

AUTOMOTIVE

Land Rover attests to performance of electric vehicles in mountain-climbing stunt

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The Range Rover Sport PHEV climbed the Dragon Road in China. Image credit: Land Rover

By DANNY PARISI

British automaker Land Rover is rolling out a new campaign meant to emphasize the power and performance of some of its hybrid electric SUVs.

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The stunt showcases the Range Rover Sport PHEV becoming the first vehicle to ascend the steep steps of the Dragon Road at China's Tianmen Mountain, a famous landmark known for a natural rock arch called Heaven's Gate. Land Rover is hoping to win over those who are skeptical of electric vehicles by emphasizing that they can perform just as well as gas-powered cars.

"This was the hardest Range Rover Sport challenge I've ever been involved with because, until we reached the top, we couldn't categorically say we would succeed," said Phil Jones, Land Rover Experience expert. "By making it to the summit, we've proven the phenomenal capability of the Range Rover Sport plug-in hybrid like never before with a genuine world first."

Dragon Road

Electric vehicles are an important step towards reducing overall emissions and the carbon footprint of vehicles, which is one of the primary drivers of global warming.

But for many consumers, especially those who value the power and performance of traditional muscle cars and sports cars, electric vehicles hold little appeal due to their perceived weakness in that regard.

Land Rover set out to disprove the notion that its electric hybrid SUVs are any less capable than similar vehicles powered by gas.



The Tianmen Mountain. Image credit: Land Rover

The auto manufacturer sent one of its new Range Rover Sport PHEV plug-in hybrid cars to China's Zhangjiajie region to the Tianmen Mountain to climb the 999 steps leading to Heaven's Gate. This mountain is home to the 99 turn path known as the Dragon Road that leads to the top.

Land Rover employed Panasonic Jaguar Racing's Ho-Pin Tung to drive the Rang Rover Sport PHEV up the path all the way to the top, a treacherous journey requiring a lot of horsepower to push through.

The vehicle succeeded, and Land Rover documented the entire effort as testament to the car's power.

Heaven's Gate

As automakers continue to invest in electric mobility initiatives, the electric vehicle market is likely to see a paramount jump by the year 2025.

According to a new report from Frost & Sullivan, the electric vehicle (EV) industry is expected to see a 28.3 percent annual compound growth rate, with a jump from 130,000 units to 1.8 million in seven years. Plug-in hybrids will lead the market, with a 59.8 percent share, but complete battery-powered cars will continue to gain traction ([see story](#)).

Luxury automakers have already heeded this call, introducing a number of their own electric models in anticipation of rising demand.



The electric car's plug-in. Image credit: Land Rover

For example, Ferrari is embracing changes in the auto industry with plans for its first battery-powered car. While many marques in the auto world have already embraced electric vehicles, supercar manufacturers were some of the last holdouts, but earlier adopters are putting pressure on them to move in a greener direction ([see story](#)).

Renowned automotive designer Henrik Fisker is making his big comeback into electric vehicles at the 2018 Consumer Electronics Show with the debut of a new model and supporting technology.

After his first venture into electric cars in 2013 proved to be a flop, Mr. Fisker has spent his time redesigning and reinventing his approach to luxury electric vehicles. Now, the automotive designer is finally ready to debut his latest

iteration, meant to be a competitor to the electric vehicle giants such as Tesla and others ([see story](#)).

Land Rover is keeping up with its competitors with the Range Rover Sport PHEV, and its ascent to Heaven's Gate is a testament to its staying power.

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