

# Anytime

*Motor  
Madness*

**Ian Lamming** gets to grips with the awesome Unimog, a vehicle for all seasons, tasks and terrain.

# Anywhere

**T**HE phrase 'go-anywhere' is often used too glibly to describe your average 4x4's ability to venture off the tarmac and into the wild.

It is surprising to the uninitiated just where these SUVs and pick-ups will actually travel in the right hands. But their mud-plugging prowess really does pale in comparison to a real all-terrain vehicle such as the Unimog.

I have to admit, when I was asked to test the U530, I did have to Google it. So, it's a sort of off and on-road truck with more gadgets than a Swiss Army knife, is it?

In a nutshell, it is twice as fast as a tractor, twice as economical, twice as cool. It can be operated as a commercial or an agricultural vehicle so it can be driven on and off the road – even on the streets of London as it has truck-spec safety features – if you fancy having laugh with the locals.

As a lorry you will need an HGV licence but if it is for agriculture a normal driving licence will do. The 250 litre fuel tank can be filled with white or red diesel accordingly.

Climbing up into the glass cab you feel 10ft off the ground but all round visibility is so magnificent you adjust in seconds. There is no overhang to speak of at the front, big mirrors and cameras all round so clear vision is assured right round the block.

Vario-pilot allows the steering wheel to be swapped in around 20 seconds from right to left hand drive. This is not only brilliant for hedge cutting or gully clearing but opens up the world for resale, which is sheer genius.

The Mercedes three pointed star on the front speaks volumes about the level of ingenuity and engineering that has gone into the Unimog, it is breath-taking.

What it amounts to is an implement carrier for councils, farmers, hauliers, or rescue services. So it can clear drains, grit roads, plough or blow snow, spray weeds and crops. It can be a bin lorry or road-sweeper or carry heavy loads and tip them in three directions. It can be fitted with three hedge cutters at once that can be used simultaneously by two operators. The exterior is littered with drives, orifices and connections for hydraulic shafts, pumps, rams and motors, as well as plates for hitches.

The massive tyres can be deflated and inflated from within the cab, from 1.0-4.2 bar to suit conditions, conditions which it generally laughs in the face of.

A gargantuan 7.7 litre blown six-cylinder diesel turns out 300hp and an incredible 1,200Nm of torque – that's about the same as a Bugatti Veyron, by the way. On the road that means it will cruise at a maximum speed of 56mph.

Off road, in the stubble fields of Houghall College, Durham, it drags earth-churning discs so easily through the compacted, moist top soil that it is easy to forget it is tilling at all. Never does it falter, never does it spin a wheel thanks to stunning pulling power and three diff locks. Climbing a 1 in 1 hill, where flood waters have carved their path, it romps up the slope with ease with hardly any pressure on the throttle. Coming down the same incline, braking is aided by the exhaust, which is effective and pleasing on the ear.

Under the watchful eye of Lloyd's Unimog specialist Jason Toogood, driving, in any condition, is staggeringly easy. Throttle and brake pedal on the floor do the starting and stopping (there's no clutch pedal), the gears are on a stalk, the steering action light and controllable.

Centre console offers myriad switches and a joystick for the various gadgets, as well as an air handbrake lever. There's also cruise control, toolkit and jack. There's even an airline to blow out the radiators and a squidgy on a pole to clean the windows.

In the Unimog, Mercedes has thought of everything and built a vehicle for every eventuality. By doing so it has created the true go-anywhere vehicle with which operators can do pretty much anything they want.



## Fact File

- Model: Unimog 530
- Engine: 7.7 litre six-cylinder turbo diesel Euro6 compliant
- Drivetrain: eight-speed manual with

- auto-shift or hydrostatic
- Power: 300hp
- Torque: 1,200Nm
- Top speed: 56mph
- Max commercial towing weight: 40 tonnes
- Payload: up to 8.5 tonnes

- Miles per gallon: 8.1 mixed use
- Lateral tilt: 30 degrees
- Incline: 1 in 1
- Wading depth: 0.8m (or 1.2m for extreme off road spec)
- Diff locks: 3