

More Than 60 Years of Jeep® Brand Heritage is Inherent in the 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee

August 17, 2004, Auburn Hills, Mich. -

When pinpointing what is special about the all-new 2005 Jeep® Grand Cherokee, some things are readily apparent.

The vehicle has a new design, improved ride and handling capabilities, new features – like the optional 5.7-liter HEMI® V-8 engine – and enough upscale amenities to make many *luxury* cars envious.

And yet, what is perhaps most special about the 2005 Grand Cherokee is something that is not readily apparent. It's an intangible ingredient that no other vehicle in its class can claim: the heritage of Jeep.

"The heroic heritage of Jeep stretches back more than 60 years," said Jeff Bell, Vice President – Jeep. "It's a heritage built on freedom, adventure, mastery and authenticity. Those are the core values of every Jeep vehicle we design and build. The 2005 Grand Cherokee embodies that rich heritage in a modern, sophisticated package."

The 4x4 military "Jeep" of World War II – praised by GIs and generals alike for its ruggedness, dependability and go-anywhere capability – is the starting point of the Jeep family tree.

The 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee traces its lineage to a major branch of that tree, beginning with the 1946 Jeep Station Wagon, manufactured by the Willys-Overland Motor Corporation. The 4x2 Jeep Station Wagon was notable for being the first all-steel wagon. It was powered by the famous "Go-Devil" engine used in the military Jeep vehicles. The Jeep Station Wagon was taller than today's station wagons, with a height of 72.75 inches. (By comparison, the 2005 Grand Cherokee is 67.7 inches in height.)

The 1949 Jeep Station Wagon landed in showrooms with a new grille – eight slots instead of the 10 slots on the '46 model. The big news, however, was that 1949 was the first year for the four-wheel drive Jeep wagon.

The next major milestone leading to the Grand Cherokee was the 1963 Jeep Wagoneer. Introduced in two- and four-wheel drive versions, the Wagoneer is considered the first true sport-utility vehicle, even though that term was not commonly used until the 1980s. The Wagoneer's car-like interior and comfort, its ruggedness, and four-wheel drive capability made it a unique vehicle in its day.

Just a few years later came the 1966 Jeep Grand Wagoneer, staking its claim as the first luxury SUV. It was a limited edition 4x4 with such features as a padded vinyl roof with chrome roof rack, power steering and brakes, tilt steering column, contoured bucket seats and power rear tailgate. The engine was the four-barrel, 327 "Vigilante" V-8 with 270 horsepower. The Grand Wagoneer was "built like a bank vault," according to a reviewer at the time, and "...it looks just as much at home in the parking lot of the most posh country club as it does next to a prairie camp fire."

Jeep reignited the luxury SUV segment spectacularly on Jan. 7, 1992, at the North American International Auto Show. That day, an all-new 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokee was driven through a glass window at the Cobo Convention Center in Detroit.

The '93 Grand Cherokee was the first sport-utility vehicle equipped with a driver's side air bag. It had the highest horsepower, at 190, in its class. It was also the first SUV that used the environmentally friendly R134A refrigerant. Most importantly, and true to its heritage, the 1993 Grand Cherokee set new standards for on-road ride, handling and comfort in a sport-utility vehicle.

The second generation Jeep Grand Cherokee, the 1999 model, offered new features that put even further distance between it and its competition. Among them were:

- The Quadra-Drive® four-wheel drive system that provided progressive, speed-sensing torque transfer, which kept the vehicle moving with minimal traction.

- A new steering system with repositioned linkages for better feel and response throughout all speed ranges. The turning circle was reduced by one foot.
- An all-new electronically controlled transmission produced smoother shift and improved fuel economy.
- A new refined front suspension offered a smoother, more car-like ride with stiffer and stronger control.

The 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee grows an important new branch to the Jeep family tree. While it resembles the 1993 and 1999 models, readily apparent are the differences and the improvements. The 2005 Grand Cherokee has a new, more athletic design, a more luxurious interior and upscale amenities, three new full-time four-wheel drive systems, two new engines, two new transfer cases, an all-new suspension, rack and pinion steering, and an all-new five-speed automatic transmission. Equally as important as the hardware is the heritage of the Jeep brand.

“Jeep is one of the most recognized brand names in the world,” said Bell. “It is a brand that people know and trust because Jeep vehicles have more than six decades of go-anywhere, do-anything capability and technological innovation. The 2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee is another proud example of that heritage.”

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