

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1990 Jeep Grand Wagoneer Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1990 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1990 only · Grand Wagoneer (SJ), Toledo-built

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1990 only. This guide does not cover other years except where differences from 1990 are explicitly noted.
- **Engine:** 360 cu in (5.9L) V8 — 140 hp / 280 lb-ft class (Hagerty general rating)
- **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 1990 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 1990 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

- An honest carryover year: the marque record states the late years through 1991 were marked only by new paint colors — this guide prints the verified 1990 specification (the full 1989 equipment set, V8-only) and claims no change it cannot source.
- A 1990 is identified by its VIN year letter (L) and its paint code, not by any body or equipment cue — every dating cue on a 1990 is documentary.
- Road-test standing held to the end: period testers continued to praise the Grand Wagoneer as a first-rate off-roader into 1990 (Consumer Guide history).

Year-change register — 1990 vs. the year before:

- NEW: paint colors only (marque record) — no mechanical or equipment change verified for 1990.
- CARRIED OVER: the complete 1989 specification — 360 V8 only; overhead console; keyless entry; rear wiper; sunroof option; redesigned A/C compressor.
- IDENTIFICATION: VIN year letter L; 1991's restructured VIN format has NOT yet arrived.

4. Technical restoration data — 1990 Jeep Grand Wagoneer

4.1 Specification table (1990)

Item	1990 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	The full late equipment set: overhead console, keyless entry, rear wiper, optional sunroof, clear-coat paint. Late model years were 'marked only by new paint colors' (marque record).
Production	Per-year production not stated in the sources consulted — none printed (run total 101,637).

Engines (1990):

Engine	Rating	Notes
360 cu in (5.9L) V8	140 hp / 280 lb-ft class (Hagerty general rating)	The only engine — carbureted to the end.

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 (1990)

- Date a claimed 1990 from the VIN and paint code alone; any '1990-only feature' claim should be treated as unverified until a factory source is produced.
- **Torque:** factory values vary by fastener and year. Confirm torques against a Jeep shop manual (TSM) for 1990 before final assembly. This program's sources do not publish a verified 1990 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.
2. **Rocker panels and the rear-quarter 'dogleg' ahead of the rear wheels.**