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HOW ONE SMALL HIMALAYAN TOWN BECAME  
THE LAND OF LAND ROVER VEHICLES





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PHOTOGRAPHY AND COVER: SAM BARKER



# THE NEW LAND ROVER COLLECTION. TIME TO DISCOVER



ABOVE & BEYOND



Make every minute an adventure. Our exclusive Land Rover watch collection takes the classic timepiece one step further. More style, exacting precision, unrivalled durability. It's a piece of Land Rover engineering precision you can take with you everywhere.

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## ALWAYS WITH YOU

**Driving a Land Rover is truly special.** It embodies a spirit that we have been able to call uniquely ours for 70 years. This spirit – the curiosity it feeds and the experiences it encourages – continues to power us as we chart the exciting times to come. With many nations already preparing for a world with reduced emissions, we look ahead with ambition and optimism because we know that Land Rover vehicles will always demonstrate the uncompromising innovation that takes us Above and Beyond.

For instance, choosing an alternative to traditional combustion engines now doesn't mean compromising on the unrivaled capability that has shaped our identity over the past seven decades. The Range Rover is now equipped with an innovative new plug-in hybrid powertrain, which is truly efficient and minimizes its environmental impact, and – as the award-winning filmmaker and mountaineer Jimmy Chin discovered when he took one for a drive in his snowy Wyoming hometown (see page 20) – it offers every bit of the freedom, capability and refined comfort that have come to be synonymous with the Land Rover brand. Jimmy is certainly an exceptional character, but the Range Rover PHEV, with its easy charging options and smart technology that cleverly ensures optimal power usage, is a car for everyday heroes, too.

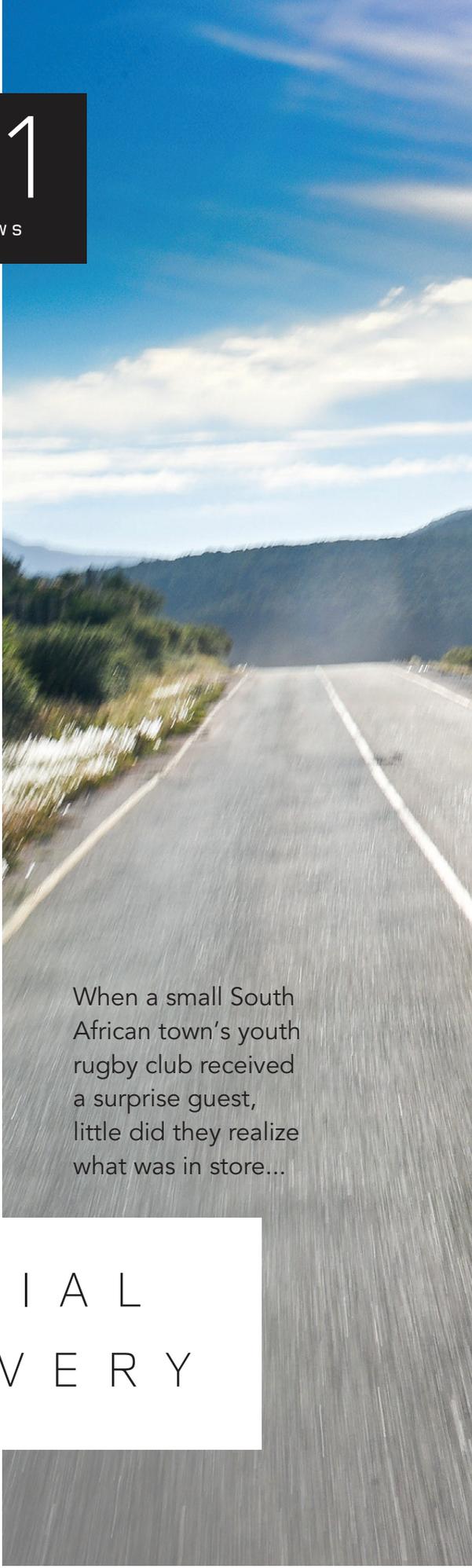
This wide-ranging capability is in the DNA of every vehicle we make, and the resultant sense of adventure is celebrated throughout this latest issue of *ONELIFE*. From the deep-seated passion of a classic Land Rover-loving community in a remote corner of India, to the icy thrills of tackling Arctic Sweden in a Range Rover Velar; from family fun with outdoorsman Monty Halls and a Discovery in Ireland's scenic Donegal, to the sense of wonder captured when children encounter the Above and Beyond Tour experience in Windsor, there's no time, place or activity that isn't perfectly suited to a Land Rover.

For everyone who wants to make the most of this beautiful world and be a part of a more fulfilling future, in your ever-evolving journey through life, Land Rover will always be an inspiring constant.

Enjoy the issue!

Felix Bräutigam  
Jaguar Land Rover Chief Commercial Officer

01 NEWS



When a small South African town's youth rugby club received a surprise guest, little did they realize what was in store...

SPECIAL DELIVERY



PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB TILL



**“Children in this township have three options,”**

Siya Kolisi, Springbok rugby captain and returning local hero, tells *ONELIFE* on location in Zwide, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. “They can get into gangs, get into alcohol or get into rugby.”

Worldwide, rugby provides a true test of human capability and delivers sporting entertainment, but in the townships of the Eastern Cape, it also provides salvation.

“Rugby saves lives, it’s that simple,” says Kolisi as he pilots a Land Rover Discovery, headed for his childhood club, the African Bombers, towing a very special cargo.

Kolisi, the latest captain of his national side – and the first black player to ever hold the post – grew up in Zwide in difficult circumstances. Against a backdrop of poverty, social unrest and limited opportunity, Kolisi’s prodigious talent as a young loose forward at the African Bombers stood out. A scholarship to the prestigious Grey High School gave him a direct avenue into its all-conquering first XV, followed by captaincy of the Cape Town Stormers and, this year, of the Springboks – all by the age of 26.

Courage, resourcefulness, perseverance and style – it’s no wonder that Kolisi eventually became a Land Rover ambassador. This was a partnership with strong synergies, given Land Rover’s 20-year support of rugby, from the grassroots to elite level, including worldwide partnerships of the 2011 and 2015 Rugby World Cups; the 2019 World Cup, to be played in Japan, will see Land Rover return as a main partner for the third time.

Through Land Rover’s partnership with Kolisi, the idea was conceived to tow a rugby club housed within a specially customized shipping container back to Zwide and gift this facility to the African Bombers. It’s Kolisi and Land Rover’s way of showing their appreciation to grassroots rugby and to those who volunteer their time to sustain local clubs and communities.

Over a period of months, Land Rover carefully refurbished a shipping container with all the equipment and facilities lacking at the Zwide stadium, including solar-power electricity, an office space, tactics board, benches, tackle bags, balls, bibs, shirts, kicking tees, water bottles and

a changing area. With the club and its coaches acting as a social stabilizer for the local community, a place where young players are as likely to ask for moral guidance and careers advice as they are for tips on how to ruck and maul, the gift was designed to help attract greater numbers of youngsters to training sessions at the club and, in turn, provide them with a more hopeful start in life.

The final piece in the jigsaw is for Kolisi to get the container to its destination, using the Discovery vehicle’s superior towing capacity and advanced tow assist\* for a road trip along the coast starting south of Port Elizabeth.

Arriving unannounced at the Zwide stadium during midweek training, both Kolisi and the mystery trailer cause an immediate stir. Kolisi is encircled by players from the various male and female junior teams run by the African Bombers, and joins the crowd in a spontaneous song of welcome – clapping, singing, whistling and cheering as the evening turns to dusk.

As the commotion attracts more and more people to the sports field, it seems the whole town has turned out by the time the doors to the container are finally opened and the full extent of the towable rugby facility is revealed.

What follows can only be described as an impromptu festival of rugby, with tackle bags put to immediate use, shirts proudly worn, balls thrown around and mini games of tag rugby breaking out all over the dusty field. Kolisi surveys the immediate impact the towable facility is having on the African Bombers. “If you’re moving forward, try to take as many people with you as you can,” he says.

As the Discovery proved in its towing of the shipping container through the savanna, and as Kolisi proved in his devotion to the club that laid the foundations for his career, legends stay forever true to their roots.

**WATCH THE VIDEO** To see how the clubhouse was delivered, search ‘Siya Kolisi and Land Rover’

\*These systems are not a substitute for driving safely with due care and attention and will not function under all circumstances, speeds, weather and road conditions, etc. Driver should not assume that these systems will correct errors of judgment in driving. Please consult the owner’s manual or your local authorized Land Rover retailer for more details.





Siya Kolisi's surprise visit to Zwide sparked scenes of joy, with the new kit quickly put to good use on the playing field



# 02

INSIGHT



Immerse yourself in the world of Bond and discover his relationship with Land Rover at the new 007 ELEMENTS cinematic installation in the Austrian Alps



# BONDING WITH THE ELEMENTS

Remember the scene in the 2015 James Bond movie *Spectre*, where the suave spy, played by Daniel Craig, arrives for a meeting at the Hoffer Klinik, a stunning glass building located on a snowy Alpine mountaintop – and then has a rather messy commute down? Bond being Bond, he gets involved in an airborne gunfight, crash-lands his aircraft in a forest, smashes through a wooden chalet and, of course, stops various villains piloting a fleet of ultra-tough Land Rover Defender vehicles and menacing blacked-out Range Rover Sport SVR vehicles.

That amazing stunt sequence – along with plenty of other memorable moments from over 50 years of Bond movies – has now been immortalized in a new visitor experience center, built right into the frozen rock on that very same mountaintop, the 10,000-foot-high Gaislachkogel.

Called 007 ELEMENTS, the permanent exhibition building in Sölden, in the Ötztal valley of Tyrol, Austria, has been designed by acclaimed architect Johann Obermoser to look and feel like a Bond villain's secret lair, replete with concrete walls, mysterious soundscapes and ambient lighting. The cinematically inspired interactive experience has been curated by Neal Callow, art director on *Spectre*, *Skyfall*, *Quantum of Solace* and *Casino Royale*.

Supported by EON Productions, movie rights owner MGM, the Sölden cable car company and 007 ELEMENTS' official partner Jaguar Land Rover, the exhibition should rank high up on any Bond fan's ski vacation 'must visit' list. And if you're keen to learn about the making of those blacked-out Range Rover vehicles and other unique Bond vehicles, do spend some time in the museum's Tech Lab and Action Hall, which are full of interactive behind-the-scenes displays showing how the thrilling mountain chase sequence in *Spectre* was filmed. We bet it'll leave you stirred, not shaken.



**EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER:** *ONELIFE* readers get a special 15% discount on entry to 007 ELEMENTS. Please contact [007elements@soelden.com](mailto:007elements@soelden.com) stating the code 'JAGUARLANDROVER' to book your visit

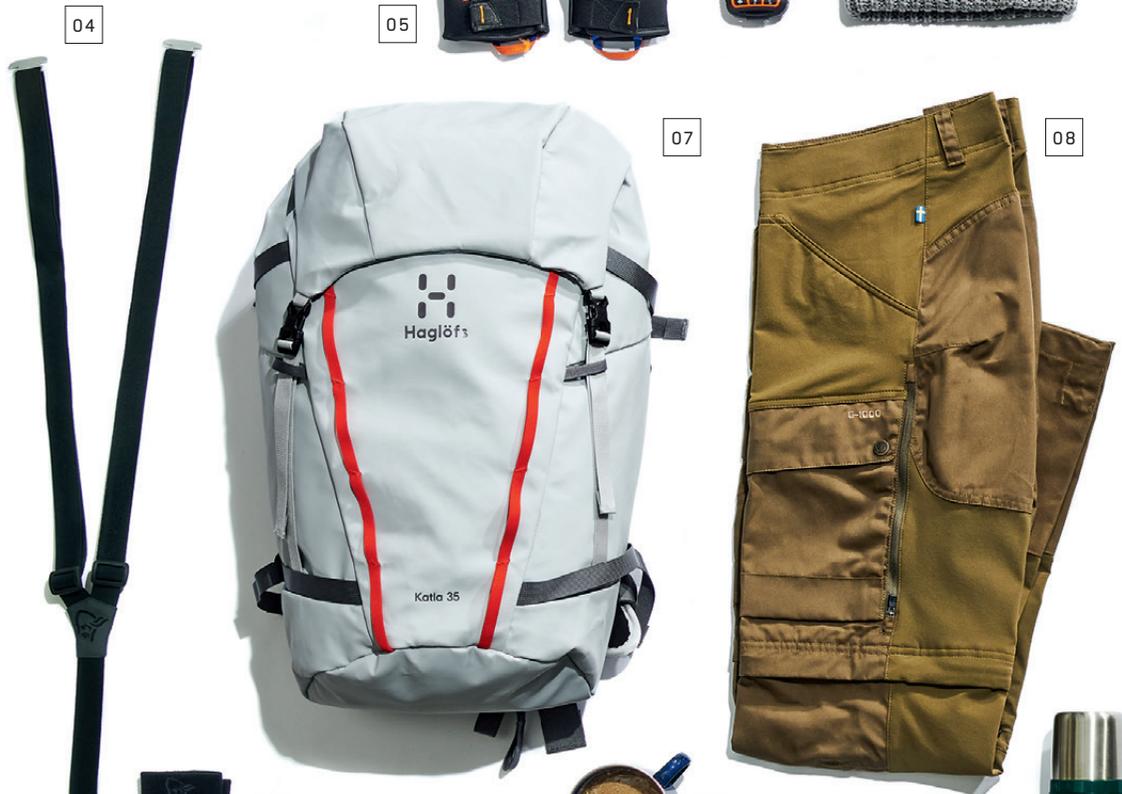
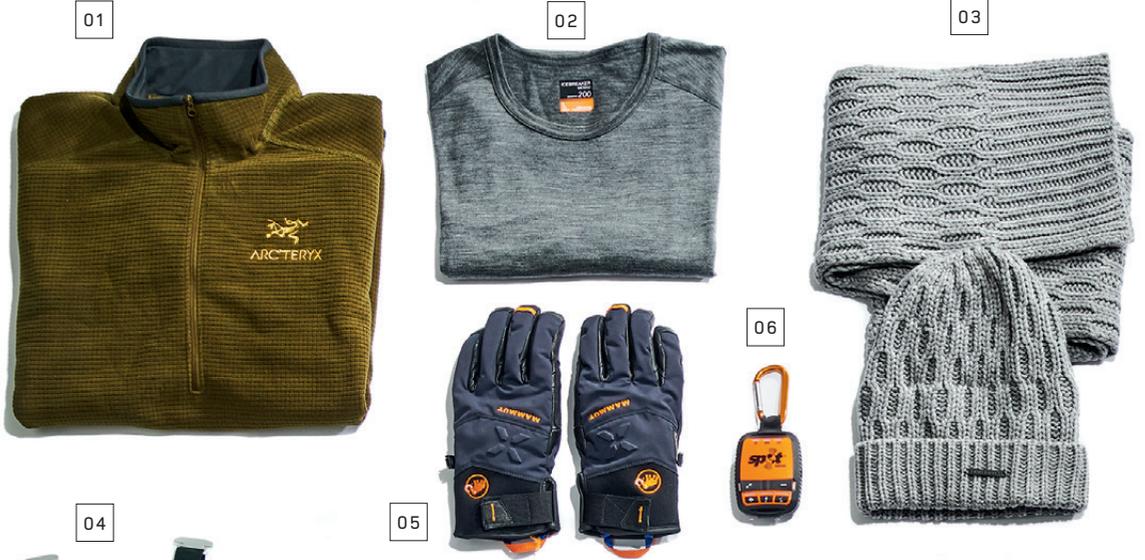


PHOTOGRAPHY: KRISTOPHER GRUNERT



# 03

TRAVEL



## TOP GEAR

"There is no bad weather, only bad clothing," goes a Scandinavian saying. Whether you are a professional explorer preparing for your next epic climb, or setting out for a family weekend away from the city, preparation is everything. Here's our handpicked selection of the best new winter gear – a range of high-quality kit to suit all kinds of adventures and adventurers – to help make the most of the season ahead.

 **BROWSE THE SHOP** Check out the latest Land Rover Collection of branded goods, gear and gadgets at [shop.landroverusa.com](http://shop.landroverusa.com)



**01 FLEECE**

Delta AR Zip Neck is ultra-warm thanks to Polartec; [arcteryx.com](http://arcteryx.com)

**02 BASE LAYER**

Oasis Short Sleeve Crew is made of pure wool for minimal friction; [icebreaker.com](http://icebreaker.com)

**03 HAT & SCARF**

High-quality knit, with subtle Land Rover metallic detail; [shop.landroverusa.com](http://shop.landroverusa.com)

**04 SUSPENDERS**

Svalbard has a fully adjustable, easy-attach system; [norrna.com](http://norrna.com)

**05 GLOVES**

Nordwand Pro gloves boast GORE-TEX grips and active moisture transfer; [mammut.com](http://mammut.com)

**06 TRACKER**

GEN3 Satellite Tracker comes with a handy smart SOS button; [findmespot.com](http://findmespot.com)

**07 BACKPACK**

Katla 35 is easy to clean as it repels water and dirt; [haglofs.com](http://haglofs.com)

**08 PANTS**

Keb Gaiter's stretch fabric enables high mobility while trekking; [fjallraven.com](http://fjallraven.com)

**09 SOCKS**

Made of ethical, breathable merino wool; [norrna.com](http://norrna.com)

**10 DRINKING CUP**

Classic all-purpose steel cup; [www.relags.com](http://www.relags.com)

**11 CLIMBING ROPE**

0.4 inches thick, the Parrot is both robust and eco-friendly; [edelrid.com](http://edelrid.com)

**12 THERMOS**

Keeps drinks hot or cold for up to 32 hours; [stanley-pmi.com](http://stanley-pmi.com)

**13 ARCTIC PARKA**

Musto parka with Silver Insulation Down Blend technology; [musto.com](http://musto.com)

**14 HELMET**

Vertex Vent features adjustable vents; [petzl.com](http://petzl.com)

**15 SOFT BOTTLE**

DuoLock SoftBottle, with dual-locking cap; [platy.com](http://platy.com)

**16 GOGGLES**

Line Miner snow goggles feature anti-fogging; [oakley.com](http://oakley.com)

**17 HEADLAMP**

Storm offers 350 lumens and RGB night vision; [blackdiamondequipment.com](http://blackdiamondequipment.com)

**18 NOTEBOOK**

Terrain Journal has a soft-touch finish cover and 96 lined sheets; [shop.landroverusa.com](http://shop.landroverusa.com)

**19 BOOTS**

Omega GTX mountaineering boots are insulated to 5°F; [hanwag.com](http://hanwag.com)

**20 ICE AX**

Glacier performance all-rounder has a steel pick and a grippy handle; [petzl.com](http://petzl.com)



04

TECHNOLOGY

## MADE OF ALL THE WRITE STUFF

**The pen, they say, is mightier than the sword. Well, now it certainly is.** The *Above and Beyond Pen* by Land Rover reflects the characteristics of the vehicles themselves: iconic, durable and truly capable. Land Rover technicians subjected prototypes to a gauntlet of torment, freezing them in ice, submerging them in water, even running them over with a Land Rover vehicle. Thanks to its precision-machined, aircraft-grade anodized aluminum body, the pen emerged virtually unscathed and perfectly functional. Rubber shock-resisting end caps minimize damage if dropped, and the tapered tip means it can be used to break glass in an emergency. Able to write at any angle, underwater, over grease, at extreme temperatures and even in zero gravity, the *Above and Beyond Pen* will perform when others have long given up. The perfect partner to your field notes, wherever your adventures may take you.



WATCH THE VIDEO Search 'Above and Beyond Pen by Land Rover' to see it tested. To order your own, visit [shop.landroverusa.com](http://shop.landroverusa.com) or your local retailer

# VELAR TAKES DESIGN CROWN

05  
DESIGN

Since its unveiling back in March 2017, the stunning Range Rover Velar has been making headlines around the globe for all the right reasons. But arguably its most important to date is winning the 2018 World Car Design of the Year.

Launched within the highly appropriate setting of London's new Design Museum, the Velar was instantly recognized by the public and critics alike for its design focus and finesse. Not long afterwards, the svelte luxury SUV made it onto the five-strong World Car Design of the Year shortlist via recommendation from a panel of six globally respected design experts from media, academia and the car design industry. Then followed the votes of the wider jury – 82 of the world's most influential motoring journalists from 25 countries – before the Velar was declared the best-of-the-design-best at the New York International Auto Show in March 2018.

Gerry McGovern, Land Rover chief design officer, said: "We're honored the jury recognized the tireless endeavors of our designers and engineers in delivering a vehicle with compelling design, tailored technology and relevant innovation, which come together to create a vehicle of instant desirability. The Velar brings a new dimension of modernity to the Range Rover family."

Named after the original concept Range Rover vehicles of the late 1960s, the Velar fills the model space between the Range Rover Evoque and Range Rover Sport. Its superb proportions are instantly recognizable as a Range Rover, while its sleek low silhouette with minimal line work is closely in keeping with McGovern's modernist philosophy. Flush fitting door handles, subtle copper accents and sophisticated surfacing all contribute to the vehicle's instantly recognizable design.

