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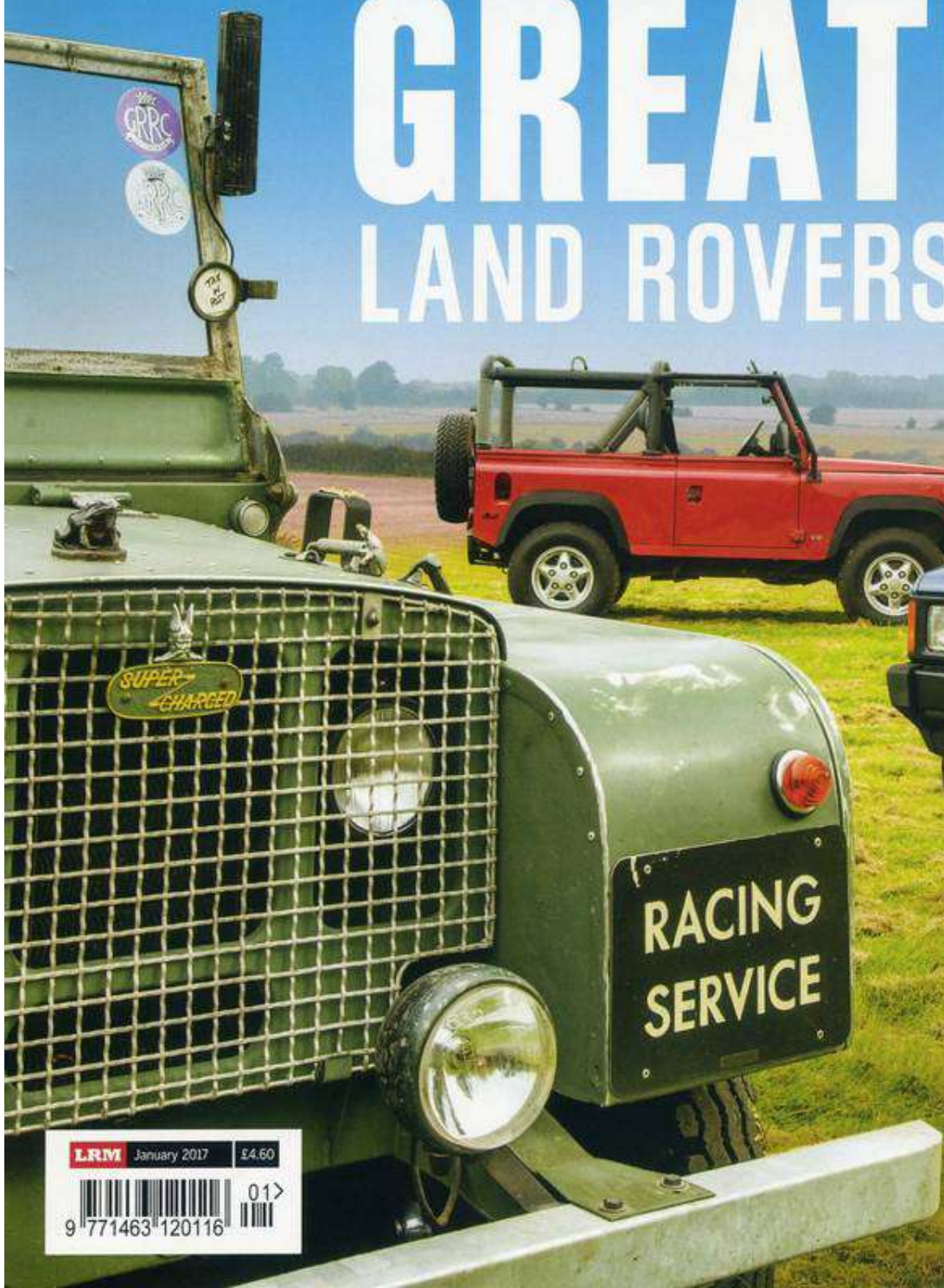
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The SE engine has been converted, with the addition of a turbocharger, giving it a power output of 150hp. This is a significant improvement over the standard 100hp engine. The conversion involves fitting a turbocharger, intercooler, and associated pipework. It's a complex job that requires a good understanding of engine mechanics.

