

A new Discovery



Ian Lamming drives the Land Rover Discovery Sport

SCRIBBLING away behind closed doors designers at Land Rover somehow find themselves in tune with the buying public – globally.

Now this is an incredible feat given the rich diversity tastes in this country, let alone the rest of the world, but time after time they simply get it right knowing exactly what we want from a car.

The lucky people who have one love them; the poor have nots go through life wanting one. This is such an aspirational brand, like no other in fact.

This phenomenon is why its production lines whirr constantly producing Evoques, Range Rovers and Discoveries and it is why the engineers now need more than 24 hours in a day to squeeze in the next successful variant, the Discovery Sport.

One look at this SUV is enough to tell you that Land Rover listens very carefully to its admiring public and senses intuitively the best way to keep them happy.

Evoque is sensational but it is radical and there are some diehard customers who balk at the trick and trendy low roofline, mainly men. So the answer is simple. Produce the rakish good looks of the front, now shared by Range Rover Vogue and Evoque, but keep the roof high and square at the back.

Please welcome the Range Rover Sport, a model that can't fail to appeal to men, women, children and animals, the world over.

I'm not sure whether it is a more sober Evoque or a shrunken Vogue but it hits the spot so well that it is already hard to imagine the range without it.

With lines, colours and finishes like this it could

only be a Land Rover and the interior is equally resplendent.

It is difficult to think of any manufacturer that does interiors as well as Land Rover. They marry purposeful and practical with sumptuous and designer.

The leather and high quality materials add the feel good, the touch screen and James Bond-esque gear knob, that rises majestically from the transmission tunnel, the contemporary nature. It's a superb combination.

I hadn't been paying attention to the spec sheet and wondered at the purpose of the grab handles on the boot floor. A quick tug was enough to raise a third set of seats from the floor which was a great and pleasant surprise. It also indicated to me that the Sport was a much bigger car than had lodged in my psyche.

When you start to consider and look around, the Sport is very large and accommodating, yet easy to manoeuvre and drive along tight country roads. It is comfortable and relaxing, makes you feel safe and secure and handles all terrains with aplomb.

It is too easy to forget that this accomplished mile-muncher is also a proper off-roader with a sophisticated all wheel drive system, easily engaged, to tackle rocks, mud, gravel, snow and sand.

The 2.2 litre diesel is powerful – close to 200BHP – refined and pretty economical. A new motor, which improves every quarter, is on the way.

Discovery Sport is yet another stunning model from the pen-wheelers of Britain. Long may their scribblings continue.

Fact File

Model: Land Rover
Discovery Sport HSE
Engine: 2.2 litre, turbo
diesel
Drivetrain: nine-speed
auto
Power: 190bhp
Top speed: 117mph
0-62mph: 8.4 secs
Miles per gallon 44.8
(combined):
CO2 (g/km): 166