The less-is-more modernist approach continues through into the interior, which is masterfully executed with its secret-until-lit blade technology, high levels of precision and highest quality materials and finishes. It is this attention to detail and focus on harmony that has led McGovern to describe the interior as "an environment of calm sanctuary."

The interior offers another first of its kind in the form of a collaboration with Danish luxury furniture specialists Kvadrat. Land Rover is the first car manufacturer to collaborate with a premium furniture company on a mass-production automotive-grade fabric weave, offering a new kind of luxury and a breath of fresh air to the sector.



**RANGE ROVER VELAR**  
2018 WORLD CAR  
DESIGN OF THE YEAR



European model shown.

06  
TECHNOLOGY



ROAM  
FREE

As an award-winning travel and lifestyle photographer, Finn Beales knows better than most how difficult it can be to stay connected when on the job. His work – which runs the gamut from striking shots of vehicles to photo-narratives from exotic destinations – takes him to places that can be hard to reach, for humans and cell phone towers alike.

“Staying connected can be hard, especially if you’re way off the grid and far away from a power outlet,” says the Welshman, whose adventures can be followed on Instagram, where his account *@finn* has racked up more than half a million followers. “I’ve also got a lot of things to keep an eye on, including quite a bit of camera gear. So I don’t want to worry about my phone at all,” he adds.

To suit the demanding lifestyles of people like Beales, Land Rover teamed up with phone makers Bullitt to create the Land Rover Explore cell phone.

The Android phone, which has a 5-inch HD screen optimized for legibility in sunlight, features a powerful 4,000mAh battery giving two days of typical use. The add-on Adventure Pack, which nearly doubles battery capacity, includes a GPS patch antenna for immense accuracy.

The Land Rover Explore is packed with useful features, from dual-SIM functionality to access to two phone networks, to high-grade topographical mapping with Skyline augmented reality to help identify physical landmarks on your journey.

And when things get messy, its ultra-durable Land Rover design-inspired IP68-rated shell gives you water resistance to a depth of three feet for up to half an hour; functionality in extreme temperatures; and protection from sand, dust and humidity, adding up to a truly rugged device you can rely on.

“Especially when I am shooting for Land Rover, I often find myself in difficult conditions,” says Beales. “So the fact that I can use the Explore phone in the wet, at sub-zero temperatures and in the dark, even with a wet or gloved finger, really is brilliant.”

Armed with a phone as capable as the Land Rover Explore, Beales can focus on what he does best without having to cut his adventures short – much to the joy of his 584,000 fans.



The Land Rover Explorer phone is not available currently in the US market.

EXPERIENCE

# EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY



ABOVE & BEYOND



Closed course. Professional drivers and drivers operating vehicles under supervision. Do not attempt.

Get behind the wheel of our latest vehicles at a Land Rover Experience Center. Head off-road with an expert instructor who will coach you in skills to tackle the most challenging terrain - from steep inclines and descents to slippery slopes and water crossings.\*

Whether novice or seasoned pro, you'll quickly build confidence, refine techniques, and have fun along the way.

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**QUAIL LODGE  
& GOLF CLUB**  
Carmel, CA  
1.831.620.8854

**EQUINOX GOLF  
RESORT & SPA**  
Manchester Village, VT  
1.802.362.0687

European model shown. 2017 Discovery HSE.

\*All attendees are required to sign a release and attendees who wish to operate a vehicle at the Experience Center must have a valid driver's license. Group and Team Building Experiences available. Payment is charged at time of booking. Applicable taxes may apply. © 2018 Jaguar Land Rover North America, LLC

C L I M B

E V E R Y

M O U N T A I N

STORY **BEN OLIVER** PHOTOGRAPHY **BRITTANY MUMMA**



Combining go-anywhere capability with hybrid performance, the new Range Rover PHEV proves to be an ideal companion for mountaineer and photographer Jimmy Chin

**Leave your car outside overnight** in Jackson Hole in winter and it will have to withstand bitterly cold conditions. So when climber, skier, photographer and Oscar-nominated filmmaker Jimmy Chin tested the new Range Rover PHEV (Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle), he didn't need to take it on one of his expeditions to find testing conditions: he just took it home.

"I really appreciate having a vehicle that can handle everything the weather here can throw at you," Jimmy says of the Wyoming town and ski resort where he lives and trains between adventures. "Conditions here can change dramatically."

Jimmy is used to being in dramatic environments. Obsessed with mountaineering, he lived in his car in Yosemite National Park after graduating from college just so he could climb every day. But his stellar career documenting his climbs as a photographer and filmmaker was almost accidental.

Soon after graduation, he used his climbing partner's camera to snatch a picture of him sleeping in their bivouac dangling from the sheer 2900 foot face of El Capitan, Yosemite's infamous granite monolith. The image sold for \$500. The pair split the proceeds, and Jimmy used his share to buy his own camera. →



## “BEING A VISUAL PERSON, I APPRECIATE DESIGN WITH FUNCTIONALITY”

His visual acuity equaled his agility on rock and snow; soon enough, his images from the most extreme environments on Earth were appearing in *National Geographic*. In 2006 Jimmy not only summited Mount Everest, but was also a member of the first US expedition to ski back down it. In 2011 he made the first ascent of the Shark’s Fin on Meru Peak in the Garhwal Himalaya. *Meru*, the documentary he made about the experience, won the Audience Award at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, and was nominated for an Oscar.

Given his background, it’s easy to understand Jimmy’s affinity for Land Rover vehicles, the vehicle of choice for adventurers since 1948. You’ll occasionally glimpse them in his award-winning commercial photography for big brands, including Virgin Galactic.

### CHARGING AHEAD

The Range Rover may be the luxury flagship of the Land Rover range, but it’s also an adventurer at heart, making the first crossing of Panama’s infamous Darién Gap in 1972 and completing the arduous 7,500-mile crossing of the Sahara two years later. The Range Rover has always been an innovator, too. It was the world’s first luxury SUV, as well as the first SUV to offer anti-lock brakes and aluminum monocoque construction.

This latest innovation goes a step further. The Range Rover PHEV uses a powerful but compact lithium-ion battery, housed under the cargo space floor and charged through a port in the car’s grille, to power an 85kW electric motor. This works in tandem with the lightweight, efficient, 2.0 liter gas engine to produce an impressive total of 398HP – enough to accelerate the Range Rover PHEV to 60 mph in just 6.4 seconds, and on to a top speed of 137 mph\*.

The impression of effortless performance is heightened by the car’s near-silence when propelled by the electric motor alone, for up to 31 miles\*\*. As someone who documents the world’s most beautiful, fragile environments and campaigns for environmental causes, the issue of lowering emissions is close to Jimmy’s heart.

Land Rover engineer Dan Hook accompanied Jimmy on his drive, and explained how he could use the car’s different driving modes to maximize the environmental benefit of its drivetrain. With ‘EV’ mode engaged, the car uses pure electric drive as much as possible; ideal for reducing tailpipe emissions in Jackson Hole’s historic town center. ‘Save’ mode, on the other hand, uses the car’s gas engine on the open road and maintains the battery’s charge so you can save your electric running for the city.

And the clever Predictive Energy Optimization mode gives the best possible fuel economy by calculating the optimal places to use the car’s charge or regenerate it when following a navigation route: perfect on the mountain roads around Jackson Hole.

But as someone who carries huge amounts of equipment when climbing and skiing in the mountains around his home, training and seeking the inspiration for his next project, Jimmy also wanted to know if the plug-in hybrid powertrain compromised the Range Rover PHEV practicality.

“The battery is packaged in such a way that it won’t influence or compromise the way you use the vehicle,” Dan tells him. “You can still put your luggage and skis in the back. You don’t have to change your lifestyle.”

As if on cue, some of Jackson Hole’s 5.5 feet of annual snow began to fall just as Jimmy headed out to the sweeping mountain roads. Nothing to concern a man who has made dozens of difficult, dangerous ‘first ascents’ – nor to concern the Range Rover PHEV, which like all Range Rover vehicles, is capable across a wide variety of challenging terrain.

“It is a confident car to drive, and that’s important to me. It’s great for my family,” Jimmy said. “And being a very visual person and focused on composition, I appreciate design with functionality. I think that this Range Rover has a really incredible combination of the two.” Looks like Jimmy has found the perfect partner for his next adventure... □

\*Always follow local speed limits.\*\* Manufacturer-estimated up to 31 miles EV range with fully charged battery. Actual range may vary.





The Range Rover PHEV can drive up to 31 miles purely on electric power, with a variety of modes that help to optimally use or regenerate the battery's charge

## RANGE ROVER PHEV: A QUIET REVOLUTION

The world's first luxury SUV is still the best. As the flagship for the entire Land Rover marque, the Range Rover blends peerless performance and off-road capability with exemplary levels of sophistication, with a cabin that offers a truly first-class travel experience. No other vehicle has such a broad span of ability.

Range Rover vehicles have always harnessed the latest technology; the latest model, too, is filled with smart ideas such as the twin 10" Touchscreens of the Touch Pro Duo Land Rover InControl® infotainment system<sup>1</sup>, seven-mode Terrain Response® system<sup>2</sup>, and all-round LED lighting. But the advanced drivetrain of the Range Rover PHEV powers this icon into a new era for mobility.

As a Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle, it seamlessly selects and blends usage of its gas engine and its electric motor – which is charged from an external power supply, and enhanced by regenerative braking – to deliver optimum performance and efficiency.

The drivetrain also enhances the hallmark capabilities of a Range Rover. Up to 31 miles<sup>3</sup> of quiet electric driving makes it even more refined. You can even pre-cool the cabin in hot weather, without affecting the electric range, as long as the vehicle is plugged in.

Cabin space and off-road ability are uncompromised by the electrification of its drivetrain; nor are the famous Range Rover design cues – even the charging point is

hidden discreetly in the grille. Charging is convenient and simple. It can be done overnight with a standard domestic electricity supply, or in less than three hours with a dedicated wallbox, and can be controlled remotely with the Remote Premium app on your smartphone or wearable device.

And naturally, the PHEV has the lowest emissions (and in electric mode, none at all) and fuel consumption of any Range Rover.

Range Rover created the luxury SUV category in 1970. Now, with the PHEV, it's redefining it. □



**WATCH THE VIDEO**  
Search for 'Jimmy Chin Range Rover Plug-In Hybrid' on YouTube

<sup>1</sup> Do not use Land Rover InControl® features under conditions that will affect your safety or the safety of others. Driving while distracted can result in loss of vehicle control.