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Picking the ten
most important
Land Rovers ever
produced: so how
hard can that be?

The phone rang. "How would you like to write a piece for the magazine? Simple topic. The Top Ten Land Rovers of all time, from an historian's perspective. Write about the models that stand head and shoulders above the others and made the world sit up and take notice." Such was the invitation from my old friend Patrick Cruywagen, LRM's Deputy Ed. I had no hesitation in accepting. After all, what could be easier than the Top Ten Land Rovers of all time?

Except it isn't particularly easy, is it? How do you measure whether one Land Rover deserves to be in the top ten, while another doesn't? What are the selection criteria? New, innovative, ground-breaking or trend-setting? Engineering excellence? Design? The vehicle's impact on the marketplace, or indeed the creation of a new market? Sales volume? The reaction from other manufacturers and competitors? The impact on the company itself? And on that key point about making the world sit up and take notice, is that sitting up and taking notice immediately, or after a few years? After all, I can think of one or two Land Rovers that the market seemed underwhelmed by at the time, but which hindsight shows had a significant impact on the marque, the company or the marketplace.

Or maybe I could just go for the ones I like? But that takes me to rather more than ten... This isn't an easy subject after all. There are no right and wrong answers. The criteria can help make a decision to include or exclude, but it is fundamentally a personal and subjective exercise. So while I decided to bear in mind all of the criteria, and use them to help me justify my choices, the end result is fundamentally a list of the Land Rovers that I think deserve to be in the top ten. As a trustee of the Dunsfold Collection I was fortunate enough to be able to gather together all of these vehicles, so here goes... But before I start, I apologise if one of your favourites isn't in my top ten. It is more than likely in my top 20, but Patrick didn't want to make it that easy!

A photograph of four Land Rover vehicles parked in a line on a grassy hillside. From left to right, there is a red Land Rover Defender (open-top), a blue Land Rover Freelander, a red Land Rover Defender (closed-top), and a red Land Rover Range Rover Sport. The background features a line of trees and a cloudy sky. The foreground is filled with fallen autumn leaves.

TEN OF THE BEST

Story: Gary Pusey Pictures: Alisdair Cusick



SERIES I

The Land Rover. Not actually the Land Rover Series I because presumably that title wasn't bestowed on it until after 1958, when there was a Series II. But naming aside, the first Land Rover obviously has to be on the list. After all, it was the start of the whole story, an instant sales success both domestically and in the all-important export markets, and arguably saved the Rover Company in the immediate post-war years. A short-term stopgap that sired the world's greatest family of 4x4s and spawned at least half of today's global automotive giant.

It may well be based on the Jeep, but Land Rover took what was inherently a cheap, disposable design and made it better. A stronger box section chassis rather than the Jeep's bendy channel section, a new body design in Birmabright aluminium that was more comfortable than a Jeep. Utilitarian, but practical, capable and long-lived. Best of all, it's British!

Somewhat puny in its earlier but nevertheless purer incarnations, it grew in length, engine capacity, load carrying capability and (relative) luxury during its ten-year lifespan. It formed the basis for myriad conversions from the functional and useful to the ever-so slightly wacky. It secured the first contracts of scale for Rover with the British armed forces. It was the bedrock of the trials movement. I would argue that it was classless from the outset, being bought by people who needed its go-anywhere capabilities to conduct their day-to-day business, whether they were dog-and-stick farmers or dukes. And this is an interesting point, because the word 'classless' has been applied in a virtuous way to many Land Rover models in recent times, particularly since they have crossed the line that marks them out as bona fide, card-carrying classic vehicles. This classlessness is not something that came with classic vehicle status, in my view. It was there from the very beginning. And despite what one recent commentator has said about the famous drawing in the sand at Red Wharf Bay being a PR invention of the 1960s or

**"I would argue
that it was
classless from
the outset"**



'70s, I for one will always be a believer. The drawing in the sand is part of the romance and myth that surrounds the first Land Rover, and it is all the better for it.

