

## The Jeep Compass

by Ian Lynas

The Jeep Compass is a compact SUV set to compete in one of the most competitive sectors of an expanding market where sales account for 7% of the total market. Jeep recently celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a wide range of new products, including an all-new Grand Cherokee, are already entering Western European markets.

The Compass is the first new generation Jeep to offer two-wheel drive versions and it has been designed to appeal to a wide audience.



By making two wheel drive versions available it puts it within reach of hatchback owners who want to move up. With no great need for four-wheel drive, they desire styling, image and the practicality of a SUV.

No, Jeep is not forsaking four wheel drive, far from it, but what they do offer is capable and affordable four wheel drive versions.

The Compass gets a redesign inside and out to appeal to a wider audience. High equipment levels, affordability, interior flexibility and economy, with a sophisticated design, revised chassis,

advanced new line-up of engines and a completely revised cabin all make for an attractive package.

With the Compass Jeep intend to capture new customers to the brand, people who previously may have felt that owning a Jeep was way beyond their means.

The fact is the range is very competitively priced and on price beats off a bunch of very stiff competition. Stretching from £16,995 - £23,995, there is a Compass to suit the budget.

There are four trim levels, with 4x4 Limited and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary versions on sale now and the entry-level Sport and Sport+ versions will join the range in August. There will also be a choice between three different engines, two petrol and one diesel. These have four power outputs and offer significantly improved performance and economy over the engines they replace.

The Compass has always been able to deliver the performance of an SUV combined with the price, handling and fuel economy of a compact car. Now with an improved drive quality and finish as I discovered when I tested one recently the newcomer does represent very good value for money.

Safety and a high specification level are on a par with much larger SUVs. Every model in the range has automatic climate control, apart from the Sport which features

manual air-conditioning. There are padded bucket seats, covered in leather with accent stitching in the Limited and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary models, premium cloth in other versions. A six-way power adjustable driver's seat and heated front seats are standard in the Limited and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

All models feature chrome rings surrounding the air vents, while illuminated cup holders in the centre console emphasize the feeling of quality already given by the leather wrapped handbrake and steering wheel.

The driver looks at LED backlit gauges in the instrument binnacle and holds a new Jeep steering wheel. This adjusts for rake and features integrated controls that allow operation of the sound system, cruise control and hands free phone.

Sport and Sport+ models feature a Media Centre CD player and MP3 compatibility, while the Limited and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary add a six CD system.

All models come with four speakers and an audio jack for connecting MP3 players. Owners of Sport+ models and above have a USB socket and can connect their mobile phones and use them hands free with Uconnect Bluetooth.

The majority of sales are expected to be the new Mercedes-Benz 2.2-litre CRD turbo diesel engine. This comes either with 134bhp or as a high output 161bhp version.

The petrol engines have a capacity of either two or 2.4-litres and are Chrysler's adaptable World Engines. The two litre petrol engine comes with a five-speed manual gearbox while the diesel cars all feature a smooth shifting six-speed manual and the 2.4-litre is the only engine in the range available with the CVT2 Continuously Variable Transmission.

The 2.4 petrol and 2.2CRD high output engines both feature Jeep's Freedom Drive I, a full-time active four-wheel drive system featuring a locking mode that gives owners reassuring performance in low traction conditions.

With regard to two-wheel drive versions, many of Jeep's legendary attributes are retained. There is up to 209mm of ground clearance, which gives the Compass an ability to ford water that's up to 279mm deep.

Stylish and chunky the new Compass is bound to win a number of new friends for Jeep.