

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2023 Jeep Grand Cherokee Trailhawk 4xe

MSRP: \$60,260 (Grand Cherokee 4xe) As Tested: \$75,355 (Grand Cherokee Trailhawk 4xe)



Trailhawk rejoined the Jeep Grand Cherokee lineup in 2022. The most dirt-loving, trail-busting member of Jeep's senior series, Trailhawk debuted with a choice of either conventional or plug-in hybrid power. Jeep is expanding its commitment to electrification in its 2023 lineup. The company's 4xe plug-in hybrid system is now available optionally on Grand Cherokee 4xe, Overland and

Summit trim levels, and is the only mode of propulsion offered on Trailhawk.

The reasons for the shift towards electric are simple (more power, less emissions, better mileage) even if the technology is not. The 4xe system combines a turbocharged, 2.0L four cylinder engine with two electric motors, a 400-volt battery pack and an 8-speed automatic transmission. The combined output is 375 horsepower and 470 lb.-ft. of torque. The system is capable of 25 miles of electric-only range, and has an EPA rating of 56 MPGe. Maximum towing capability is 6,000 lb. on Trailhawk.

Trailhawk is the most capable trail rider in the Grand Cherokee lineup. I've done my share of off-roading over the years, and while I've not had the Trailhawk hybrid off pavement, it's equipment roster is a laundry list of hard core hardware, including the Quadra-Drive II 4x4 system with two-speed transfer case and a 2.72:1 low-range gear ratio, a 47.4:1 crawl ratio, up to 10.9" of ground clearance and 24" of water fording capability. Angles of approach/breakover/departure are 35.7/22.3/30 degrees respectively. Of course, on road is where most SUV's will spend most of their lives – even specialty models like Trailhawk – and it



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer

handles paved driving duties quite capably. I found the hybrid power system to be not as smooth as the conventionally powered versions I've driven, but there's no denying the capability here. Zero to sixty times are estimated to be in the low six second range, and the engine easily settles into a comfortable cruising attitude at highway speeds. Three drivetrain modes are offered (Hybrid, Electric, e-Save) as well as five terrain modes (Auto, Sport, Rock, Snow, Mud/Sand) to adjust settings to suit your driving conditions.

Grand Cherokee Trailhawk offers a comfortable cabin; nicely finished, with room for adults in both rows. Cargo capacity is generous: 37.7 cu.-ft. behind row two and 70.8 behind row one. Up front, system controls are generally in easy reach, with secondary switchgear embedded in the steering wheel, for easier access. The Uconnect5 infotainment system has a 10.1" display screen. The system is Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatible. Trailhawk has the rear ¾ blind spots typical of SUV's. Blind spot and cross path detection are standard across the Grand Cherokee 4xe range. Speaking of visibility, both a digital rear view mirror and a surround view camera system are available on Trailhawk. The former lets you see what's directly behind you, even when the rear window is blocked by passengers or cargo. The latter gives you a bird's eye view of the vehicle, which is particularly useful when parking in tight quarters.

Conventionally powered versions of the fifth generation Grand Cherokee have a base MSRP of \$40,595. The plug-in hybrid versions start at \$60,260; that number is offset currently by an available, federal tax credit of up to \$7,500. Trailhawk targets 4xe hard core off-road enthusiasts seeking serious capability, coupled with the latest, plug-in hybrid powertrain technology.



A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.