I bought my first Series I in the early 1990s. A 1954 86in Station Wagon. It was a beautiful thing and is still going strong in the stewardship of its current dedicated owner, but I never fully bonded with it. The reason? It was too darned slow! I have eclectic tastes in old cars, but one thing that matters to me more than anything else is keeping up with modern traffic. And that's something a Series I will always struggle to do. Great on minor roads, but less inspiring on busy main roads and motorways.

I had a pal whose answer to this was to drop in a V8, but that seemed to destroy the very essence of the Series I. Others fitted six-cylinder engines or Rover car cylinder heads in the pursuit of more power. But I found my ideal solution a year or two ago. KGX 504 is a 1949 car that had lost its original engine and could therefore never be restored to factory condition. Nevertheless, it was rebuilt and became the subject of dedicated experimentation and fettling until it performed to perfection with its 2.0-litre Rover engine augmented by a supercharger. A purist's nightmare, but it is hugely entertaining and it certainly goes! As soon as I got it home the canvas tilt and the hoops came off, and have remained neatly stowed in the garage ever since. Last winter it served us well dragging windfall timber home for the log store. It stood proud in the car park at the Goodwood Revival. 75mph in a Series I is undoubtedly fun! But even without a blower, the Series I is still in my Top Ten.

NAS 90

You all remember the Cariba, don't you? A concept vehicle built by Land Rover PR in 1987, it was based on a V8 Ninety and was fitted with a roll cage, leather seats, big tyres, extra lighting and given a silvery-blue metallic paint job and side stripes. Its purpose was to put a toe in the water in terms of exploring the 4x4 fun market epitomised by the likes of the Suzuki SJ. Land Rover's senior management did not approve, however, and the Cariba was quietly sold off.

But this new market was not going away, and finally in 1992 came a Land Rover version you could buy, the 90SV. Only 90 of these were made for the European and home markets, and they sold out very quickly. Powered by the 200Tdi and finished in vibrant turquoise with a black vinyl soft-top, alloy wheels and – a first on a Land Rover – rear disc brakes. The 'lifestyle Land Rover' had arrived.

But then in 1994 came the North American Spec NAS 90,

which took the styling of the 90SV to a new level and cemented Land Rover's position in the sports leisure market. The NAS 90 deserves its place in our Top Ten because of this, and because it played a significant role in re-establishing Land Rover in the United States. Fitted with a 3.9-litre V8 and open bodywork, with an external roll cage around the driving compartment and rear bracing bars, Freestyle alloy wheels with black wheelarch eyebrows, anti-roll bars front and rear, a swingaway spare wheel carrier, and a fabric tonneau cover and removable Bimini half-top which covered the cab.

Throughout the four years it was in production, the NAS 90 was used to pioneer developments that eventually found their way into Defenders for the rest of the world. It remains the only Land Rover you could buy new and double your money in ten years. It also inspired the 50th Anniversary Defender and you could argue that it catalysed the thriving aftermarket trade in bespoke Defenders.

DISCOVERY 1

In the mid-1980s Land Rover was in a spot of bother. Those fiendishly clever Japanese manufacturers had carved out a new market for their 4x4s. Their vehicles might not have been as accomplished as the Range Rover, or enjoyed its tremendous brand cachet, but they were not as expensive, either. And they were more comfortable and family-friendly than the utilitarian 90 and 110. And they were selling well. And Land Rover had nothing to counter them.

The 1989 Discovery was Land Rover's response, and it was the vehicle that undeniably saved the company. Developed in double-quick time, the body had a distinctive stepped roofline and looked new and different, although underneath was a largely unaltered Range Rover chassis. Terence Conran was retained to create the interior, which was trendy, colourful (remember that Sonar Blue?) and undeniably modern. The launch models made extensive use of exterior decals, starting with the initial three-door that was aimed squarely at younger buyers. The family-oriented five-door followed a year later (did you know that the decision to call the Discovery models three-door and five-door was a deliberate attempt to differentiate them from the Range Rover, which had always been known as two-door and four-door?).

