digit, year letter, P (Toledo #2), serial. Year letters follow the standard sequence E=1984, F=1985, G=1986, H=1987, J=1988, K=1989, L=1990, M=1991 — see the corrections file on the Hagerty text's internal conflict. The VIN lives on the firewall (upper driver's side), the door-jamb sticker, and the dash plate visible through the windshield. On a vehicle whose body never changed, the VIN is the model year.

4.3 Year-correct procedures and finishes (1987)

- Six-cylinder claims on a 1987 die at the VIN plate: decode the engine character before any valuation discussion.
- Interior work: door-panel parts are 1987-specification; earlier panels are not the same trim job.
- **Torque:** factory values vary by fastener and year. Confirm torques against a Jeep shop manual (TSM) for 1987 before final assembly. This program's sources do not publish a verified 1987 torque table, so none is printed — a borrowed number would be worse than none.

4.4 Rust-prone areas — where to look first

Inspect in this order. SJ rust decides these restorations:

1. **Floor pans** — lift the front carpet; water channels there and sits (Hagerty). Original, intact floors say more about a Grand Wagoneer's life than any other single check.