

# 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.

## MEDIUM WAGONS

### Hummer

What can we say? It isn't a real Hummer, but a bodywork exercise on an old Chev ute platform. An



orphan five-cylinder petrol engine, cramped interior, poor payload and towing capacity, leaf rear springs and so-so fit and finish. Don't.

#### Previous models

Thankfully, none

#### Bush Modifications

The Hummer can be fitted with front and rear locking diffs.

### Jeep Grand Cherokee

Inputs from the Daimler Chrysler days include a brilliant diesel engine and auto transmission.

#### Previous Models

Always honest performers, Grand Cherokees pre-Daimler suffered from quirky fit and finish problems.



#### Bush Modifications

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



## Kia Sorrento

The pre 2010 Sorrento is probably the best value of the Korean mid-wagon offerings and performs reasonably on and off road. The 2010 model is based on the Hyundai Santa Fe and has no low-range gearing.

### Previous Models

Early Sorentos were OK and can be good used deals.

### Bush Modifications

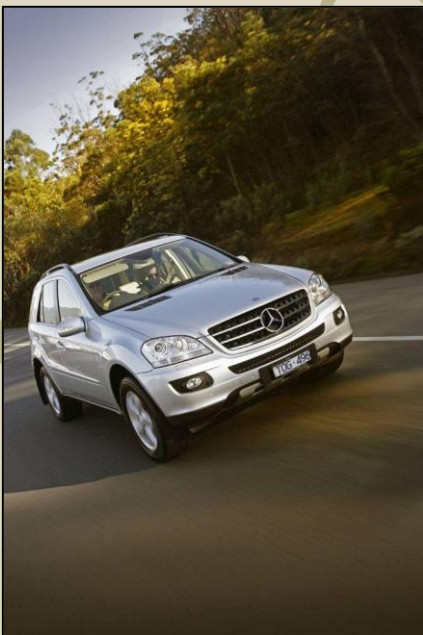
There are limited after-market bits for the Sorrento, but taller coils and matching shock absorbers are needed.



## Mercedes-Benz M-Class

The M-Class, fitted with the off-road package that includes height-adjustable air suspension and low-range gearing, is very useful on and off road.

The diesel V6 is a knockout and couples to a seven-speed auto.



### Previous Models

A well-serviced five-cylinder ML270 makes a good used purchase.

### Bush Modifications

There are not many after-market bits for the M-Class, but the ML270 can benefit from a suspension height increase.

## Mitsubishi Pajero

A better on and off road wagon than the Prado, the Pajero has never sold as well as it should have.

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.



### Previous Models

A used diesel Pajero is a great basis for a bush tourer.

### Bush modifications

Driver controlled locking diffs are great additions to older Pajeros that lack traction control and an optional rear diff lock. All Pajeros can benefit from a suspension height increase around 50mm, with matching shock absorbers.

## Nissan Pathfinder



This Euro-built wagon is excellent value for money and should have sold better than it has.

The suspension needs tuning for suppleness and much-needed ground clearance.

### Previous Models

Pathies have always been excellent value for money and are very reliable.

### Bush Modifications

A suspension height increase of around 50mm is needed front and rear, with longer shock absorbers to match the suspension height change.



## Porsche Cayenne

If you've got the bread, why not?

VW based, but it has that magic shield on the bonnet.

The two Turbo models and the new diesel are mind-blowing.

### Previous Models

A used Cayenne can be a good value for money buy.

### Bush Modifications

You're not seriously going to take your Porsche into rough country, are you?

## Range Rover Sport



The Sport bodywork sits on a shortened Disco 4 chassis and is superior in the bush, thanks to better belly clearance.

The new V8s are sensational, but even the diesel V6 lopes along very well.

### Previous Models

The original Sport would be a good used buy.

### Bush Modifications

Bush tyre availability for 19 and 20 inch wheels is the limiting factor.



## SsangYong Kyron and Rexton



The live rear axle Rexton and independent-rear Kyron aren't bad medium wagons, but need suspension work to improve handling and off-road clearance.

Diesel 2.0 and 2.7-litre sizes are offered.

## Previous Models

New breed.

## Bush Modifications

Suspension height, rate and damping need changing, but there are limited bits available.



## Toyota LandCruiser 76 Series

A shortened Troopy chassis, with different front and rear wheel track, minus one fuel tank and fitted with a squeeze 25-year-old body is saved by its glorious single-turbo V8 diesel. Air bags have just been made an option, but there's still no ABS, let alone traction control. Very expensive.



## Previous Models

Old Troopies are the nearest.

## Bush Modifications

Toyota 76 Series rear leaves sag quickly when loaded, so an after-market suspension is essential. The factory-fitted diff locks give excellent traction, but a pair of driver-controlled diff locks can be fitted to those that don't have factory locks, which cannot be retro-fitted.

## Toyota Prado

The 2010 Prado is a re-skin of the old model, with carry-over mechanicals and additional features. Pricing is high – especially for top spec' VX and Kakadu models.

Prados have always been expensive, but the pay-off comes at trade-in time.



## Previous Models

Expensive used proposition, but the Prado is one of the best 4x4 wagon investments around.

## Bush Modifications

GXL Prados have no traction aids other than a weak rear LSD, so a set of driver controlled diff locks is a good addition. A suspension height increase of around 50mm is also called for, along with matching shock absorbers.

## VW Touareg

The Touareg has a brilliant chassis, with optional height-adjustable air suspension and a choice of great diesel engines.

The drawback is bodywork aimed at big-bonnet style, rather than practical interior space. Good towing machine, though.



### Previous Models

A used Touareg should make an excellent bush-towing vehicle.

### Bush Modifications

Taller coils are needed on steel-spring Touaregs.