The new Discovery was a runaway success, despite disparaging remarks in some quarters that labelled it the 'poor man's Range Rover'. Key to this success was the brilliant new 200Tdi engine, although the V8 was also offered, as was a thankfully short-lived Mpi version with a 2.0-litre Rover car engine (what were they thinking?). Part of the Discovery's appeal was the wide range of options offered, the distinctive colour palette, and the modern interior design. Land Rover had a success on its hands, and a more than capable competitor in the family 4x4 market.

As the vehicle that saved the company, the Discovery belongs in our top ten. But the first Discovery also founded the emerging Discovery-branded family of vehicles – the new Discovery and the Discovery Sport and, as sure as eggs is eggs, there will be more family members to follow.

“It was the vehicle that undeniably saved the company”





EVOQUE

The Evoque pioneered a totally new design direction for Land Rover. It was previewed as a concept car in 2007 and introduced to the world's media as the Land Rover LRX. The concept became reality in 2010 as the Range Rover Evoque. It sought to be deliberately fashionable and was linked to celebrity culture from the outset. Land Rover had very clearly decided that these factors were important in its desire to increase global sales and to attract new audiences and buyers. It was therefore not really much of a surprise when the new vehicle was launched in 2010 under the Range Rover family brand, although few customers buying their new baby Range Rover knew that it was built around a modified Freelander 2 platform.

The emphasis was on personalisation and the Evoque could be ordered in two- and four-door variants, with three equipment levels enticingly branded Pure, Prestige and Dynamic, all overlaid by a wide variety of options. An entry-level Evoque was also offered with two-wheel drive, and those who criticised this as yet another desertion of Land Rover's core DNA had clearly forgotten about the 4x2 Series I of 1958, the batch of 4x2 Series IIs in 1958, and the 4x2 Series IIIs delivered to the Belgian military in the mid-'70s.

At the Kensington Palace launch in 2010, Victoria Beckham was introduced as an Evoque 'styling consultant' and eventually launched her bespoke Evoque in Beijing in April 2012, which could be yours for £80,000, or roughly twice the local price of the standard car.

The Evoque has been a global sales success, selling half a million models in 180 countries in its first five years of production. Its desirability in emerging markets such as China perhaps best illustrated by the 2015 launch of the LandWind X7, a locally-made Evoque clone for the young, aspirational professional who can't run to the real thing...

FREELANDER 1

Freelander was a radical new direction for Land Rover. Conceived in the first half of the 1990s, it was designed from the outset to be a lower-priced, more mainstream vehicle, and its sole objective was to attract a new group of customers to the Land Rover marque.

The separate chassis was consigned to history, and the Freelander had a monocoque bodyshell and all-independent suspension mounted on separate front and rear subframes. The engine was transversely-mounted and although all four wheels were permanently driven, differently-g geared front and rear diffs delivered a torque bias towards the front wheels. There was no transfer box, and instead an Intermediate Reduction Drive performed the function of a centre diff while dividing the drive between the front and rear axles. There was no low-ratio but instead a combination of electronic Hill Descent Control and Electronic Traction Control, working through the ABS.

Two body designs were available at the 1998 launch, a five-door Station Wagon and three-door with an open rear section, which could be covered with either a Softback or Hardback. Two engines were available: a 1.8-litre four-cylinder petrol, based on the K-Series engines used in Rover cars since 1989, and the Rover's 2.0-litre L-Series diesel.

Land Rover traditionalists were aghast, and the Freelander was roundly criticised for abandoning many of the DNA traits that defined Land Rover vehicles. But it was an immediate sales success, rapidly overtaking the Discovery as the company's best-selling vehicle. Of late it has been reappraised by marque enthusiasts, and is gaining a strong fan base among those who appreciate that early Freelanders are accomplished off-road (with the right tyres), and offer a lot of car for very little money.