<sup>2</sup> These systems are not a substitute for driving safely with due care and attention and will not function under all circumstances, speeds, weather and road conditions, etc. Driver should not assume that these systems will correct errors of judgment in driving. Please consult the owner's manual or your local authorized Land Rover Retailer for more details.

<sup>3</sup> Manufacturer-estimated up to 31 miles EV range with fully charged battery. Actual range may vary.



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T H E

L A N D

O F

L A N D

R O V E R S

Deep in the eastern Himalaya lies a small, misty Indian town: Maneybhanjang. It's not very different from a hundred other towns like it, except for one thing. It is a living museum of Land Rover vehicles. *ONELIFE* travels to a very special place

STORY OUSEPH CHACKO  
PHOTOGRAPHY SAM BARKER





Pemba (center) tackles the tough conditions with a smile, maneuvering his Series I up the narrow hairpin-studded road with practiced ease

**Pemba Tamang is wearing a smile that says,** very clearly, that he is in his element. Mine, not so much. I'm riding shotgun with him in his weather-beaten Land Rover Series I as we drive up a snake of a Himalayan road, from the tiny Indian mountain town of Maneybhanjang to the trekking destination of Sandakphu on the Nepalese border. We climbed 2,000 feet in the first five miles; within the next 15, we will shoot up to 13,000 feet – and it is a first-gear climb all the way. The screaming diesel engine makes conversation difficult, so smiles will have to do the talking for now.

The road is narrow and peppered with tight hairpin bends. Nepal flashes by, sometimes on our left, at other times on the right. Now, a novice driving a non-power-steered Series I might misjudge a hairpin, have to reverse and burn his clutch plates to get going again; but not Tamang. He expertly navigates these curves with practiced muscle memory and the sincere belief that the small figure of Lord Buddha stuck on the dashboard will guide his Land Rover up safely.

About 13 miles in, the concrete road deteriorates into a path strewn with rugby-ball sized rocks. To perform its usual duty of carrying loads of up to 1,764 lbs, this old Series I has beefed-up leaf springs, which makes it ride like a kangaroo on a pogo stick when unloaded – but to my amazement, it barely rattles.

Instead, it's only my teeth that do so, as we bounce down this so-called road, past rhododendron forests and through rolling mist. Four-wheel drive engaged, the Land Rover remains as unperturbed as its ever-smiling driver, and we chug forward steadily. And though the thick, chilly fog today unfortunately denies us the otherwise pristine view of Kanchenjunga, the third-highest peak in the world, the Land Rover has more than proven its Himalayan mettle.

It dawns on me that anything longer or less tough than a Series I will not ballet its way up half as easily. No wonder that, for decades, Land Rover Series I and II vehicles were the only vehicles plying this old pony trail – and 42 of them still survive to this day, rendering faithful service. And this is the very reason I find myself in this remote Himalayan district – three hours by road from the nearest small airport, Bagdogra, itself a 75-minute flight from the city of Kolkata – to discover just how this beautifully simple vehicle changed the fortunes of one small Indian town forever. →



**“THE SERIES I IS AS TOUGH AS  
A HAMMER. ITS BODY DOES NOT  
RUST AND IT IS SIMPLE TO FIX”**

Passang, one of the oldest Land Rover drivers in Maneybhanjang, firmly believes that no other vehicle can take on this arduous task

### CHANGING LIVES

The genesis of these vehicles in India traces back to the Rover Company's local distributorship, the Kolkata-based Dewars Garage and Engineering Works, which imported and sold around 1,000 Land Rover vehicles to British companies that owned tea plantations in West Bengal, Assam and other north-eastern states. As British companies exited India in the years following its independence, many of these vehicles were auctioned off in the town of Siliguri, about three hours away.

The first Land Rover arrived in Maneybhanjang in 1958. Until then, life had been very hard, especially for the ponies that used to transport supplies to remote settlements high up in the Himalayas. The four-wheel-drive Land Rover proved to be so reliable and so much faster that over the next 36 years, an estimated 300 more were bought by the people of Maneybhanjang.

Walking down Maneybhanjang's narrow main street, busily lined with small stores selling assorted goods, snacks and trinkets, I'm immediately drawn to the parked row of Series I and II vehicles. They look like they've lived a hard life – the paint on most is worn down to bare metal, and most of their tires are way past their use-by date – but they are clearly well-maintained, and proudly sport an array of colorful stickers, from 'Great Britain', 'England Rover' and 'Manchester Rules,' to the slightly puzzling 'Chocolate Boy,' and the apt 'Life Line.'

Maneybhanjang, population 2,500, is a tourist town; its three hotels and numerous homestays cater to the trekkers who come to huff up 20 miles and take in the spectacular view from Sandakphu. For decades, the Land Rover vehicles ferried supplies and passengers between the towns, and have been the engine of Maneybhanjang's commerce.

### URBAN LEGENDS

"I owe everything to the Land Rover," says Passang Ramba, one of the oldest drivers in these parts. Since the 1970s, he has been driving supplies up to Sandakphu twice a day, bringing back crops of potatoes to Maneybhanjang's market. This is no mean feat: in the old days, the 40-mile return trip could take up to seven back-breaking hours. Today, two-thirds of the road has been upgraded to asphalt and concrete – but while it may be a bit more comfortable, the ride still takes about the same time, as the road's width and gradient limit average speeds.

"The Series I is as tough as a hammer," he says, explaining that its longevity derives from its durable →







**"AKBAR, THE GOD OF  
LAND ROVER IN THESE  
PARTS, IS PROUD  
OF THIS IDENTITY"**

Akbar (top) is said to be able to fix almost any mechanical problem, utilizing his vast experience and the cavern of parts in his workshop (left)

aluminum body and simple running gear. "The body does not rust and so it doesn't need to be parked in a garage, which can be an expensive luxury in a town like this where space is tight. Modern 4x4s with their steel bodies need a lot more maintenance."

He's convinced modern cars can't take the constant beating that the Series I can. And who am I to argue with this passionate man who, through years of sheer hard work and diligence, has a daughter with an Oxford doctorate, a son completing his Master's degree in Australia, and a third child in a school nearby. I begin to understand how the Series I has helped to drastically change lives in this town.

Later, I'm perched on a blackened wooden stool in a workshop whose walls are lined with shelves full of old Land Rover parts. Akbar is in his 50s, but the creases in his face instantly disappear as he animatedly shows me various pinions, gears, clutch assemblies, gaskets, fan belts, and three complete engines. Akbar, who has been working on Series I vehicles for over 30 years, is the man who keeps Maneybhanjang's Land Rover vehicles running. His expertise includes mating Indian-made diesel engines to the running gear of the Series I.

He tells me that only three Land Rover vehicles here still run the original gas engine, for reasons of simple economics; in India, diesel is considerably cheaper than gas, and diesel engines are more economical in these high-revving, slow uphill, off-road conditions. And when fuel accounts for a third of the cost of the going rate for each trip made by these Land Rover vehicles, the savings add up.

"Only Land Rover vehicles can ply the road up this mountain because they are so

simple to fix," he says. He shows me a gear shaft with its teeth almost stripped off. "This happened high up on the road, but the driver managed to make it back to the workshop." I stare at the almost bald gear shaft in utter disbelief – it doesn't have enough teeth to bite into a well boiled potato, let alone bring a fully loaded Series I home. "Modern vehicles," adds Akbar, "have electronic systems that are almost impossible for people in these remote areas to fix."

Akbar, who has not had a school education, doesn't know the correct names of the parts he needs to fix but, through sheer experience and intuition, understands what is wrong and how to execute repairs. Later, I learn there are other mechanics in the area who can repair these old Land Rover vehicles, but it is Akbar they turn to for the difficult problems. In these parts, Akbar is the god of Land Rover, and he is proud of this identity. "Times are hard," he admits, "but when people come from far away to speak to me about what I do, it gives me a deep sense of satisfaction." →

"PEOPLE COME HERE



FOR ADVENTURE, AND THIS ROAD IS A HUGE PART OF THAT ADVENTURE”

**AT A CROSSROADS**

In 2004, the drivers formed the Singalila Land Rover Owners Association, and its head is Chandan Pradhan. I meet him in the family room behind his general-store shop. The association's main job, he informs me, is to look after the welfare of the drivers. If one member falls sick or needs medical treatment for example, every other member chips in to help with an interest-free loan. The association also gives all the drivers a fair chance to make money: if one driver makes a trip up, his next turn comes only after the other 41 have had theirs. Clearly, the co-operative system works: the drivers' children all attend school, Chandan tells me, "and they can afford to buy gifts for their wives. These old Land Rovers make it all possible."

The local government has proposed to ban these old vehicles, which no longer meet modern emissions norms, from plying the roads as taxis. But there is hope, Chandan believes, as there is strong support "from high places." Even the regional border police enlist these Land Rover vehicles to supply their outposts because

nothing else can do it so reliably.

The government has also proposed plans to complete work on the remaining sections of the road so that lesser vehicles can also make it up to Sandakphu, but this is not a popular course of action, I learn. Dawa Tenzin is one of the youngest Land Rover drivers in

**"IF THE LAND ROVER VEHICLES  
DISAPPEAR, A HUGE PART  
OF MANEYBHANJANG WILL  
GO WITH THEM"**

Maneybhanjang. A well-spoken university graduate, he returned to his hometown to follow the tire marks of his father. "Yes, most remote villages in India are fighting for better roads, but the road to Sandakphu should remain the challenge it is," says Tenzin.

"People come to this place for adventure, and this difficult road is a huge part of the adventure. If it gets fixed and becomes accessible to even hatchback cars, more tourists will arrive. More tourists will mean more money – but also more pollution, noise and garbage. The town will lose its charm. This road must remain difficult to traverse because if it isn't, the Land Rover vehicles will disappear, and when that happens, a huge part of what makes Maneybhanjang what it is, will go with it."

I can't help but agree with him. I've been here all of three days and I can clearly see how the Series I has helped shape the fortunes of what could have easily been just another anonymous Himalayan town. It is the Land Rover vehicles here that make Maneybhanjang special. □

Chandan (bottom) heads the drivers' association, which has benefited the community. Tenzin (middle) wants the road to remain challenging, in order to preserve the character of the town



**WATCH THE FILM** To ride with Land Rover into the heart of the Himalaya, search for 'Land of Land Rovers' on YouTube



# C H I L D ' S P L A Y

What happens when you give children the chance to experience the extraordinary off-road abilities of a Land Rover?  
We capture the excitement as young imaginations run wild...

