

Motoring Feature



■ The New Defender

The story of how an old favourite off-roader got where it is today

SINCE its inception in 1948, the Land Rover has earned a reputation as the ultimate off-roader. It was designed under the premise of being an all-purpose vehicle that could conquer any terrain.

It quickly became a success, and was gradually updated throughout the years. This year, Land Rover has finally introduced an all-new version, bringing more creature comforts to its iconic off-roader.

Here we take a look at how an icon grew.

1948 – Series I

The Land Rover was launched at the Amsterdam Motor Show on 30 April and it would later become known as the Series I. It had a 50bhp 1.6-litre engine from the Rover P3 and had a pick-up body style.

After a year, 8,000 had been built and the British Army ordered its first trial cars, while selectable two- and four-wheel-drive was added in 1951. In 1952, the engine was increased to a 52bhp 2.0-litre unit, while a new long wheelbase version was added.

1958 – Series II

The second-generation model was introduced, featuring a new but recognisable look and a 2.25-litre petrol engine, before a facelifted version brought a 62bhp 2.3-litre diesel.

In 1962, the Forward Control model was launched with new petrol and die-

With a new Defender out now, we look at the history of a 4x4 icon

sel engines, focused on being a real work-horse. Just four years later, Land Rover production broke through half a million vehicles.

1971 – Series III

Another new-look Land Rover is launched with a plastic grille, flatter door hinges and a full-width dashboard. To demonstrate its accelerating popularity, production hit 750,000 in 1971 and then one million by 1976.

In 1983 the Series III underwent some modernisation, with a new One-Ten model being introduced, leaf springs being replaced by coils, and four-cylinder engines that got a full synchromesh five-speed manual gearbox.

1990 – The Defender is born

In 1990, the Ninety and One-Ten models were renamed Defender 90, 110 and 130.

The next major milestone didn't come until 2007, with a major update bringing a new four-cylinder turbo-diesel engine with a six-speed manual gearbox, updated dashboard, and new body styles.



■ The Defender through the years

In 2015, Land Rover celebrated 'The Year of the Defender' with three new Limited Edition models being launched, as well as recreating the Series I production line in Solihull. Production finally came to an end in January 2016.

2019 – New Defender revealed

At the 2019 Frankfurt motor show, the

new Defender broke cover, sporting an all-new platform, advanced off-road technology and a cool, retro-inspired look.

Some purists were disappointed to see the interior move upmarket, as the traditional model was known for being easy to clean when being used as a true work-horse. But the new Defender boasts some of the most advanced off-road technology ever fitted to a production car to make it capable on any terrain, while also being pleasant inside for families who want a practical SUV.



■ Series I



■ Series II



■ Series III