



2008 JEEP LIBERTY KK

Text by Will Morgan of JeepBrokers.com. Photos by Will Morgan and Chrysler Media Services.

In 2002, Jeep® introduced the original Liberty KJ to the mid-size SUV market as a replacement for the very popular Cherokee XJ, and in a short time it became a popular, all-around family vehicle. The new design would be the first Jeep® to offer independent front suspension and rack and pinion steering, as well as side curtain airbags. Many came to use the vehicle in various ways and over time, the aftermarket support grew to include rock sliders, simple spacer lift kits to solid axle swaps for guys that intended to tackle more extreme conditions. With the original Liberty selling well in over 90 countries, Jeep® has decided to up the ante with the release of the next generation Liberty; and this new version sure has evolved!

This new model has some great things to offer Jeep® enthusiasts of all ages and experience. Their new platform boasts an improved on-road ride and handling with the new independent front and five link rear suspension systems. Having had the opportunity to actually spend some time in this new Liberty, it is very impressive the change in comfort and ride. It is very exciting to experience these systems in action; it absorbs the washboards on dirt roads and increases the feel of control behind the wheel. With this new model comes the option of two "Jeep Trail Rated" four-wheel-drive systems: the Command-Trac, (a part-time four wheel drive system in which the front driveline is disengaged from the transfer case and the power is directed towards the rear wheels) and the new Selec-Trac II (a full-time four wheel drive that offers an active on-demand system that anticipates and



prevents wheel slip before it occurs). Off the pavement and on the trail is where these systems really shine. It is amazing to be able to sit behind the wheel and feel the "Hill Descent" control take over and guide the vehicle down an impressive slope, or to feel the traction control get you through cross axle situations that one can't help but wonder what they are in for upon approach. I was continuously amazed and impressed as to what this Jeep® was capable of, after it went through obstacle after obstacle from off-camber situations to cross axle sections of the trail that we had to test it on, and even more so the hill descent as well as climbing abilities and tight turning radius.

Powered by the 3.7 liter V-6 engine, this Jeep® can be purchased with a six-speed manual as standard equipment in the "Sport" model and the "Limited Edition," or available in the four-speed automatic in the "Sport" model as an option. The front axle comes as a Dana 30 in the 4WD only, and the rear is a Corporate 8.25 with a four-wheel anti-lock brake system as a standard feature on both the "Sport" and the "Limited Edition" models. With a wheel base of 106.1" and an overall width of 72.4," this Jeep® has the ability to perform well in those areas where you may need to be able to negotiate tight turns around trees, rocks, or any other obstacles that you may encounter on a weekend camping getaway.

As far as the interior and exterior design is concerned, it too has had some exciting new design features that are impressive and confirm Jeep's presence as the industry leader. The "Sky Slider" full-length canvas roof is a great idea to have as a roll back option that can allow the front and rear passengers to get the feel of the sun and the breeze on their skin, and enhance the outdoor experience of traveling in a Jeep®. The open top experience has been one of the many reasons that Jeep® owners have enjoyed their vehicles year-round in so many different environments, and for Jeep® to bring

this to the mid-size SUV market is a great idea. The "Sky Slider" is four times as large as an average sunroof, and it can be opened in a variety of positions from full forward, full rear, or any position in between with the push of a button. These are the reasons that Jeep® can continue to introduce new models and find a different fan base for each vehicle, all while gaining a larger customer base. Kudos for staying on the "cutting edge" and trying these

new ideas, and offering something to the consumer that is desired in a vehicle but not offered in any other mid-sized SUV out there.

Continuing on with the design, some of the features that consumers can look forward to in the interior would be the amazing technological bells and whistles such as the "Multimedia Infotainment System" that includes items like hard-drive music storage, real-time traffic updates, a personalized

screen saver, as well as voice and touch screen control. In addition to all of the available options, consumers are able to get SIRIUS Satellite Radio with numerous audio entertainments from music to comedy, and sports channels to suit the listening tastes of pretty much anyone. The interior is roomy and has plenty of storage compartments,

especially in the cargo area. The load floor has a great design for those instances when you have items that you don't want to put on your carpeted interior floor. It has a reversible lid that you can flip over and put your dirty items on top of, and the 4" deep storage area or the waterproof storage compartment can accommodate a variety of needs.

There are many other examples of things in the new Jeep® Liberty that I could that I could write pages about

that impressed me, and in my opinion made this another great introduction to the Jeep® lineup. It has also been a great way to follow up the original Liberty with new ideas and options that will get buyers interested in this vehicle for many of its upgrades and improvements. The add-ons that buyers have to choose from are a long list as well, with things like the remote start system (which is an item that once you have had on a vehicle,





whether you are in a cold climate for the winter or a hot spot in the summer, you'll wonder how you ever got by without it). The navigational systems that are also available in these Jeeps is another great tool, and another "How did I ever get by without it" item. With many features such as the 2-D and 3-D birds eye view of the roads, as well as multiple route calculation alternatives, navigation comes easy by monitoring the 6.5" flip down thin-film-transistor color display.

In closing, if you are a veteran of the Jeeping world or are looking to purchase your first Jeep ® vehicle, look no further than the new Jeep ® Liberty as it is well worth taking the time to check out. Once you have had the opportunity to spend a little time in the seat, you will be able to tell if this Jeep ® is right for you.



- Will Morgan is a seasoned veteran with over 20 years experience building and working with Jeep ® vehicles. Will is the co-owner of JeepBrokers.com, an online Jeep ® classifieds and review company, and he has worked with Jeep Jamboree USA and Chrysler LLC as a trail guide and staff member for a number of years. Will resides in Arizona.

JeepBrokers.com

Ride Hard,



Tread Lightly.

Stay on designated trails.

Being responsible doesn't mean being boring. Have a blast out there. Just use common sense and simple outdoor ethics to keep your riding areas beautiful, healthy, and open.

1.800.966.9900

treadlightly!
ON LAND AND WATER



www.treadlightly.org