**“The CSK
pioneered a
new market for
sporty Land
Rovers”**

RANGE ROVER CSK

The Limited Edition Range Rover CSK was introduced in 1990, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Range Rover and carrying the initials of Charles Spencer King. By 1990, the Range Rover two-door was a special order option in most markets, and the vast majority of Range Rover sales were four-door. So it was surprising that the CSK used the two-door bodyshell. It had the most luxurious interior yet created by the factory for a Range Rover, and introduced the tuned 3.9-litre version of the V8, and also pioneered anti-roll bars. And it came in any colour as long as it was black, Beluga Black.

Only 200 were made and all carried an individually-numbered plaque mounted on the centre console just ahead of the gear lever. Each car came with its own numbered commemorative pack, beautifully encased in a black wooden case containing brochures and a certificate signed by Spen King.

Today, the CSK is highly-regarded by enthusiasts and collectors and a good CSK carries a big price premium over a standard car of similar vintage. But back in 1990 dealers were struggling to shift these cars, and there are stories of CSKs stockpiled in the open at Solihull (which might explain why they have a reputation for rotting away more rapidly than any other Range Rover).

So why is it in the Top Ten? Quite simply because the CSK pioneered a new market for sporty, high-performance Land Rovers and in that sense was the grandfather of the Range Rover Sport, the Evoque, and the Discovery Sport. Which are arguably Land Rover's most important vehicles today in terms of both overall sales and relevance in emerging markets such as China and India. And a CSK still looks like a pretty cool Range Rover, even two and a half decades later.





RANGE ROVER CLASSIC

It won't come as much of a surprise to you to learn that I would place the Range Rover in the number one spot of our Top Ten. I have been a committed fan since I first saw a Range Rover in the early 1970s, and I have never been without a Range Rover since I bought my first one in 1991. I still own it today. But I think the facts surrounding this tremendous vehicle speak for themselves, and more than justify my opinion.

When it was launched in 1970, nothing quite like it had been seen before. The Range Rover single-handedly invented a whole new market for recreational four-wheel drive vehicles. Okay, so cars such as the Ford Bronco and the Jeep Wagoneer already existed, but they could not match the Range Rover's unparalleled combination of on-road and off-road capability, or its stunning looks. They were crude by comparison. And the Range Rover remains to this day the only vehicle to have been exhibited at the Louvre in Paris as an example of 'exemplary industrial design'.

The markets fell in love with it, and in the early '70s you could sell your new Range Rover for more than you paid for it if you could get one – waiting lists were huge. Demand remained enormous through the decade, despite minimal development and a lack of investment from parent British Leyland. Ten years after the model's launch, your new 1979 Range Rover had acquired such luxuries as power steering, rear wash-wipe and slightly better upholstery. But otherwise little was changed. Customers were not deterred however.

In 1980 the model's rise to luxury car status began. Five-speed manual and three-speed automatic transmissions, the four-door body, alloy wheels, metallic paint, air con, electric windows, luxury trim... Today, it is difficult to envisage a vehicle carrying the Range Rover brand that would not be fully-loaded with all these and more. The '80s also saw the first Range Rover limited editions which were often used to introduce these new features, although why Land Rover felt

the need to test the market's interest in them seems bizarre.

By the end of its second decade, the Range Rover was established as the SUV that everyone wanted to own. Introduced into the US in 1987, a brilliant marketing campaign ensured that the Range Rover was the must-have four-wheel drive for the smart set. And despite their best efforts, other manufacturers never quite managed to emulate the Range Rover. The car moved further upmarket, with many innovations being introduced to the American market before being rolled out elsewhere, including cruise control, sunroof and power-operated leather seats.

The 1990s saw the introduction of the CSK limited edition, and with it the move to extract more power and performance from the venerable V8. Diesels became viable alternatives with the introduction of the 200Tdi and, even more so, with the 300Tdi. By the mid-1990s the Range Rover had been in production for 25 years, but park a 1995 model alongside a 1970 model and the differences are wafer thin. How many other vehicles have continued in production for 25 years? Very few is the answer. And so successful was the car that when the time came to replace it with the P38a, Land Rover hedged its bets by keeping the first generation in production until it could be confident the second would be a success.