STORY LUKE PONSFORD  
PHOTOGRAPHY HANNAH SMILES







### ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Acclaimed illustrator Jim Stoten is the creative force behind the *Mr Tweed* series of children's books. His unique style – playful, bustling scenes brimming with a sense of fun and discovery – perfectly brings out the magical experience of the Land Rover Above and Beyond Tour from a child's perspective.

**If you're into competitive equestrianism,** it doesn't get much better than the Royal Windsor Horse Show, held in the grounds of Windsor Castle. Undoubtedly the largest and most prestigious outdoor event of its kind in the UK, this is the place to see international show jumping, dressage and carriage driving competition at its highest level. Her Majesty The Queen, the show's patron, and Prince Philip attend every year.

But on this sunny Saturday morning, the horses aren't getting much of a look in, at least from the younger members of the crowd. No, their attention is very much drawn to a large area behind the main arena. An area where a fleet of bright white Land Rover vehicles are doing the craziest things – climbing up impossible inclines, negotiating near-vertical descents, tilting sideways at terrifying angles. And, if that weren't enough, there are mini-sized Series I Land Rover vehicles that children can drive themselves, and remote-control Defender vehicles, too.

Today's Land Rover Above and Beyond Tour is full of thrills. Especially if you happen to be well under driving age...

### BOSS BABY

Also known as the 'Huey Kids' cars, this six-strong fleet of beautifully made mini Series I Land Rover vehicles – in authentic Grasmere Green – debuted at last year's Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials. With a staff of Land Rover attendants to guide the kids around the diminutive, hay bale-lined track, these pint-sized Land Rover vehicles – limited to a top speed of 10 mph – have since provided more than 3,000 youngsters with their very first driving experience. And if you're five years old, like Charlie Warman, simple words can't express the feeling of taking the wheel on your own. After two thrilling 5 mph laps of the course, the wide-eyed, slack-jawed Charlie is taken by his father to join the line again for another go. →



YAHYA  
AGED 6

← "CAN I HAVE ONE?  
PLEASE?" →





## UP!

A three-part 'obstacle course' is the star of the show. The first, the Twin Terrapod, is an awesome custom-built machine that looks like something out of Jurassic Park – if Jurassic Park featured construction toy monsters instead of dinosaurs. The job of this huge steel structure is to test a Land Rover vehicle's ability to climb up and over steep gradients, and, today, to make children squeal. Our Discovery navigates the formidable 30-degree incline, the car's All-Terrain Progress Control function managing the power going through each wheel to maintain a steady speed across the obstacle surface\*.

With a forward view of nothing but sky, our passengers, eight-year-old

Haiden and 11-year-old Augustus Wrenn, are beside themselves with excitement. "How is the car holding us up?" Wrenn screeches. "It's shocking!"

Before we know it we're at the top, our Land Rover Experience instructor balancing the car on the throttle 19 feet above the ground, the height of a fully grown giraffe. The view down is a 40-degree slope – as steep as the stairs in a two-story house. More excited screeching ensues from the back seats as the descent begins; our driver keeps his feet clear of the brakes and the Discovery vehicle's Hill Descent Control (HDC®) function automatically slows our descent on the slippery metal surface\*.

On the Turntable Terrain Trailer the climb is followed by the car being set onto a vertiginous platform, which then tilts itself through 180-degrees before dropping the Discovery down to ground level, where it articulates itself off the trailer, wheels akimbo, and onto terra firma. The demonstration is a reminder of just how supremely capable the Discovery is. The final section, the Articulation Trailer, has two large staggered ramps to test the Discovery vehicle's talents for conquering difficult approach angles.

Twelve-year-old Hugo Allison-Vallois emerges visibly shaking. "It was so exciting! It was so steep it felt like I was taking off!" Was he impressed with the car? "I definitely want a Land Rover when I'm older," he states firmly. But which one? As well as the Discovery there are two Range Rover vehicles and a Range Rover Sport on duty here today. "Oh, all of them!" he laughs. →

ANNABEL  
AGED 10

"IT WAS SO MUCH FUN! THE  
FIRST SECTION WAS THE  
SCARIEST BY FAR!"



\*These systems are not a substitute for driving safely with due care and attention and will not function under all circumstances, speeds, weather and road conditions, etc. Driver should not assume that these systems will correct errors of judgment in driving. Please consult the owner's manual or your local authorized Land Rover retailer for more details.







## TOY STORY

Size clearly doesn't matter when it comes to the capability of a Land Rover, even a remote-controlled one. Based on the Defender 110, these rugged 1:10 models do almost everything a real Defender can do. Featuring cruise control, locking differential, a high- and low-range gearbox and 'crawler mode,' the remote-controlled Defender vehicles took on the jungle-themed modular track with aplomb, negotiating muddy climbs, slippery log bridges and technical descents, all the while cheerfully absorbing plenty of impacts thanks to their child-sized operators. Oh, and they were a big hit with the adults, too.



MILLER  
AGED 6

"THIS IS SO COOL!"



More than a million people have experienced the Above and Beyond Tour at various events around the world this year, many of them young children who will doubtless remember their thrilling day long into the future. For them this hasn't just been a 4x4 experience, it's been a Land Rover experience.

For six-year-old Miller Delaney, it's been nearly too much excitement for one day. Having been on the obstacle tour (twice) and driven the Huey Kids cars, he's now totally enthralled with a remote-controlled Land Rover, sending it bouncing sideways over a muddy slope on the jungle track.

So, has he had a good time today at Windsor? He looks up from the handset for just enough time to flash me an encouraging ear-to-ear grin. And what about the horses? Did he like them? Delaney looks up again. "What horses?" he asks.

Welcome to the wonderful world of Land Rover, young man. □

 **FIND OUT MORE** To book your own Experience, visit [landroverusa.com/experience](https://www.landroverusa.com/experience)



# C A P E F E A R

The fearsome Cape Epic is one of the toughest mountain bike races on Earth. Plotting its ever-changing route is almost as hard as completing the race, but made easier thanks to a group of dedicated route planners and their Land Rover vehicles

STORY LUKE PONSFORD



PHOTOGRAPHY: ABSA CAPE EPIC / NICK MUZIK

**Into the sun: with some of the toughest routes of any mountain bike race on the planet, riders in the Absa Cape Epic are often faced with extreme terrain and insufferable temperatures**

**When New Zealand rugby legend** Carlos Spencer claims that a bicycle race is a lot tougher than playing for the All Blacks rugby team, you know that he's talking about one hell of a bicycle race. And the Absa Cape Epic is just that, but in a setting that's closer to the sun-dappled heavens.

With South Africa's mountainous Western Cape region serving as its backdrop, the Cape Epic is the world's biggest and toughest endurance mountain bike race. Its combination of distance, climbing and technical sections give the race a 'hors catégorie' (beyond category) classification by cycling's international governing body, the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI).

1,300 riders – male and female, from aspiring amateurs to world-class professionals – racing in 650 two-person teams face a Herculean eight-day challenge that sees them covering 406 miles of harsh gravel roads, rocky climbs, technical descents and fast forest tracks that weave their way through glorious vineyards and indigenous forests, across fathomless ravines and along magnificent coastlines. However, with a knee-weakening 44,390 feet of steady climbing over the course of the eight days, there's little time for riders to enjoy the scenery.

From its beginnings in 2004 as an all-comers mountain bike event with around 200 riders taking part, the Cape Epic has grown into a truly international date on the competitive mountain biking calendar. Nowadays, each year attracts around 1,300 riders from around the world. It's also become increasingly difficult, a true test of riders' mettle and inner strength, with Land Rover Technical Terrain sections specially designed to challenge even the hardest of competitors.

Extreme gradients, vertiginous descents, large rocks and loose shale make cycling these sections something of an ordeal for the Cape Epic riders, not to mention the race organization's team of route-planning drivers, who rely on a fleet of Land Rover vehicles to scout this jagged terrain and plan the routes months ahead of the main event.

As the route changes every year, this is no easy task. Both planners and vehicles are put through their paces to make sure the best paths, tracks and climbs are identified, tested and finally added to the tour.

"These days there are so many constraints on the route and there are so many requirements on the villages that host the Cape Epic that we literally have to plan the route 18 months in advance," says Kevin Vermaak, the founder of the Cape Epic race.

"The terrain changes, farms get sold, borders are created between the farmlands. This is very much a moving target because you have a drought, a fire or a river flooding and you've got to be changing the route →



**NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART**  
Participants in the Absa Cape Epic – from keen amateurs to world-class professionals – come from all across the world to compete, in teams of two, over a distance of more than 400 miles, split across seven stages and eight days. Some stages include climbs of more than 6,500 feet. Riders typically train for six months ahead of the race, for up to 12 hours a week.





Land Rover vehicles' capabilities are put to the test every year in the Cape Epic, making sure its riders face some of the toughest and most challenging routes on the planet

throughout that 18 months of preparation." Indeed, when it comes to the massively complex task of scouting the route of the race, the Cape Epic's fleet of ultra-capable Land Rover vehicles plays a crucial role.

"We simply couldn't do it without the support of Land Rover because we've got to be out every single month monitoring the state of the next year's itinerary. For that we need highly capable and, above all, reliable scouting vehicles," says Vermaak, thinking no doubt of the upcoming 2019 Cape Epic and its possibly entirely new route. He, his scouts and their Land Rover vehicles are set for another busy year.

This year's race – the 15th Cape Epic and the third with Land Rover as its Official Vehicle and Route Partner – started with a 12.5-mile Prologue on the iconic Table Mountain followed by seven grueling stages that visited the towns of Robertson, Worcester and Wellington, before finishing at the beautiful Val de Vie Estate in the Paarl-Franschhoek Valley.

Those spending eight days in the saddle could expect to face four consecutive days of over 62 miles, as well as a draining time trial on Stage 5 and a final stage taking the exhausted riders from Wellington to Val de Vie over a testing 43 miles with 6,560 feet of climbing. The Cape Epic race organizers made sure that those prized finishing medals didn't come easy. It's no surprise, then, that only 84 percent of riders managed to cross this year's finishing line.

"It's such an intense ride," says 59-year-old Mike Nixon, ex-mountaineer and a member of Land Rover's own official Cape Epic team, which participates in a

## "YOU LITERALLY HAVE TO FIGHT FOR EACH PEDAL STROKE ON THOSE CLIMBS"

MIKE NIXON

number of categories with a 12-man roster. As one of only four riders to have completed the Cape Epic all 15 times (a group known as the Last Lions), Nixon knows what he is talking about.

"This year's Stage 4 – the Land Rover Technical Terrain section – was the toughest stage on the Epic this year by far. The

single-track trails going up the Goudini Spa segment were incredibly dry, rocky and sandy. You literally had to fight for every pedal stroke on those climbs."

