

Top of the



Range

Ian Lamming pays respect to a majestic motor

Fact File:

Range Rover TDV6

Engine: 3.0 turbo diesel

Power: 258BHP

0-60mph: 7.4 secs

Top speed: 130mph

Combined miles per gallon: 37.7

Transmission: eight speed automatic

CO2 g/km: 196

IF YOU want to feel like royalty, a sheik, or you are just plain rich – and you are heading for the country, – there's only one car, really.

For generations Range Rovers have circumnavigated the Earth carrying the globe's elite. The rest of the automotive world must seethe with jealousy because no matter how hard they try, no matter how good and capable their machinery is, they can never come close to enjoying the acclaim and kudos of a Range Rover.

This leviathan has stage presence like no other and its new set of tweeds commands even more respect.

Range Rover has always been big and imposing but now it has stunning looks as well it's longer, lower, wider, meaner, moodier, more modern – magnificent in fact.

Start with the key; there's no need to do anything with the key of course except carry but if you want the lovely split tailgate to rise, you can press a button and it obliges - a nice touch is that the lower section also lowers and rises electrically.

Mount up, it's too high to do anything else, and the opulent interior reveals its charms. The leather seats belong in the drawing room, are multi-adjustable and just the place to look down upon your peers.

The leather steering wheel is heated because one would not care to catch a chill and when the starter button is depressed the gear knob rises graciously from the polished wood paneling of the transmission tunnel.

The interior oozes class, as one would imagine, but it's the

technology that is striking. The clocks are virtual, mere electronic representation of the goings on below stairs.

In the centre of the dash sits a touch screen which operates everything from the heated seats to the climate control, the satellite navigation to the rear entertainment system. Little Lord Fauntleroy in the back loves the video screens that are embedded in the backs of the front headrests and the cordless headphones. It takes threats and bribes in equal measure to unseat him from his throne.

Ride height can be dropped at the push of a button to sharpen the handling and then raised for the bumpiest sections.

It flies up hills and the trip computer is reading 36mpg, which is astounding for such a huge car. No testing is done on this occasion off the road so the electronic all wheel drive settings never move from the auto position. With this sort of pedigree it is hard to imagine the RR being anything but sublime in the dirt.

As the Vogue sweeps through town parking spaces are a bit tight so I head for side streets to be safe. I'm sure in reality the chauffeur will just stop, let you out and keep the motor running.

Like the monarchy, the Range Rover remains an institution, something to be proud of, a global icon of epic proportions.

Vogue may remain a lottery dream for most of this country's humble subjects but with a deferent tug of the forelock we still salute you.