The Range Rover also achieved notable successes as an expedition vehicle (double-crossing of the Sahara in 1969, the Darién Gap adventure in 1971/72), and was used as a platform for ambulance and fire tender conversions. Almost every police force used them as motorway patrol vehicles, too. There was even some competition use (the first Hill Rally in 1971 was won by a Range Rover, and they also competed in Paris-Dakar rallies and the Camel Trophy).

So I rest my case. The Range Rover really was (and is) a car for all reasons and I for one will never disagree when a motoring pundit describes it as 'the best car in the world'.



“It had an immediate reputation for toughness and strength”



DISCOVERY 3

Discovery 1 morphed into the Discovery 2 in late 1998. Superficially similar to the first Discovery, the second generation was in fact a new model and the tail-door panel was the only thing the vehicles had in common. Overall, the Discovery 2 was more substantial and more macho, with the Thor version of the V8 and the brand-new Td5, but it still looked like a Discovery. Then, in 2004, came the Discovery 3.

The familiar stepped roof remained, but Discovery 3 was a dramatically different vehicle. With different engineering. Designed under the Ford regime, it was significantly bigger and three rows of seats were standard in most models. It had hydro-formed chassis main members to minimise weight and improve rigidity, while the body was a separate, bolted-on load-bearing monocoque. This rather over-engineered approach gave the new vehicle an immediate reputation for toughness and strength.

All-independent suspension and sophisticated electronics based on those in the third-generation Range Rover gave the Discovery 3 car-like handling on the road, while off-road performance remained superb. Electronics also underpinned the new Terrain Response System, which allowed the driver to turn a dial which selected the appropriate throttle response, traction control and other systems to suit the terrain. It was quickly voted the world's best tow-car.

Three engine choices were offered. A single-turbo version of the twin-turbo Jaguar V6, known as the TDV6, proved extremely popular in Europe and took performance to new heights. Most markets could also choose the Jaguar 4.4-litre V8, although from 2005 some countries outside the UK had the 4.0-litre V6 from the Ford Explorer. Six-speed automatic and manual transmissions were provided.

A real game-changer, Discovery 3 deserves its place in our Top Ten. Brilliant engineering, excellent performance and superb on-road manners, it offered an understated alternative to the Range Rover and was eagerly acquired by those who no longer wanted to be seen in a Range.

DEFENDER WOLF

Project Wolf was Land Rover's name for the Defender XD (eXtra Duty), which was developed in the early 1990s in response to a British military requirement, and Wolf is the name commonly used to describe the resulting 90s, 110s and 130s. Land Rover won the contract in 1996 and vehicles began to enter service in 1997/98. The vehicles have been sold to other military customers but were never offered to the civilian market.

The Wolf is to many people the epitome of the ultimate Defender. Powered by the wonderful 300Tdi engine and with extensively redeveloped chassis (stronger side-rails and crossmembers), uprated heavy-duty rear axles, and bodies that are substantially more robust than a standard Defender. Both the hard-top and soft-top bodies are taller than standard, to offer more headroom in the rear and to clear the internal roll-cage fitted within the back body. Soft-tops are made of a synthetic material rather than the canvas that has been carried by Land Rovers since 1948, and the hard-top bodies are moulded in resin. A substantial roll-over bar is fitted behind the front seats to form a safety cell, and all variants are fitted with heavy-duty perforated disc wheels. The combination of all of these characteristics,

together with the raised air intakes and the spare wheels mounted high on each side of the body, create a purposeful, go-anywhere impression. It is no surprise that a de-mobbed Wolf is a very desirable thing, and prices are commensurately high.

One of the most consistently popular vehicles in the Dunsfold Collection is the Wolf 110 that is known as Goldilocks. And I confess

it is one of my personal favourites as well. Goldilocks is one of seven Defender Wolf vehicles equipped by Land Rover for a 1998 global expedition by Sir Ranulph Fiennes that was cancelled at the last minute. Shortly afterwards, a group of Land Rover employees came together to organise a spectacular expedition of their own to raise money for charity and celebrate 50 years of Land Rover. Their expedition became known as the Fifty/50 Challenge. One of the Fiennes Wolf 110s was dusted down, repainted gold and kitted-out with roof rack, communications

equipment and internal racking. And so Goldilocks was born. The 110 accompanied the successful expedition (the expedition vehicles themselves were Freelanders) and the team managed to visit a total of 56 countries in 50 days, raising over £130,000. There's enough there to merit the Wolf a place in the Top Ten!