As for the Land Rover team, all of its 12 riders successfully crossed the finishing line this year. Mike Nixon came in at 252nd overall with his riding partner Jasper van Dijk, while former Proteas batsman and all-round cricketing legend Gary Kirsten and his partner Roddy van Breda, competing in the over 40s Masters category, finished 87th in their category. And rugby hero Carlos Spencer, together with Clinton Mackintosh, finished 98th in the Masters category.

"It was a truly incredible eight days," says Gary Kirsten, who managed the Land Rover team as well as riding for it. "I felt honored to be leading this group of people under the Land Rover banner. Simply finishing this grueling race really is an achievement in itself." Carlos Spencer, it seems, really wasn't wrong. □



**RIDE ON** Next year's race runs from March 17-24. For more information on the Absa Cape Epic, visit [cape-epic.com](http://cape-epic.com)



THE  
HILLS  
ARE  
ALIVE



Just you, your car and the road... and your family...  
and a whole lot of gear. Adventurer  
Monty Halls and his brood find Ireland's County Donegal  
is the perfect setting to rediscover togetherness

STORY MONTY HALLS  
PHOTOGRAPHY ALEXANDER RHIND

**For anyone who travels,** there is something special about a border. It represents a moment of transition between two worlds, a single step that crosses from one environment to another, one that invariably heightens the senses and enriches the traveling experience. And for me, there is no finer border than the one between the land and the sea. Coastlines have always held a certain magic throughout the history of travel and exploration, and this one – the convoluted, honeycombed, endlessly variable shores of Donegal – holds more wonder than most.

Donegal is the north-western-most county in Ireland, and as such represents the last point of landfall in western Europe. It is one of those rare places where you can stand with your heels on a great continent, and your toes in a vast ocean. I have a little bit of history here, as Malin Head in Donegal – the very northern tip of Ireland – was where in 2011 I had one of the most memorable marine encounters of my entire life. It was here that for one wondrous day hundreds of basking sharks ploughed across the limpid waters of the bay beneath the glowering cliffs of the headland – an unforgettable aggregation of the second-largest fish on earth, drawn here by current, tide, plankton, and a sun that shone in a cloudless sky.

I was returning seven years later with my family, to share with them not only the wonders of the coastline, but also the green hinterland of one of Ireland's wildest and most sparsely populated counties. My own rather tenuous connection with Ireland is based on a deep and abiding affection for the country and its people, generated during the filming of the BBC series *The Great Irish Escape* several years ago. But this paled into insignificance next to the ancestral links of my wife Tam, something that was clearly manifested in our daughters Isla and Molly, the latter in particular undeniably a flame-haired distillation of that Celtic lineage. And so

it seemed only appropriate that we took the kids to a county where the waters are wild, the heartland is ancient, and Irish culture is nurtured and celebrated. It would be our gift to Isla and Molly, albeit a fairly self-indulgent one.

It's no small matter packing for a week away, given the unique demands (and they are demands, let's make no bones about that) of little people on long trips. And thus, the Tardis-like capacity of the Land Rover Discovery – the car chosen for our small family adventure – was tested to the full as we found room for it all – a colossal tetra of cases, backpacks, shovels and pails, and – in the middle of everything – a small overnight bag for me.

We were also towing a boat – there was absolutely no way I was visiting over 700 miles of Donegal coastline without the ability to launch into the Atlantic to visit offshore islands and hidden coves. The towing experience was a delight (and there's a rare sentence); Land Rover has really thrown some resources at making sure this otherwise stressful experience is entirely easy and (dare I say it) great fun. Indeed, the only issue is occasionally forgetting that you're towing anything at all. Before we knew it we were arriving at our first destination, clear-eyed, sane, and still married.

Our exploration of Donegal would last a week, which is no time at all to experience what the place has to offer. This is, after all, the location voted the world's number one travel destination by National Geographic on their 'cool list' of 2017. But we had tried to view the trip through the eyes of a six- and four-year-old.

What experiences would generate memories to last a lifetime? What would fire their imaginations? We assumed that fine restaurants and sleepy boutique hotels would not be high on their agenda – although Donegal has plenty of those. We wanted to get down and dirty, to get tanned, salty and sandy. As such →

**The Discovery unloads the Halls and their bodyboards onto Rossnowlough Beach. In Tullagh Bay, horsepower gets swapped for horses and a seaside canter**



European model shown.

“WHAT WOULD FIRE THEIR IMAGINATIONS AND  
GENERATE MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME?”





“THIS WAS A CHANCE TO  
TRAVEL ON A REAL VOYAGE  
OF DISCOVERY”

we had created an itinerary that meant delving into every aspect of the wilderness around us, a veritable surf and turf extravaganza that would utilize every aspect of the vehicle and our ingenuity. I have always maintained that there is no finer explorer than a child, and we now had two of them bouncing around in the back of the car, desperate to be unleashed on the landscape that surrounded them.

The county represents quite a playground for any age. With an area of 1,877 square miles and a population of only 160,000, vast swathes are given over to wilderness: loughs, ancient peat bogs, forests and mountains. I'm not entirely sure at what point a hill becomes a mountain, but what the two main ranges of Derryveagh and Blue Stack lack in altitude, they certainly make up for in grandeur.

But I was keen to baptize the vacation in brine, so we drove to the chocolate-box pretty port of Portnablagh to dip our toes in the sea. A trait we found throughout Donegal is that you can drive straight onto the beach, and I did so muttering sotto voce in gratitude at the Discovery vehicle's sure-footed feel on sand. Apparently each day in peak season a car becomes an unwitting amphibious vehicle as the tide races in, so it was rather nice to feel confident about beating a hasty retreat to higher ground if required.

This also gave me a chance to use the optional Land Rover Activity Key, which – to my lingering shame – I had only found in the glove compartment just before the trip. This was doubly embarrassing as I'd been hiding the main key in clumps of grass every time I had gone surfing or diving for the last six months, when I could have simply strapped on the wrist band and got on with it. But better late than never, and I tapped the band on the trunk, was met with a reassuring whirr of the central locking, and charged off to catch up with the kids who were already shrieking and splashing in

the shallows, leaping crystal clear waves that raced toward them.

We had decided to kayak out to a local sea arch, the home (so I assured Isla and Molly) of the local mermaids. It was a short paddle along the coast to the arch, a glimmering world of reflections and whispering echoes. Molly, sitting between my knees on the kayak, assured me that she had indeed seen a mermaid catching a fish, and I hadn't seen it as "only little girls can see a mermaid, not grown-ups," which seemed to make perfect sense to both of us.

That evening, glowing with the warmth of the sun and the memories of the day, we drove to our overnight accommodation. This was – and bear in mind the importance of this when you're a little kid (or indeed a 51-year-old man) – a lighthouse. And not just any old lighthouse. Fanad Lighthouse was built in 1817, and stands 72 feet above the Fanad Peninsula. This may not sound particularly impressive in terms of its height, but climbing the 79 steps to the top of the tower makes you appreciate every inch. The view that greeted us was so all-encompassing, so ludicrously, riotously beautiful, that the kids were struck dumb (only temporarily, mind you). The accommodation at the lighthouse is in the old keeper's cottage, where history is held in the walls. You fall asleep to the percussive sound of the sea in the coves far below your bed.

Next on the list was riding horses along a beach. It's probably time to give up the pretense that this itinerary was built around the dreams and aspirations of two small girls – there may well have been elements of a large middle-aged man's bucket list in there somewhere as well. We spent the day in the company of the Tullagh Bay Equestrian Centre, whose endlessly patient staff moved heaven and earth to get the entire family on horseback walking beneath the dunes of Tullagh Beach. Molly was sat upon the smallest pony I've ever seen, →

The Discovery makes short work of the coastal gravel roads. On foot, conquering the cliffs of Sliabh Liag proves a highlight, especially for indefatigable young Isla

her eyes wide with the sheer wonder of it all. By stark contrast I was seated on a colossal horse called Jack, a benign beast who's only sign of chagrin at the incompetent buffoon on his back was the occasional roll of his eyes and contemptuous snort.

Over the next few days we roamed throughout the county, visiting the Folk Village at Glencolmcille to glimpse a past that had been anything but easy – this was and is a beautiful place in which to travel, but had at times been a harsh one in which to live. This perhaps explains why community in Donegal remains so strong to this day, with a genuine warmth and a profound interest in who you are, where you've come from, and where you are going.

Our most challenging location was Port, situated at the end of a long stony track, which itself was the continuation of a narrow road that snaked across endless miles of misty peat bog. At the end of the road sat Port Cottage, a restored building in a long abandoned hamlet that looked straight down the gun barrel of the Atlantic. The cottage was basic, to say the least, but therein lay its magic.

A turf fire burnt in the corner of an atmospheric room containing a small kitchenette and living area. This was strewn with the detritus of the sea, the flames reflected in emerald sea glass and dancing through dried kelp strands that hung from the ceiling. It was in this bay that Isla – accompanied by the incomparable Ian Millar, local climbing legend – became the youngest person ever to climb a nearby sea stack, arms raised in triumph as the sea swirled 165 feet below, and the gulls wheeled and called in the sea mist that surrounded her lofty perch.

But the final hurrah was still to come. I had stored the boat locally during the week, and retrieved it in order to whisk the family to a place of genuine wonder for me: Malin Head. Rightly revered amongst mariners, wildlife enthusiasts, and indeed anyone who loves wild places, it was here of course that I had my basking shark encounter so many years before.

Launching the boat was a chance to use the Land Rover Advanced Tow Assist\*, a wondrous wee dial on the Discovery vehicle's central console that essentially steers the trailer down the narrowest of slipways. This gives ample opportunity to leap out of the car looking smug, giving every appearance of a salty old sea dog, when in fact it's a triumph of technology rather than personal competence and know-how. But for now, that was my dirty little secret as I acknowledged the smile of a local man on the jetty with a modest tilt of my head.

We spent the majority of that day at sea, going as far as Inishtrahull Island – frequently the last sight of land for anyone emigrating from Ireland, and therefore a place that has had more tears shed over it than anywhere else in the country. It was on our return to harbor that our farewell to Donegal awaited. A local boat contacted us on the radio to tell us that a pod of dolphins was playing beneath the long shadow of the great, glowering cliffs of the headland. I turned the wheel and sped towards a rendezvous that had been several hundred miles, and many years, in the making.

We had come to Donegal to show our children a place that we thought one of the most wondrous in Europe, indeed in the world, and as we arrived at Malin Head, the pod raced to meet us. Within seconds the boat was surrounded by sleek gray figures, twisting in the waves and exploding out of the water in our wake, accompanied throughout by the shrieks and laughter of Isla and Molly.

