

OUT OF HOME

## Land Rover adds another accomplishment to long list of firsts

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Land Rover atop a paper bridge

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automotive brand Jaguar Land Rover is turning heads by testing its flagship SUV on a new kind of terrain.

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To celebrate 45 years, the Range Rover was driven over a paper bridge in China, a feat that took three days to complete. The creative promotion will help Land Rover distinguish its brand and SUV in an increasingly crowded market in a desirable new geography.

"Land Rover took to driving over a paper bridge as an innovative way to highlight the lightweight construction and all-terrain capabilities the Range Rover has above it's competitors," said Tracey Tompsett, senior press officer, Land Rover UK.

### Paper bridge

Environmental artist Steve Messam constructed the 16-foot long bridge using James Cropper PLC's luxury writing paper. Wooden abutments were designed and laid the groundwork, with paper being stacked on the supports, but after all the paper was stacked the framework was removed, resulting in a freestanding paper bridge.



Range Rover and paper bridge infographic

"Paper structures capable of supporting people have been built before but nothing on this scale has ever been

attempted," Mr. Messam said in a statement. "It's pushing engineering boundaries, just like the Range Rover, and the ease and composure with which the vehicle negotiated the arch was genuinely breathtaking."

#### *Range Rover Paper Bridge, short*

Land Rover captured the moment in a video, released in two versions. The shorter video shows brief highlights in the construction of the bridge and contains an interview with Mr. Messam in addition to the feat itself.

The longer version begins with shots of China as Mr. Messam talks about the country and its history as the inventor of paper. Mr. Messam talks about the physics of building and driving over the bridge and the construction process and drive are shown in greater detail.

The drive is the latest in a line of "firsts" for the Range Rover. According to the brand, it was the world's first luxury SUV when it debuted in 1970; the first to drive from Alaska to Cape Horn in South America, including the undeveloped swampland at the north of Colombia; the first 4x4 equipped with ABS anti-lock brakes and the first all-aluminum SUV.

#### *Range Rover Paper Bridge, full*

Undertaking the latest challenge on an anniversary and linking it to a history of other innovations shows off Land Rover's heritage to a new market in China. Positioning itself as a brand that has long made innovations in safety and performance could help Land Rover fight off other, newer luxury SUVs.

The drive itself was made possible by the vehicle's lightweight aluminum body and Land Rover's Terrain Response 2 and All-Terrain Progress Control capabilities, which optimize settings and allow the driver to steer without worrying about pedaling, which the vehicle does on its own. In effect, Land Rover is telling new luxury consumers that while other automakers may have newer vehicles, its performance is tough to match.

#### First in line

Other luxury automakers are also promoting SUVs in headline-grabbing ways.

For example, British automaker Bentley Motors promoted its Bentayga SUV with a new mobile application responsive to consumer emotion.



#### *Finishing the paper bridge*

The "Inspirator" app shows a series of images ranging from beaches, surfing and yachting to music and dancing to chinaware and furniture to parties and discos in four separate chapters, using facial and emotional recognition technology to capitalize on the viewer's preferences as it goes on, generating a custom Bentayga for the viewer at the end. The app represents a technologically innovative and creative way for the brand to promote its new model ([see story](#)).

Other major players are also getting ready to launch SUVs.

Italian automaker Lamborghini is expanding its range with production of an SUV, which will be the third model offered by the brand when it launches in 2018.

First unveiled as a concept car called the Lamborghini Urus at the 2012 Beijing Auto Show, the SUV will be produced in Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy. Production of this vehicle will grow the company and provide new opportunities, as the company plans to invest hundreds of millions of dollars during the car's lifecycle ([see story](#)).

The size and ever-expanding taste for luxury in China made it an ideal venue for Land Rover to reach impressionable new luxurians.

"China is an important market for Range Rover the second biggest globally and the home of paper," Ms. Tompsett said. "Once we'd decided to build the bridge in China, Suzhou was a natural place to do it."

"Artist Steve Messam, who designed the bridge, chose the venue because Suzhou is the home of culture and the arts in China and is famous for its bridges," she said. "Suzhou is a water city, nicknamed the Venice of the East, and our bridge pays homage to the distinctive structures that can be seen throughout the city."

Final Take

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