

OZ ROAMER

**JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LAREDO
WINNER OF THE OZROAMER
2013 4WD UNDER \$60,000 AWARD**



OZROAMER 2013 AWARDS

by Rob Fraser



Ever since Jeep released its latest version of the Grand Cherokee in 2011 it has been a revelation. Here we have an American 4WD that has legendary off road capability combined with a powerful and economical diesel motor packaged in a stylish body.

The MY 2014 Laredo has a host of external enhancements including new bi-xenon HID headlamps with signature LED daytime running lights (DRLs), new wheels designs, larger tail lamps with LED lighting, a larger and more aerodynamic rear spoiler, new bumpers and a re-sculpted tailgate that offers greater visibility and a host of detail styling changes. It does however retain Jeep's classic seven-slot grille albeit a little shorter.

Grand Cherokee Laredo exteriors are identified by body-colour side mirrors and door handles. The grille receives a chrome headlight treatment, while the rear fascia features the new signature tail lamp design. Laredo models ride on standard twin-spoke-design five-spoke 18-inch alloy wheels finished in Satin Chrome.



When you first sit inside the Grand Cherokee Laredo you immediately feel comfortable. The heated, 8 way electrically adjustable front seats also have 4 way adjustable lumbar support. The leather wrapped steering wheel is height and reach adjustable, thick rimmed and delightful to use. It houses the controls for managing radio, cruise control, telephone and voice commands. The Laredo also has paddle shift controls, again an unnecessary addition in my opinion.

Tall drivers could use a little more slide but overall it's a comfortable driving position. Note that the foot brake gets in the way especially as the left foot has limited space.

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In front of the driver, the dash has two large dials and a new 7-inch user-configurable multi-view display, with colour TFT liquid crystal technology, in between. All are clear and easy to read. Controls for MFD and Uconnect etc are on the steering wheel. Navigation, speed, audio and fuel economy info, as well as useful information provided by on-board Jeep systems, such as Selec-Terrain modes, can all be displayed in the 7-inch screen, keeping the driver's eyes – and attention – closer to the road.

The centre stack houses the new 8.4inch Uconnect Infotainment system. Features include a 40GB hard-drive, Voice Command⁽⁶⁾ and media player audio jack, Uconnect™ iPod1 or smartphone, and Bluetooth® compatible. The standard sound system is more than adequate.

Rear passengers are well catered for with adequate head, shoulder and knee room unless there is a tall driver. There is plenty of boot space and with the 60/40 rear seats folded flat there is an enormous area available.

The heart of the Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo is the combination diesel engine and Quadra-Trac 4wd system. The 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesel engine produces 184 kW at 4,000 rpm with 570 Nm of torque at 2,000 rpm. This power is delivered through a ZF 8 speed automatic. This new 8 speed transmission provides smooth gear changes, greater economy and performs faultlessly both on and off road. Together with the powerful diesel motor the Jeep presents a formidable combination

Jeeps Quadra-Trac II is a two-speed transfer case that uses input from a variety of sensors in order to determine tyre slip at the earliest possible moment and take corrective action. When tyre slippage is detected, as much as 100 percent of available torque is instantly routed to the axle with the most traction.

The all-new Selec-Terrain traction control system lets customers choose the setting for the optimum experience on all types of terrain. This feature electronically coordinates up to 12 different powertrain, braking and suspension systems, including throttle control, transmission shift, transfer case, ASTC and ESC. Quite frankly it is fantastic..

Off road on outback dirt roads the jeep is awesome. This is a fantastic outback tourer. In the rougher stuff its ability surprises, although it shouldn't with its heritage. It looks like a soft road AWD however it performs like the off road warrior it hides beneath its stylish exterior. The suspension soaks up corrugations and while there is some overhang, rocky sections don't present a problem, nor does steep slippery sections. On sand the Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo simply glides over the dunes thanks to the prodigious torque.

One thing that is noticeable is the amount of feedback through the steering wheel. It lets you feel in control at all times. In addition to the feedback is the variable assistance that allows ease of manoeuvring in tight situations.



JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LAREDO V6

\$56,570 RDAP

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Model	Laredo V6
Model Price	\$56,570 RDAP
Engine	3.0L CRD V6
Drivetrain	4WD 8 speed Auto
Power	184 Kw @ 4,000 rpm
Torque	570 Nm @ 2,000 rpm
Safety	4 Star ANCAP
CO2 Emissions	198 g/km
GVR	3 ½ Star
Economy	7.5 L/100km (ADR comb)
Tow Capacity	Max 3500 kg
Tow Ball Rating	350 kg
Servicing	TBC
Warranty	3yr/ 100,000 km with full roadside assist



Standard safety features include ESC, Electronic Roll Mitigation (ERM), ABS with off road calibration, ASTC, Brake Traction Control System (BTCS), Trailer-sway Control (TSC) and front-seat passenger seat-belt pretensioners.

The Grand Cherokee Laredo now offers upgraded Forward Collision Warning with Crash Mitigation, Adaptive Cruise Control, ParkView rear back up camera with dynamic grid, ParkSense park assist system and new Selec-Speed Control with Hill Ascent Control and Hill Descent Control, assisting the driver when climbing and descending steep grades

Other standard safety features include seven airbags; advanced multi-stage driver and front passenger, front seat side airbags, side curtain airbags for front and rear occupants, driver knee airbag and active head restraints that deploy in the event of a rear collision.

Towing with the powerful, torquey V6 Diesel is a breeze with 3500Kg capacity and standard Trailer-sway Control (TSC). Add the optional Quadra-Lift suspension and it gets better. With a 350Kg tow ball rating the Jeep in diesel format becomes one of the premier towing vehicles. We have towed caravans, boats and camper trailers and with all the Laredo took them in its stride.

Buyers of the 4X4 entry level Laredo will be surprised at the value component of features for not a lot of money. As a 5 seater vehicle it doesn't have the bulk of some of the larger 4WD vehicles but still performs as well if not better both on and off road, throw in top of class towing and the Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo V6 Diesel is a worthy winner of the 4WD under \$60,000 category for 2013.

All up the Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo V6 Diesel is a superb 4WD that is as comfortable on city streets as it is on the track to Broome. In fact I would love to take one to Broome. At this price level there really isn't any competition.



What's Good:

- Drivers comfort
- Sophisticated Selec - Terrain
- Value for money

What's Not:

- Left leg room for driver
- Foot brake
- We had to give it back

Overall OzRoamer Rating: 90/100

Behind the Wheel	9	Practicality	9
Comfort	9	Fit for Purpose	9
Equipment	9	Towing Ability	10
Performance	8	Off Road Ability	9
Ride & Handling	9	Value for Money	9