It was, truly, a fitting send-off for a week in a special place on the edge of a continent, and for a chance to travel by road, by track, and by sea on a real voyage of discovery. □



**WATCH THE VIDEO** To relive the Halls family's all-terrain adventures with their Land Rover Discovery in beautiful Donegal, visit [youtube.com/landrover](https://www.youtube.com/landrover)

**The Advanced Tow Assist functionality helps to maneuver the Hall's boat with ease. Out on the water, a magical treat awaits the Halls: a pod of exuberant dolphins**

\*These systems are not a substitute for driving safely with due care and attention and will not function under all circumstances, speeds, weather and road conditions, etc. Driver should not assume that these systems will correct errors of judgment in driving. Please consult the owner's manual or your local authorized Land Rover retailer for more details.



“DOLPHINS TWIST IN THE  
WAVES AND EXPLODE OUT OF  
THE WATER IN OUR WAKE”



P A T R O L  
S  
N  
W

The Land Rover Ice Academy in northern Sweden is the perfect place to experience the thrill of ice driving. And there's plenty to discover beyond the track, too, in this remote region full of spectacular snow-covered forests and fascinating local culture

STORY GEOFF POULTON  
PHOTOGRAPHY DIRK BRUNIECKI



Left: Lars Hoffmann and Malin Strid. Below: Get a unique perspective on Arjeplog from the back of a dog sled

**At 3pm, the sun is already low** in the pale blue winter sky above Arjeplog in Swedish Lapland. Snow crunches underfoot on the walk down to Lake Sälla. Despite multiple thermal layers, the -22°F cold almost takes the breath away – a startling yet strangely invigorating feeling. Standing by the edge of the frozen lake are Lars Hoffmann and Malin Strid, harnessing ten of their Alaskan huskies to an eight foot sled. Tails wagging, some of the dogs bark excitedly; this is what they were born to do and it's almost time to go.

As we settle under a thick woolen blanket on the front of the sled, Strid takes her place standing at the rear. With one loud command the dogs fall quiet, race forward and we accelerate away. Silence envelops us as the sled heads deeper into the powder-covered pine trees along the lake, punctuated only by the gentle whoosh of the wooden runners across the snow. We sit back and enjoy the ride, savoring the picture-perfect winter scene. This is a very different side to Arjeplog.

**“ARJEPLOG IS  
A PINE-COVERED  
WILDERNESS AT  
THE EDGE OF THE  
ARCTIC CIRCLE”**

The majority of visitors to this small town, located in the sparsely populated, pine-covered wilderness of northern Sweden at the edge of the Arctic Circle, spend most of their time in the driver's seat. In the winter, ice more than three feet thick covers the region's many lakes, making it ideal for Land Rover's extreme cold-weather testing regimen, as well as for driving enthusiasts looking to test or expand their skills. →





**DRIVING ON ICE  
IS A VERY DIFFERENT  
EXPERIENCE.  
PATIENCE IS KEY**

Overlooking the spectacular 97-square-mile Lake Hornavan, the Land Rover Ice Academy offers three- and four-day ice-driving courses with expert instructors. Guests learn how to handle the latest Land Rover vehicles around a series of tracks, from intricate slalom to exhilarating high-speed drifting and off-roading through the snow-covered trees.

As learning curves go, it's a steep one. Driving on ice is a very different experience to negotiating everyday roads and patience is key, as the (very patient) instructors continually point out. It's a fine balancing act between gas pedal, steering and brakes – get it right and you're floating at right angles around corners; get it wrong and you'll quickly spin into a snow bank.

Earlier in the day, I experienced this first-hand behind the wheel of a Range Rover Velar. After a briefing in the Experience lodge next to the lake, the first challenge is to negotiate what appears to be a simple slalom course. "Find the balance and let the momentum take you," says my instructor

Andre D'Cruze, as he tells me when to steer, brake and put my foot down. "You can't make immediate adjustments like you can on asphalt, so don't steer too hard." Despite the Velar vehicle's undoubted off-road abilities, my initial lack of expertise sees me pirouetting more often than an ice dancer. But after a few runs it becomes easier to pick the right moment to ease off on the gas and flick the steering wheel. It's still a long way off D'Cruze's Hollywood stunt driving skills, but it's a reassuring sign of progress nevertheless.

In addition to the thrills on the track, a Land Rover Experience visit to Arjeplog has plenty of lower-speed highlights to offer, including a drive north to take in the dramatic beauty of the Arctic Circle, a bracing snowmobile tour, as well as the serene husky sled ride.

"This is a beautiful place and there's something quite enchanting about gliding silently through the forests," says Strid, as we slowly warm up after the sled ride, in the Hotel Silverhatten overlooking Lake Hornavan. Over a delicious meal of reindeer steaks and moose burgers, the couple explain how they set up →

Left: Cap an invigorating drive by relaxing in front of a crackling fire at Hotel Silverhatten. Below: The Velar takes the Arctic wilderness in its stride



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### SMOOTH OPERATOR

The Range Rover Velar vehicle's striking looks saw it crowned World Car Design of the Year 2018. But its beauty isn't just skin deep. Torque-on-demand all-wheel drive gives it outstanding performance both on- and off-road, while the Terrain Response® system can help improve handling in challenging conditions.

European model shown.



“THERE’S SOMETHING ENCHANTING ABOUT



GLIDING SILENTLY THROUGH THE FOREST"



Cold-Nose-Huskies after meeting at a sled dog kennel. Strid, from northern Sweden, is a trained wilderness guide, dog trainer and animal keeper, while German Hoffman is a photographer who has undertaken expeditions through Alaska, Greenland and most of Scandinavia. When they're not leading guests around the forests and lakes of Arjeplog, Strid and Hoffman like to put themselves to the ultimate test in some of the world's most demanding sled dog races. The epic routes – some over 620 miles long – are a true test of determination and endurance.

These races pay homage to the days when sled dogs provided a crucial mode of winter transport, as they did for the Sami – indigenous people living around Arjeplog and in other parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. In town, visitors can learn more about the culture and lives of the Sami, many of whom still work as reindeer herders, at the Silvermuseet.

Housed in a former boarding school for the nomadic Sami children, it is home to an extensive collection of artifacts, and offers a wider look at the Arjeplog region throughout its varying seasons. The Båtsuoj center, half an hour south, offers a more hands-on insight into Sami life; you can explore traditional houses, feed reindeer and sit around a fire sampling an array of local meat and fish dishes while you listen to fascinating stories about Sami customs.

Nowadays, snowmobiles have largely replaced huskies as a way of accessing remote areas during winter, and a snowmobile safari is an exciting way to explore the vast pine forests when you're not tackling the tracks at the Land Rover Ice Academy. In the depths of the Arctic wilderness, it may well be a dog's life, but Arjeplog certainly allows you to live yours at full pace. □

## “FIND THE BALANCE AND LET THE MOMENTUM TAKE YOU”

### THE LAND ROVER ICE ACADEMY

#### ON THE TRACK

Tackle the thrill of ice driving amidst stunning Arctic scenery. Driving high-performance vehicles such as the Range Rover Sport and the new Range Rover Velar, you will be able to learn from expert instructors and take your skills to a new level. Three-day or four-day courses are available for both ice driving novices and those with previous experience.

#### OFF THE TRACK

Warm Scandinavian hospitality awaits at Arjeplog's largest hotel. Silverhatten offers breathtaking views over Lake Hornavan and the snow-covered forests and mountains, and its restaurant serves delicious local and international cuisine. Round off your visit by exploring the region's incredible beauty on a snowmobile tour, husky sled ride or Land Rover Experience drive to the Arctic Circle.



**GET IN ON THE ACTION** Book your visit to the Land Rover Ice Drive Academy at [landroverusa.com/experience](https://www.landroverusa.com/experience)

Left: Experience the thrill of driving on ice. Below: Visit local Sami families, sample traditional dishes and listen to stories of their age-old way of life





European model shown.

## COOL RUNNINGS

Land Rover tips for driving  
in snowy conditions.



When the world turns white and streets pose the risk of dreaded black ice, you can count on your Land Rover vehicle and the many advanced systems to help.

But to get the best out of it, equip yourself with the skills to drive in slippery conditions.

Phil Jones, driving specialist at Land Rover Experience, runs the team of instructors at the Land Rover Ice Academy in Arjeplog. A 38-year veteran of Land Rover, who honed his skills in Canada's frozen north, Jones gets a real thrill out of driving on ice. In fact, he admits he would actually rather drive on snow than on asphalt!

We asked Jones for his top ten tips to handle icy conditions...

### 01 PREPARATION WINS BATTLES

Practice ice driving techniques in a controlled environment, such as the Land Rover Ice Academy, before you need to drive in slippery conditions out in the real world.

### 02 GET A GRIP ON GRIP

Check that your tires are properly inflated. You can fit a Land Rover Snow Traction System (clip-on traction aids) to your tires<sup>1</sup>, or opt for deep-treaded Land Rover-approved winter tires.

### 03 TAKE THE EDGE OFF

If not automatically set (on selected models), manually set your vehicle's Terrain Response to Grass-Gravel-Snow mode, which assists by softening overly aggressive inputs.

### 04 STEADY DOES IT

Your Land Rover vehicle's All Terrain Progress<sup>®2</sup> Control function allows you to set a given speed (below 20 mph) and adapts the vehicle's systems to make steady progress in various conditions<sup>2</sup>.

### 05 THINK BIGGER

Recalibrate your mind. Braking distances on ice are tenfold more than in normal road conditions.

### 06 BE A SMOOTH OPERATOR

Make every input smooth. Look as far ahead as possible on the road or any other surface in order to anticipate any change of direction or braking that may be required, in good time.

### 07 SKIDDING? GET SOME STEER

If you find yourself in a skid through oversteer (meaning, your car's nose is turning too sharply into the corner), apply a bit of opposite-lock – a quick steering input that points the front wheels back in the direction you want to face.

### 08 BE AWARE OF YOUR WHEELS

Remember where the wheels are pointing and neutralize the correcting input, so when the car finds grip again, its direction isn't unexpected.

### 09 POWER CAN BE YOUR FRIEND

When sliding in an oversteer situation, the idea of applying more power may seem counter-intuitive – but when you have All Wheel Drive, it helps to pull the car straight, as the front wheels are able to simultaneously steer and grip<sup>3</sup>. So as you counter-steer, don't hold back.