"The Wolf is the epitome of the ultimate Defender"





FINAL DEFENDERS

As the end of Defender as we knew and loved it came closer, it was inevitable that Land Rover would mark the occasion with a limited edition vehicle. But when the story broke, it celebrated the Defender's demise with a whole year's worth of events, commemorations and special vehicles. It all kicked off in January 2015 when six Land Rovers created the largest sand drawing ever produced in the UK – a one kilometre long outline of a Defender in the sands of Red Wharf Bay on Anglesey, where in 1947 Maurice Wilks had sketched the shape of the first Land Rover.

And then came the announcement of the three Celebration Editions that would commemorate the end of Defender. We can do no better than quote Land Rover's press release: 'The Heritage Edition is inspired by early Land Rover models and mixes nostalgic design cues with modern creature comforts. It will be identified by distinctive Grasmere Green paintwork and a contrasting white roof. A Heritage grille and HUE 166 graphics, recalling the registration plate of the first ever pre-production Land Rover nicknamed 'Huey', also identify the Heritage model.' And then came 'the exciting new Adventure Edition aimed at Land Rover customers who relish the great outdoors and embrace the Defender's go-anywhere, do anything attitude. It comes fitted with additional underbody protection and Goodyear MT/R tyres to boost the Defender's already class-leading all-terrain capability. Unique decals and a leather-trimmed cabin ensure the Adventure Edition stands out from the Defender crowd.' And finally there was 'the exclusive Autobiography Edition that promises more

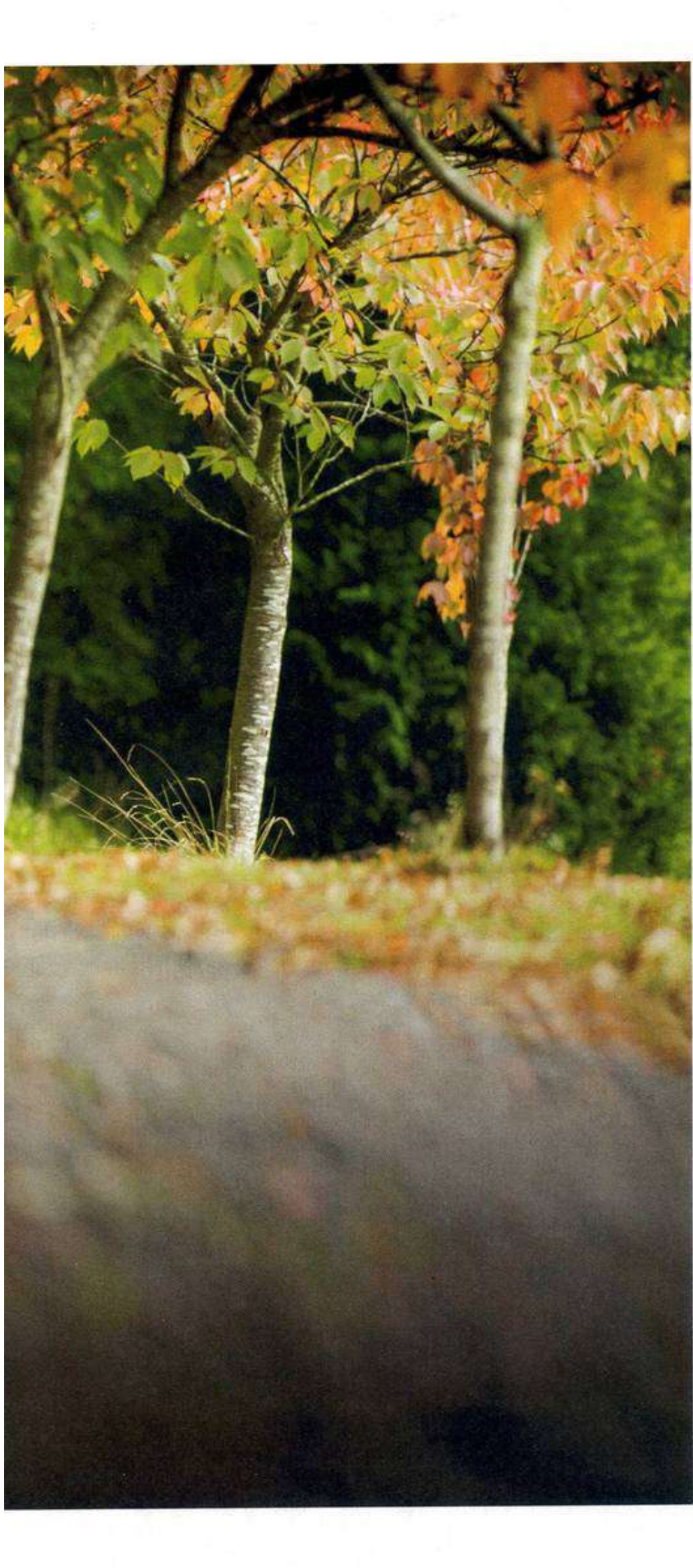
performance, luxury and comfort than ever before thanks to its comprehensive equipment list, unique duo-tone paintwork, full Windsor leather upholstery and a power upgrade from 122PS to 150PS.'

