

AUTOMOTIVE

Land Rover revives Defender by balancing exploration, innovation

September 11, 2019



Land Rover has debuted its redesigned Defender. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

By SARAH RAMIREZ

British automaker Land Rover has unveiled its redesigned Defender along with a campaign touting its adventurous use of technology.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

After months of anticipation, the new Defender was revealed on Sept. 10 at the Frankfurt Motor Show. The updated off-roading model encapsulates the Land Rover brand by bringing together exploration and forward-thinking technology.

Land Rover was reached for comment.

Driving the Defender

While the Defender was one of the most iconic Land Rover models, the automaker discontinued United Kingdom production of the car in 2015 ([see story](#)).

In the years that followed, the 4x4 maintained cult status, with Land Rover seeing a 30 percent increase in interest for Defenders from business professionals and celebrities around the world ([see story](#)). Land Rover also unveiled a "Defender Journeys" online hub and a Heritage Restoration Program to ensure that the vehicle remains firmly embedded within the brand's narrative ([see story](#)).



The Defender underwent rigorous off-road testing. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

While the classic silhouette has seen some minimalist style changes, the new Defender models have been updated with technology for the 21st century. These features include connective Advanced Electrical Vehicle Architecture, software-over-the-air updates, 3D onscreen systems and heads-up displays.

In addition to traditional combustion engines, advanced mild-hybrid and plug-in electric engines are also available for the Defender.

Since the redesigned Defender balances Land Rover tradition with innovation, this is reflected in a new vignette centered around the off-roading vehicle.

The film follows professional mountaineer Kenton Cool, who is shown climbing in a remote area of Kazakhstan. As Mr. Cool overlooks an expansive vista, he receives a message to return home 4,440 miles away.

The New Defender was tested by mountaineer Kenton Cool for a new campaign

Mr. Cool repels down to his Defender and starts to track his route home. He begins driving across the rocky terrain, guided by the Defender's navigation system.

The mountain climber reaches a road, only to continue trekking through the muddy landscape.

Wide shots further establish how desolate the area is, but the Defender and Mr. Cool continue their long journey. The Defender undertakes a steep uphill climb, seemingly unencumbered by the numerous rocks and boulders.

Mr. Cool continues driving the Defender through mud, rivers and alongside wild horses. He even balances a cup of coffee as the ride remains steady.

The mountaineer reaches the edge of a cliff, and after stopping to look at the long drop below, he puts the Defender back into drive. The new Defender remains undeterred by its numerous obstacles.

Teasing the comeback

Land Rover has been dropping hints about the new Defender since its comeback was announced late last year.

During this year's World Land Rover Day, the automaker publicized its plans for the Defender's final tests, including a philanthropic partnership.

Land Rover's Defender prototype underwent 1.2 million kilometers of testing, or more than 745,000 miles. These tests were carried out in 45 different locations, seeing how the car handled Arctic temperatures or the arid heat of a desert.

For the final field testing, Land Rover gave Tusk Trust a wrapped Defender, which was put to work hauling supplies across a 54-square-mile reserve in Kenya ([see story](#)).

A specially designed Defender took on a variety of real world tasks, as wildlife managers forded rivers, pulled heavily loaded trailers and negotiated challenging terrain. A male lion was also sedated and fitted with a tracking collar from the Defender during the test.

The prototype featured unique camouflage specific to the landscape as well as integrated raised air intake ([see story](#)).

Priced starting at \$50,000, the new Defender range encompasses the Defender, S, SE, HSE, First Edition and Defender X. Defender models will be sold in the United States for the first time in more than two decades.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.