### 10 BUT KNOW WHEN TO EASE UP

On the other hand, if the skid is by understeering (meaning, your car's nose is not turning into the corner enough and you risk running wide), cease accelerating and don't add more steering lock. □



**GET READY FOR THE SEASON** Book a pre-winter vehicle check at your local Land Rover retailer. View the Land Rover Gear range of genuine winter accessories at [gear.landrover.com](http://gear.landrover.com)

<sup>1</sup> Land Rover Snow Traction system available on 18" tires only.

<sup>2</sup> These systems are not a substitute for driving safely with due care and attention and will not function under all circumstances, speeds, weather and road conditions, etc. Driver should not assume that these features will correct errors of judgment in driving. Please consult the owner's manual or your local authorized Land Rover Retailer for more details.

<sup>3</sup> This feature is not a substitute for safe and attentive driving, nor can it overcome all extreme circumstances. Please consult the owner's manual or your local authorized Jaguar Retailer for more details.

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D R E A M A L I



STORY NATHANIEL HANDY  
PHOTOGRAPHY PETER GUENZEL

Or indeed as big a dream  
as you like; Land Rover  
Classic Works is where  
it can come to life.  
Director Tim Hannig gives  
*ONELIFE* a guided tour

T T L E D R E A M



**“My uncle had a first-generation Land Rover Discovery,” remembers Tim Hannig,** director of Land Rover Classic. “We would go to visit him in Denmark. His was a messy hunter’s car, but I remember him unlocking the big side-opening back door and I’d climb in and sit sideways on the bench seat in the back. I was eight years old and it was just ultra-cool.”

Similar Land Rover stories abound, all of them contributing to a history that is now 70 years old and spans every continent (and even a few tracts of ocean – remember the first-ever crossing of the Bering Strait by a land vehicle in 2008?).

Now, the Land Rover story has a home in a new 150,695-square-foot, purpose-built, \$9.2 million facility in the British Midlands. Classic Works is a full sales, servicing and restoration facility – one of the largest of its kind in the world. A showroom greets visitors at the threshold, backed by huge glass doors revealing 54 workshop bays with dedicated strip-down, remanufacturing and assembly zones. Behind all this, like the secret at the back of the closet, lies the Classic Collection – a warehouse full of over 500 vehicles.

“Classic Works has almost taken the role of a museum without being a museum,” explains Hannig. “On a tour, you will learn a lot about where the company comes from, but you’re in an active working environment. It’s living history.”

### IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

Why invest so much in a facility that is focused on out-of-production vehicles? For Hannig, there are two elements. “One is to celebrate the history of the brand and let people experience it,” he explains. With a history as rich as Land Rover, there’s no shortage of things to celebrate. But it’s the second element that has made Classic Works a reality. “This has to be a sustainable undertaking,” says Hannig. It turns out that the restoration of old Land Rover vehicles causes a lot of excitement.

“When we did the recreation of the 1948 Series I production line in 2015, the response was huge,” remembers Greg King, Classic Works engineer. “When I first looked at this it was just a study to see what was possible. I don’t think we understood quite how successful it was going to be.” King is, by his own admission, “Land Rover through and through.” He fell for them as a child growing up on a south Devon farm, and joined the company as a 16-year-old apprentice. The opportunity to be part of a project like this was his ultimate challenge.

“We’ve got all the original drawings going back to the 1940s,” King explains. Such know-how means that Land Rover can deliver restoration projects to a level that is unrivalled. But blueprints are nothing without the expertise to bring them to life. And in a sector as specialized as classic cars, Hannig believes having the

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## “A CLASSIC IS AN EMOTIONAL AFFAIR AND WE NEED TO RESPECT THAT”

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right people is critical. Two years ago, some 35 employees worked out of a corner of the Solihull plant. Today, 140 specialists fill the bays of the dedicated Classic Works facility.

“Customers trust us with their vehicles. A classic car is an emotional affair,”

he insists. “We need to give the vehicle that same level of respect.” The hands-on nature of the work means that quality control can’t be built in as it is on factory production lines. “We cannot robot-check if the wheel nuts are fixed to the right torque,” Hannig admits. “Every car is different. That’s why we have to have people who are not only capable and highly skilled, but also motivated to pay special attention to these classics, every day.”

### IN PURSUIT OF THE HORIZON

The existing restoration industry is often small-scale. The creation of Classic Works stays true to that spirit, but brings with it the added benefits of operating at the top end.

“There is a positive momentum created by Classic Works,” Hannig explains. “There are gaps in our parts catalogs and we are determined to improve it. Last year, we implemented 150 new parts. We need the enthusiasts to work with us on that.”

By pooling knowledge, the industry can identify the most needed components. “We then have the ability to invest, which is good for everybody,” says Hannig. “And we are generating knowledge by working on the cars, allowing us to tool up new spare parts available to anyone. The person who restores at home in his garage deserves a good spare part as much as anyone else.”

Classic Works is the first Land Rover retail outlet – classic or new – anywhere. Until now, the company has been a manufacturer and wholesaler. By inviting the public not only to a shop window, but right onto the workshop floor, they are breaking new territory. In doing so, they are connecting with customers like never before.

“Tours of the site have been full since we started,” says Felix Welch, general manager at Classic Works. “These cars are very close to being works of art, and they’re attracting people who are relatively new to the world of classic cars, as well as firm fans. Last Sunday, we had a Land Rover Breakfast Club and 52 50th Anniversary Defender vehicles showed up – the biggest such gathering ever.”

Classic Works now has its sights set even further afield. A second facility is already open in Essen, Germany, and planning for a North American center is underway. “We will provide a service where there is a demand for it,” says Hannig, adding with a wry smile: “Land Rover didn’t stop at the borders of the UK. In fact, it went a long way beyond.” □

From cosmetic to powertrain, Classic Works is fully equipped to restore Land Rover vehicles of any age back to life. Bottom right: General manager Felix Welch



H O W T H E D E F E N D E R  
G O T I T S S T R I P E S

Classic Works engineer Greg King reveals the story of the most powerful and dynamic Defender ever built – the Defender Works V8

**2018 is a big year for 70th anniversaries. It marks the jubilee of the first Grand Prix at Silverstone and the first Land Rover vehicle.** They all reflect the boom in enterprise that characterized the post-war years in Britain.

Perhaps no vehicle embodies the possibilities of the age quite like the Land Rover Defender – the nameplate that is a continuation of the original Series I and II vehicles that, in many cases quite literally, mapped the modern world. When production ceased in 2016, it felt like the end of an era. Classic Works – and the anniversary year – presented Land Rover with the perfect opportunity for the ultimate send-off.

“The Land Rover Defender Works V8 is the most fantastic celebration of what Defender is,” says Classic Works engineer Greg King. “It shows how important the Defender is to Land Rover. You can’t fail to get out of the vehicle with a massive smile.” He should know. King led the engineering team that set out to create a vehicle that, while unmistakably a Defender, has a breadth of capability and dynamic ability like no other.

The Works V8 is a fully rebuilt and refinished Defender sourced between 2012 and 2016 model year, re-engineered with a 5 liter, naturally aspirated V8 engine complemented by an eight-speed automatic transmission, heavy-duty front and rear differentials, and an automatic torque biasing center differential.

“Unlike any other Defender conversion on the market, the Works V8 is fully integrated, with all the electronic aids such as traction control and stability

control systems,” says King. “No one else has the know-how to be able to do that. The other difference is that the Works V8 conversion has been tested to Land Rover standards.”

One test, for instance, involved driving two prototypes from Classic Works to Western Sahara, with trailers, for hot weather testing in up to 126°F. The result is a Defender that can hold its own, both on the road and off it.

Normally, nameplates don’t pass to Classic Works until they have been out of production for ten years. For example, they’ve just gained the Freelander. So why did they get the Defender so soon? “Simply because the Defender is an instant classic,” says Tim Hannig, director of Classic Works.

All 150 limited edition vehicles were sold within nine days of the first press release. Luckily, there is some consolation if you are not one of the lucky 150: off the back of the Works V8, a number of Defender accessories and upgrades will become available.

The Works V8 has also helped to define the role of Classic Works for the future. As Hannig puts it: “It’s the ultimately refined Defender, while still being very much a Defender. It shows how we are in the business of fulfilling dreams.” □

Top left: Greg King, who led the project. With its powerful engine and suite of modern technology, the Works V8 is the ultimate performance Defender



**FIND OUT MORE**

To book your own tour of Classic Works, please search *Land Rover Classic Works*



European model shown.



# THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Dogged by distraction, in an age of anxiety, mindfulness is the need of the hour. Where better to practice it than... in your car

STORY ERIN BAKER  
ILLUSTRATION JÖRN KASPUHL



**Up to eight trillion dollars.** That's the estimated loss in annual global output due to mental health issues, according to the World Economic Forum. By 2030, depression is projected to cost society more than diabetes, cancer and respiratory disorders combined. No wonder, then, that Headspace, a meditation app for beginners launched in 2014, has already been downloaded more than 16 million times.

Why? Because despite being wealthier, generally healthier and living longer than ever before, humans are more stressed than ever. The internet, mobile devices that allow you to stay connected wherever you are, and the inexorable rise of social media, all enable people to reach you and delve into your privacy day and night. As a result, we suffer constant white noise, the insistent buzz of neurotransmitters in our brains dealing with incessant communication, demands, requests, debates and interaction. Edward Bullmore, neuroscientist and Professor of Psychiatry at Cambridge University, UK, calls it "the chronic stress we deal with in the 21st century" – 'chronic' in the medical sense of constant, unsolvable. It used to be that the greatest luxury was staying connected. Futurist Gerd Leonhard opines that soon it will instead be switching off.

No wonder, then, that driving still remains a pleasure for most motorists, despite the political pressure to get us out of our cars and onto public transportation. The car is one of the few truly personal spaces left, and driving one of the few remaining everyday activities where you are asked to disengage from everything else and concentrate on an activity that is both physically and mentally involving.

The beauty of the car is that – unless you are unfortunate enough to have four boys who need constant driving around, as I am – it offers an intrinsically solitary space, which I suspect is half the reason so many commuters refuse to swap their cars for public transportation. You can personalize your soundtrack, climate, seating position or ambient lighting, free of interference into your space. And, as car interiors evolve into that third space beyond office and home, the car is an increasingly luxurious place in which to meditate, solve problems in silence or just empty your mind. Simple, clean, smooth surfaces that are pleasing to touch, light fabrics and pared-back design help to create a sense of calm and space, an environment conducive to practicing mindfulness.

With autonomy set to increasingly feature in cars in the years to come, we will soon be able to liberate guilt-free mindspace as we crawl through traffic jams. And when the road opens up and gets twisty, the joy of driving will always remain a meaningful experience.

So, whether it's a case of sit back and relax, or feel at one with your car, remember: just breathe, and be. □

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