

¡Detrojito Mojito!

BY JOE SAGE

We did a double take when a friend in Michigan asked whether this was “a real Jeep”—a question sometimes asked of, say, a Renegade or Compass, with the answer typically invoking their Trail-Rated Trailhawk models. But this one was easy, as real as it gets: a Wrangler. Two-Door. Rubicon. Trail-Rated. With rock rails, skid plates, disconnecting sway bar, 4.10 rear end, 33-inch tires on 17-inch wheels, the works. As real as it gets and as real as it ever was, only consistently better. (And its vivid Mojito! Green is perfect for red rocks.)

She had owned a Jeep Wrangler some years back, when they were less refined. But creature features and technologies added since then do not subtract—they simply add comfort and safety for the daily drive. And that was the kind of driving we were doing for a few days after FCA’s “What’s New 2020” event at Chelsea Proving Grounds wrapped up—mostly urban and suburban duty, from farmlands near Chelsea to Ann Arbor, then to Detroit’s northwest suburbs, downtown Detroit’s inner ‘burbs, then back to the airport a few days later.

Four-Door sales are now about 75 percent of the Wrangler total, so a short-wheelbase Two-Door was a special treat in town. Usually, we’d have one of these while navigating the tightest rock crawls (see our launch feature on the all-new

Wrangler JL outside Tucson, in our JanFeb 2018 issue). In this case, we were navigating hotel parking lots and highway construction barrels and traffic cones (known locally as the Michigan state tree and state flower, respectively), and we loved the smaller Jeep’s maneuverability.

A cousin told us the roads were much worse than usual this year (it was still early summer, with most repairs ahead), but in the Jeep Wrangler, we barely noticed and we didn’t care. For a Wrangler Rubicon, the pavement of Detroit was child’s play. The ride is firm on broken concrete, as intended, but that’s more than made up for by the tight-turning urban mobility of its 96.8-inch wheelbase.

This top-capability off-roader—see sidebar for suspension, drive, brake and clearance specs—has had much added in our sample, even leather bucket seats, Uconnect navigation and 552-watt, nine-speaker Alpine audio with all-weather subwoofer. Our options brought the \$38k Wrangler above \$50k, but you could knock three grand off with a manual transmission and 3.6L Pentastar V6 (with a bit more horsepower but a bit less torque), and if it would feel more real-Jeepish to you without so much urban civility, you could also shave off some electronic driver assist.

This was a great cruiser for our urban Michigan overtime, and we vowed that next time, we’d head into the north woods. In Arizona, it’s a better formula still, with smoother roads in town but the most rugged terrain even more readily at hand. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY PLANT	Toledo, Ohio
BUILD	ladder-type frame, steel and aluminum body
ENGINE	2.0L 16v I-4 direct-inj eTorque turbo, chain-driven DOHC, alum block/heads
HP/TORQUE	270 hp / 295 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10:1
TRANSMISSION	8-speed automatic
TRANSFER CASE	Rock-Trac: 2HI, 4HI, neutral, 4LO
DRIVE / AXLE RATIO	part-time 4X4 / 4.10
SUSPENSION	F: solid axle, link coil, leading arms, track bar, coils, stblzr bar, electr sway-bar disconnect, high-pres gas monotube shocks, hydral rebound stop; R: solid axle, link coil, trailing arms, track bar, coils, stblzr bar, high-pres gas mono shocks, hyd reb stop
STEERING	electro-hydraulic power
BRAKES	F: 12.9x1.1 vented, 2" twin-piston floating cal; R: 13.4x.55 solid, 1.88 single-piston floating caliper
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	166.8 / 96.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R 2/2)	41.2 / 35.7 in
WHEELS / TIRES	17x7.5 / LT285/70R17C on/off-road
TURNING CIRCLE	34.5 ft
APPROACH / BRKOVER / DEPART	44 / 27.8 / 37°
GROUND CLEARANCE	10.8 in
WEIGHT (two-door, 2.0L, auto)	4175 lb
TOW CAPACITY (two-door)	2000 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	18.5 gal
MPG	23/25/24 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$38,045
INDIV OPTIONS:	leather bucket interior (1395); heated seats-wheel, remote start (995); trailer tow group (795); LED lighting (995); 8.4" Uconnect premium audio-nav group (1595); rear park assist, blind spot, cross-path (895); adaptive cruise, brake assist, collision warning (795); steel bumpers (1295); floor mats (150); window storage bag (75); 8-spd auto w hill descent (2000); 2.0L eTorque engine (1000); Sunrider soft top (595)
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$52,120

