

NEW AND USED VEHICLE REVIEWS

These brief assessments of each make and model 4x4 are to be used as guides only; particularly when evaluating used vehicles. The models covered are true off roaders, with low-range gearing and high ground clearance.

We've also included modifications you'll need to make if you intend to do much off-roading. Not included in these sections are bars, bush tyres, deep-cycle backup battery power, fridges, racks and winches, which are covered in the vehicle modifications section.

SMALL WAGONS

Jeep Wrangler



The 'square rigged' Jeep preserves traditional styling, with coil-sprung ride and an ultra-low-g geared Rubicon option. Payload and space are limited, but the Wrangler can tow a camper. The diesel is the best engine.

Previous Models

Wranglers haven't changed much over the years, so a used one can be a good buy.

Bush Modifications

The Wrangler is low-slung, so a set of taller coils is necessary, along with matching shock absorbers. Being a part-time 4x4 wagon the Wrangler can benefit from a rear-axle self-locker, ideally matched by a driver controlled front locking diff.

Jeep Cherokee

The latest model sits lower than the previous shape, so off-road ability is worse, but there's more room inside. Engine choices are the same as for the Wrangler, so the diesel is the pick.



Previous Models

The older-shape Cherokee would be our pick, over the current model.

Bush Modifications

The Cherokee is low-slung, so a set of taller coils is necessary, along with matching shock absorbers.



Mitsubishi Pajero Three-Door

Unlike the three-door Prado, the Pajero has less towing capacity than the five-door (2500kg vs 3000kg). The new diesel is powerful and drives a package that includes all-independent suspension, traction and stability control and an optional rear diff lock. Excellent vehicle.



Previous Models

No previous three doors.

Bush Modifications

All Pajeros can benefit from a suspension height increase around 50mm, with matching shock absorbers.

Suzuki Jimny

The Jimny replaced the Sierra and Australian Suzuki dealers are still wondering why, because the market lacks a farm-oriented small 4x4.

The Jimny's tarted-up look doesn't make it match the new breed of small soft-roaders.

Previous Models

Buy a Sierra, if you can find one.

Bush Modifications

The Jimny is low-slung, so a set of taller coils is necessary, along with matching shock absorbers.



Suzuki Grand Vitara



This is the best small 4x4 wagon on the market – better than all the soft-roaders, on and off road.

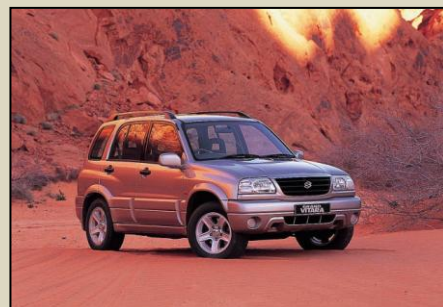
The petrol and diesel engines perform strongly, but where's the diesel auto?

Previous Models

The Grand Vitara has been a great on and off road vehicle since its inception.

Bush Modifications

The Grand Vitara can be given a slight lift, to improve ground clearance.



Toyota Prado Three-Door

The 2010 Prado is a re-skin of the old model, with carry-over mechanicals and additional features including traction and stability control and a reversing camera on all models.



The SX Prado three-door has almost identical equipment levels to five-door GX, with an additional 500kg towing capacity, for a total towing capacity of 3000kg.

The ZR has the same advanced safety option as the five-door Kakadu Prados have always been expensive, but the pay-off comes at trade-in time.

Previous Models

No previous three-doors were offered.

Bush Modifications

A suspension height increase of around 50mm is called for, along with matching shock absorbers.