While most of us were still digesting the idea that a 90 could cost over 60 grand (the Autobiography was priced from £61,845), we were treated to the news that one had sold for £400,000 at a charity auction in London! Admittedly it was perhaps the most desirable Defender of all time, but no-one in their wildest dreams expected it to sell for anything like that.

Suddenly an Autobiography 90 looked cheap. Such was the clamour to buy one that Land Rover increased the size of the limited edition from 80 to 100. Orders for the other Celebration Editions, and for last-off-line Defenders generally, meant the production line remained in operation for over a month longer than planned, and the final vehicles rolled off the line on 29 January 2016.

Many new owners were apparently deferring registration of their Defenders to ensure they received a 65-plate, but the canny owner of the Autobiography featured in our article was not troubled by such trivialities, because he had secured the ultimate registration – L316 DEF.

He had also secured a vehicle that is at the centre of the end of an era, a serious collector's vehicle at the zenith of the model's development. The V5 states that it is an Autobiography. It is Land Rover's own take on what a Defender taken to the max should look like. A factory-build and not an aftermarket build. And that makes it very special indeed.



“It’s Land Rover’s own take on what a Defender taken to the max should look like”



THE DUNSFOLD COLLECTION

THE DUNSFOLD Collection is the world's largest collection of Land Rover vehicles and archived material. Founded in the late 1960s by Brian Bashall, the Collection became a registered charity in 2014. It is dedicated to preserving Land Rover vehicles, history and heritage for the benefit of future generations.

The Dunsfold Collection does not yet have a permanent home, and the vehicles are stored at multiple locations across the south of England. The charity's ambition is to create a permanent museum and display facility that will be open to the public. In the meantime, Collection vehicles are regularly exhibited at Land Rover events and classic vehicle shows throughout the year, and the Collection hosts an Open Weekend every two years when all its vehicles are displayed. Details of forthcoming events are posted on Dunsfold's website, www.dunsfoldcollection.com.

The Collection depends on donations from Land Rover enthusiasts and, contrary to popular belief, is not formally funded by Jaguar Land Rover. As a Land Rover enthusiast, you can help Dunsfold achieve its goal by becoming a Friend of the Collection, which will entitle you to free entry to the biennial Open Weekend as well as regular newsletters containing Collection vehicle news, updates on shows, events, and articles relating to Land Rover history. Dunsfold is also delighted to receive donations to join its 'Wall of Fame' and further details are available on the website.

Dunsfold also welcomes volunteers who have relevant skills or just want to help out with vehicle preparation, shows and events. If you think you can help, please contact the team at collectionadmin@btconnect.com.