

AUTOMOTIVE

Land Rover enlists rugged musician for a forest adventure

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John Mayer explores the California Redwoods in his 2020 Land Rover Defender. Image courtesy of Jaguar Land Rover

By SARAH RAMIREZ

British automaker Land Rover is going to the great outdoors with a celebrity ambassador in an effort spanning film and multimedia.

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Land Rover often centers campaigns around its reputation for adventure and exploration. These themes may especially resonate now, as many including singer-songwriter John Mayer have sought solace in nature in recent months.

"The campaign and film celebrate the Land Rover brand's spirit of exploration and embracing the great outdoors," said Stuart Schorr, vice president of communications at Jaguar Land Rover North America. "The new Defender enables explorers to have their own adventures, and this mentality perfectly aligned with John Mayer's personal passion for the outdoors."

The advertising campaign was a joint effort between Land Rover and *The Atlantic*, an American magazine and multi-platform publisher.

John Mayer Goes Outside

The film begins with Mr. Mayer waxing poetically about the American wilderness. The music swells for added gravitas, until he comedically breaks the fourth wall and addresses the camera crew.

Mr. Mayer tells them the whole set up feels "stiff" and a director asks if he has another idea.

"How about we just go outside and see what happens?" Mr. Mayer asks, pitching the idea as "John Mayer Goes Outside."

Defender collector John Mayer for Land Rover x The Atlantic

In the next scene, the crew is seen setting up at California's Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. Mr. Mayer and director Eric Ryan Anderson plot a course for the musician to drive a Land Rover Defender.

"John Mayer, in addition to being an incredibly accomplished musician, is a gear aficionado with a passion for all

things mechanical," Mr. Schorr said. "He also has a personal heritage Defender collection."

In the film, Mr. Mayer tells Mr. Anderson about how he has been a fan of Defenders for a decade.

"I think they represent outside thinking," Mr. Mayer says. "I love seeing the little core design elements that are quintessentially Defender."

The men decide Mr. Mayer will drive the Defender without a set plan for the film, choosing to see what unfolds naturally on their adventure together. They greet other hikers, attempt to skip rocks and challenge the Land Rover with the rocky terrain.

"There's a reason people call it escape," Mr. Mayer muses. "Because you really are kind of slipping the bonds of something, even if the bond is just routine."



Redwoods can live up to 2,500 years. Image credit: Jaguar Land Rover

The musician also takes a detour for a walk with a redwoods guide. She shares with him the importance of slowing down to appreciate the majesty of the forrest.

In more personal moments, Mr. Mayer also speaks about how the experience has impacted and relaxed him.

The film concludes with Mr. Mayer and Mr. Anderson driving to the coast at dusk. The musician takes out his guitar for an impromptu performance sitting in the back of the Defender.

"John Mayer is a fit for this Land Rover effort because he is smart and sophisticated, while also having a rugged side," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at [iSeeCars](#). "Land Rovers, like John Mayer, also appeal to a sophisticated demographic and brilliantly combine luxury and adventure."

"John Mayer also appeals to the target audience of *The Atlantic*, which targets affluent and educated thought-leaders," she said.

The campaign page on *The Atlantic* site includes a short article, as well as additional photography and videos from the journey. It also links to notable works from the publication about the outdoors, including a poem by Henry David Thoreau.

Automotive adventures

Adventure and versatility are key to Land Rover's identity, and the automaker often enlists unexpected ambassadors to share those themes.

In an earlier collaboration with *The Atlantic*, composer Hans Zimmer created a musical score inspired by a drive in a 2018 Range Rover along the Angeles Crest Highway. While adventure is central to Land Rover's brand messaging, this was a more upscale take for the automaker as it captures the emotion of riding in its vehicles ([see story](#)).

Another campaign followed British TV broadcaster and marine biologist Monty Halls during his family vacation in remote parts of Ireland, all while showcasing the safety and versatility of the Land Rover Discovery ([see story](#)).

This latest film with Mr. Mayer continues this tradition for Land Rover.

"This campaign reflects the Land Rover brand because they didn't choose someone who is known for being outdoorsy, but rather someone who represents the automaker's sophistication and refinement," Ms. Blackley said.

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