

• Land Rover Defender • Td5

Take me to the bush!

If ever there was an icon that represents a tough 4x4 then it has to be the Land Rover 110 Defender. It's been around in various guises since "Pa used it in the world war...!" And it's done its time in a huge variety of applications, from fire engines to ploughing fields, from military ambulances to assault vehicles.

Words by Godfrey Castle

The latest version of this well-known 4x4 icon is the Defender Double Cab, which is aimed more at the leisure recreational market and the person seeking the Camel man image of adventure. Though the word "leisure" might have the connotation of conversion to softie, this vehicle is still tough and rugged.

Ok, the Defender has been softened a bit since its early days – this model has central door-locking from the keyholder (you can now lock and unlock the vehicle from a number of paces away!). It also has a CD-player and an air-conditioner, power-assisted steering and a capacious glove box between the

two front seats.

But fear not, even with the introduction of certain creature comforts the Defender Double Cab has not conceded a millimetre when it comes down to good old-fashioned strength.

It still has hand-wound windows, air-vents that open manually into the jet stream above the engine bonnet, good visibility, basic instrumentation (no rev. counter,) and a pull-up handbrake lever that tickles the left calf muscle.

Die-hard Defender fans will no doubt be relieved that the latest model also exudes a vibe that says "take me into deepest, darkest Africa".

A heavy caravan

The Jurgens Xplorer is another icon among the 4x4 fraternity, having introduced the concept of off-road caravans to this country.

Our test caravan was loaded to its full GVM (gross vehicle mass) of 1 650 kg, which is quite a load for most vehicles. When one takes this weight and adds it to the licence mass of 1 920 kg of the Defender you have a combination weighing in at 3 570 kg!

But, like the Land Rover, this off-road caravan too is just as tough.

It's basically a four-berth caravan with a huge variety of conveniences – hot and cold water shower cubicle tent,



on-board water tank, extra jerrycans for fuel, 12V deepfreeze, full slide-out kitchen with sink, and spare wheel.

Towing recommendations

An interesting fact in the owner's book is that Land Rover sets towing limits of up to 3 500 kg for trailers with overrun brakes on-road and a 1 000 kg off-road.

Our test vehicle had the 2.5-litre turbo-charged five-cylinder diesel engine developing 90 kW at 4 200 rpm and 300 Nm at 1 950 rpm coupled to a five-speed manual gearbox.

While it's not a big engine by today's standards, the 300 Nm of low-down diesel grunt (and 10 gears between high-range and low-range) is enough to cope with the Xplorer.

In normal range, towing an equally heavy and strong Xplorer off-road caravan, the Td5 Defender would reach a terminal speed of 120 km/h in both fourth and fifth gear, and its large heavy duty coil springs soaked up the bumps in the road without compromising on stability. An impressive observation was the rear suspension's ability to support the high mass load of the Xplorer.

Bearing in mind that the 235/85 D 16C deep lugged Continental Conti Trac tyres are commercial-rated tyres more suited to off-roading and gripping sharp rocks, we were impressed with quick braking times of 4.05 seconds, from 100 km/h to standstill with a fully "expedition-loaded" Xplorer in tow.

It stopped continuously in a straight line, while the combination of torquey turbo-charged engine, long-levered gear lever and a positive clutch made acceleration up through the gears back to cruising speed fun. It's a driver's vehicle for sure!

A plus factor of the Defender/Xplorer combination is visibility to the rear of the combination. The Xplorer is virtually the same width as the Defender's flared wheel arch mouldings and the existing large side rear view mirrors provide a good view down the sides of the Xplorer to what's coming up from the rear. Also, the big side windows in the Defender give great visibility to the sides and the front.

Whereas the Defender comes in a full Station Wagon version – which increases interior room – it was nice having the loading bay of the Double Cab. For a safari this provides good packing space for everything from extra fuel tanks to a generator to firewood and chairs.

That's the beauty of this type of vehicle, it's like a Meccano set – you can add so many optional extras to suit your lifestyle. From rooftop tents to special camping canopies, fuel tanks, water tanks, winches... it's an endless adventure. □



LANDROVER DEFENDER TD5

CARAVAN: XPLORER (LICENCE MASS 860 KG : GROSS 1 100 KG)

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

CYLINDERS/CAPACITY	5 /2.399 cm ³
FUEL SUPPLY	Common Rail direct injection,
BORE/STROKE	84.45/88.95 mm
Compression Ratio	19.5:1
FUEL REQUIREMENT	diesel
POWER I.S.O. (kW/revs)	90 @ 4 200
TORQUE (Nm/revs)	300 @ 1 950

TRANSMISSION

SHIFT TYPE	5-Speed, manual
1ST GEAR	3.692 to 1
2ND GEAR	2.132 to 1
3RD GEAR	1.397 to 1
4TH GEAR	0.77 to 1
5TH GEAR	0.77 to 1
DRIVE WHEELS	permanent 4x4

CONTROLS

STEERING TYPE	worm and roller box
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	3.3
TURNING CIRCLE	13.41 m

BRAKES (ABS ASSISTED)

FRONT	ventilated discs 298 mm
REAR	disc 298 mm

MEASUREMENTS

TOWCAR LENGTH	4 599 mm
TOWCAR TARE (LICENSE) MASS	1 920 kg
GVM	3 050 kg
GCM	N/A
TOWING CAPACITY UNBRAKED	650 kg
TYRE SIZE	235/85 x16
TOWBALL HEIGHT	480 mm
TOWBALL DROP (80 kg load)	45 mm
DROP PLATE NEEDED	no
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	75 l

SUSPENSION

FRONT	coil spring suspension and telescopic dampers
REAR	coil spring suspension and telescopic dampers

TOWING PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION

(SECONDS)

0-60 km/h	10.86
0-80 km/h	19.2
0-100 km/h	33.70

OVERTAKING ABILITY

(SECONDS)

60-80 km/h	7.9
80-100 km/h	9.5
100-120 km/h	36.1

SPEEDS IN GEARS

(KM/H)

1st gear	35
2nd gear	60
3rd gear	85
4th gear	121
5th gear	120

BRAKING ABILITY

(SECONDS)

60-0 km/h	2.4
80-0 km/h	3.1
100-0 km/h	4.0

FUEL CONSUMPTION

(LITRES/100 KM)

80 km/h	13.9
100 km/h	17.2

OPTIMUM FUEL RANGE

(KM/TANKFUL - 60 LITRES - TOWING)

80 km/h	532 km
100 km/h	436 km