

1 Is it the right car for you?

– marriage guidance



Tall and short drivers

There's good headroom for tall drivers, and the wide range of seat adjustment means that short drivers can also get comfortable. Some shorter people find that the step up into a Range Rover is a stretch unless it is fitted with side-steps.

Controls

The arrays of switches across the top of the centre console and below the heater control panel were designed to look impressive and high-tech at the time, but can be confusing to a newcomer. Their functions have to be learned. The automatic climate control system is very good.



Second-generation Range Rovers were designed to compete with conventional luxury cars, and were equipped to high standards. This is an early 4.6 HSE.

Some controls were mounted on the steering wheel. This wheel, with its half-wood rim, is on a 2001 model.



The Command Driving Position, which gives an excellent view of the road ahead, is a key characteristic.

Will it fit in the garage?

A second-generation Range Rover is 185.6in (4713mm) long, and 74.4in (1890mm) wide with the mirrors folded. At standard ride height, it stands 71.6in (1817mm) tall. You will probably have to fold in the door mirrors for most domestic garages, because the vehicle is otherwise 87.7in (2228mm) wide.



Clear and simple instrumentation is matched by an electronic 'message centre.'

Interior space

These models were designed to seat four people in great comfort, or five people in rather less for the three rear passengers.

Legroom in the rear is good, even when a tall driver has the seat a long way back.

Luggage capacity

The load area will easily carry holiday luggage for four people. With the rear seat in use, the usable load area is 18.5 cubic feet (0.520 cubic metres). With the rear seat folded, this increases to 58 cubic feet (1.643 cubic metres). The rear seat has

3 Living with a Range Rover

– will you get along together?



Living with a second-generation Range Rover can be a thoroughly enjoyable experience – or it can be an expensive nightmare. When functioning as Land Rover intended, these are very refined vehicles with a feeling of dependability and strength about them. However, bad examples – and there have been many – reward their owners with a constant stream of minor problems, and sometimes major ones as well. So it is vitally important to read the buying advice that is contained in this book in order to avoid a bad one.

The driving experience is quite special, with a high seating position and an excellent view all round. Despite its size, a Range Rover does not (or should not) feel cumbersome, although simple laws of physics mean that it does not take kindly to being thrown about like a small hatchback. Weight means that it will not accelerate like one, either, despite the size of the engines, although acceleration at motorway speeds is satisfyingly rapid in the V8 models; it is very much less so in the diesels. With both engine types, the



The thirstiest engine of all is the 4.6-litre V8, seen here in an early model. The later ‘Thor’ engines had a different appearance, with a tubular manifold on top of the engine.



The on-board computer of this early 4.6 HSE calculated the fuel consumption after around 200 miles of mixed driving. There was no reason to argue ...

The BMW diesel engine is a smooth six-cylinder, but not ideal with an automatic gearbox in the Range Rover.



7 Fifteen minute evaluation

– walk away or stay?



Before you set off to look at a second-generation Range Rover, make sure you know what variety to expect. It may have a 4.0-litre V8 engine, but is the gearbox manual or automatic? What is the trim and equipment level? You can find out more about what to expect from some of the books listed on page 57.

You can often get a good idea of what to expect of the vehicle itself from the place where you go to look at it. Rough area? Farmyard? Backstreet dealer? Neat suburban drive? The location can tell you things about a Range Rover that the seller won't mention. Form your own opinion.

It's very easy to make one of these Range Rovers look newer than it really is to an inexperienced eye – all that's necessary is a set of face-lift-specification (2000 model-year) lights and some new alloy wheels: make sure that you are not being conned! Seat styles are a good guide: owners very rarely change the early seats to the later type. Of course, you may not object to these cosmetic changes at all if they make the vehicle more like what you want. On the other hand, they may well make it valueless to somebody who wants one in original condition.

Exterior

It's logical to start with a look at the outside of the Range Rover, and certain things should be very obvious from the beginning. The state of the paintwork is the first one: dull paintwork immediately suggests that a vehicle has not been maintained to a high standard. Equally, glossy paintwork may simply indicate that the vendor has been busy with the polish just prior to your arrival! However, other clues are harder to cover up. Check the condition of the bumpers and aprons, especially at the four corners of the vehicle. Misalignment and scrapes will tell their own story.



The condition of the four corners gives a good clue to how well the vehicle has been looked after. Scrapes will be very noticeable on the later painted bumper aprons.



Air suspension will sink over time – and this one certainly has: the vehicle had actually been standing for several months when photographed, and the tyre had lost air as well.

detailed inspection until later – if you go back for a second look at this particular vehicle – but now is the time to check for those suspicious-looking oil stains on the ground.

The good news is that the chassis frames of these Range Rovers have not shown any particular tendency to rust. In fact, their rust resistance seems to be higher than that of many other separate-chassis Land Rover products. So very visible rust is something out of the ordinary and will merit further investigation right away. It's also not unknown for the chassis frame to sustain some damage in severe off-road use, and your quick inspection at this stage should enable you to spot any major horrors.

Lastly, take a look at the springs to make sure they really are the original black rubber air springs. Recurrent problems with the air suspension on some vehicles prompted a few owners to swap the air springs for a set of steel coil springs as used on the earlier Range Rover. As long as all the other air suspension hardware has been disabled, this isn't likely to be a particular problem. However, the ride quality with coil springs is not as good as that with the original air suspension and, if it matters to you, the vehicle's originality has also been compromised.

Special editions

It's beyond the scope of this book to go into the minutiae of the special-edition Range Rovers. You'll need to take an expert along for that, or at least be very certain of what you expect to find before you go to view a vehicle. However, a couple of points are worth bearing in mind. One is that Land Rover often created special editions by adding accessories to otherwise standard models, so making them look like good value for money. They are therefore not all laden with exotic options. The other is that

The acid test: how does it drive on the road?



16 The Community

– key people, organisations and companies in the Range Rover world



Like Land Rovers, Range Rovers have an enthusiast following that is pretty much worldwide. But from the outset, it is worth remembering that the second-generation Range Rover's problems have been so well known and for so long that you may well have to put up with some good-natured ribbing from fellow enthusiasts about your new vehicle!

There is just not enough space here to cover the key members of the Range Rover community in every country, so these listings are confined to the UK – and even then are far from exhaustive. For details of clubs, specialists and suppliers in other countries, please consult your regional 4x4 or Land Rover magazine, or check on the internet.

Clubs

There are many local and regional Land Rover clubs in the UK that welcome Range Rovers. However, you may find that the emphasis of your local club is more on off-road driving (typically greenlaning) or on competitive motorsport (typically trialling) than on meticulous restoration for what US enthusiasts call 'show'n'shine' events. Many clubs of course cater for all forms of the hobby.

There is one club that is dedicated to Range Rovers, and covers Range Rovers of all types (not just the second-generation models). This is the Range Rover Register,



There is a reverential interest in important examples of the second-generation Range Rover, and this one is the oldest known survivor. It is a pre-production model, preserved by the Dunsfold Land Rover Trust, and is seen here at one of their displays.



By contrast, some owners prefer to customise their vehicles. This example was pictured at an enthusiasts' event, where it won a prize.