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Wheels: Travel in Grand Style with Chrysler's Voyager Van

By Tim Saunders

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The Grand Voyager's cavernous interior is disguised by its sleek finish and chrome-studded exterior design.

Editor's note: Wheels is a section featuring car reviews.

There is only one luxury people mover, and that is the Chrysler Grand Voyager.

It was fortunate that I had a grand voyage of my own planned to really put it through its paces, and I am pleased to report that it scored very highly with the Saunders family.

Facts at a Glance

Chrysler Grand Voyager 2.8
CRD Limited

Price range:

1.8 million — 2.2
million rubles
($54,300 — $66,400)
Technical
Specifications:
0- 100 kph: 12.8 secs
Top speed: 185 kph
Economy: 12 kpl

Source: Chrysler

I wanted to whisk my family away for a long weekend, and all our belongings would not have fitted into a standard car. It is only when you have at least two children that you realize that many cars just aren't big enough anymore. They won't fit all the paraphernalia. But this cavernous minivan easily swallows everything, including our cumbersome tandem stroller together with one crib, four days of food for self-catering breaks, various suitcases for the girls and a couple of shirts for me...

Life is so very easy with the Chrysler. Everything is electrically operated, including the power-folding wing mirrors and front seats. The rear doors and trunk can be opened or closed by pressing the appropriate button on the keyfob or by the front occupants, who can push the roof-mounted switches. The rear passengers aren't forgotten either because there is a button close to the inside of each door for them to use if desired. The doors also automatically slide open when the external handle is pulled. These rear doors are especially user friendly when children's car seats need fitting because there is so much space. Traditional car doors that open outwards often pose a problem when they cannot be fully opened, for instance where there's another car parked next to you in a car park.

The third row of seats, which accommodates three passengers, is easily lifted at the click of a button in the trunk. This rises or falls with ease, and when stowed the trunk is simply enormous.

My wife likes the fact that there is a space between the two seats in the second row, giving passengers plenty of room and allowing for long items to be easily stored.

Simple-to- pull up blinds are also fitted inside all the blacked out rear windows for extra protection from the sun.

As a treat, my eldest daughter was allowed to watch a DVD, and headphones are stored in a useful overhead compartment.

With its brilliant black finish, chrome grille, door mirrors and handles it cuts a dashing figure commanding many a second glance from admiring motorists.

I like the captain's-style seats, which incorporate fold-down armrests in the front and in the second row. The driving position is excellent, and it's a responsive vehicle considering its size, although the brakes do have to be stepped on extra hard for it to stop on occasions. The 2.8-liter diesel engine is a little rough around the edges and can be heard from inside the cabin, but for me this just adds to the sense that it is a van, and that's quite appealing. It's

perhaps what the A-team might have moved up to if they ever became more sophisticated. The six-speed automatic transmission is guilty of being a little indecisive at times usually when traveling at low speed up a hill and second gear might do the job just as well as third at around 40 to 50 kilometers per hour. Despite its size it has the power to safely overtake vehicles at speed along Russia's open roads.

Overall, the Chrysler Grand Voyager is unequalled in terms of luxury and capability. We traveled around 480 kilometers on under half a tank of fuel. A hard vehicle for the family to return.

Watch the video and read more reviews at testdrives.biz. Contact the author at bizreporter@imedia.ru

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