



Boxy icon goes **Bling**

Land Rover's 60th anniversary model is the blingest Defender ever. Dieter Losskarn took the limited edition black beauty to the Waterberg region and into Garonga Private Game Reserve west of Kruger.

It's the most recognised 4x4 in the world and is practically synonymous with travelling in Africa. Almost every movie made on the mother continent has featured the famous Land Rover. When I came to South Africa in 1994, the first thing I bought was a Defender. About 50000 kilometres later, I decided to go for a car instead.

While most of the 25000 Defenders produced each year are working vehicles for everyone from farmers to aid agencies, the 60th anniversary SVX special edition models are the most stylish and feature-packed versions ever produced by Land Rover.

The boxy 4x4 icon made its first public appearance at the Amsterdam

Wheels Land Rover Defender 110 SVX



LEFT: Height restriction – if you're over 1,85 metres tall, you'll have trouble getting behind the wheel of the Defender.
RIGHT: Driven to pieces – Kingsley and crew pay last respects to an icon.
BELOW: The bling interior of the SVX anniversary model has some extras.



'Imagine adventurer Kingsley Holgate in a gangsta rapper outfit and you'll get the picture.'



Motor Show on 30 April 1948. Six decades later, the Defender SVX is clearly descended from that first vehicle. Only this limited edition model is much blinger. In fact, it's the most attractive Defender ever. Just imagine adventurer Kingsley Holgate in a gangsta rapper outfit and you'll get the picture.

With metallic black paintwork and subtle, dust-catching satin-black decals, the SVX is available in the short 90 soft-top and station wagon versions, as well as the longer-base Defender 110. Each model comes fitted with an individually numbered plaque. New exterior features include a restyled grille surround, tubular side-steps, special alloy wheels, a reinforced aluminium front undershield, clear-

lens headlights and LED reverse/rear fog lights. Also included are special Defender and SVX badges.

The soft-top model is especially eye-catching, with a metallic silver tubular cage that supports a tailor-made, removable black-fabric hood. This encloses a flat load-space and a spare wheel stowed behind the front seats, reminiscent of the very first top-less Land Rovers.

Bringing the SVX interiors right up to date are custom-designed Recaro front seats, distinctive alloy gear knobs, a new audio system (with subwoofer and USB socket), iPod compatibility and Garmin satellite navigation. Unfortunately, I couldn't check this out, as whoever left the car for me at OR Tambo took the radio frontplate with



OPPOSITE: The ideal safari vehicle, the 110 Defender SVX, meets local wildlife in Garonga Private Game Reserve, just west of the Kruger National Park.

him, leaving me to tackle long, boring stretches of road without any music.

The special-edition SVX is one of the rarest Defenders ever, with only 1800 units produced worldwide. A limited number have been allocated to South Africa, where Land Rover dealers report interest is high.

Before we take the posh Landy for a drive, let's have a quick look at the company which produces the iconic 4x4. Today, Land Rover is owned by Indian car manufacturer Tata and presents a five-model line-up, headed by the Range Rover. Despite the current financial crisis, global sales are promising. More than 226 000 Land Rovers were sold in 2007.

The marque's manufacturing plants in the UK employ a workforce of 8500 people – and the company helps support another estimated 40 000 jobs through its automotive suppliers.

Since the first Series I model rolled off the production line, the vehicles created by Land Rover have defined the 4x4 market.

In 1970, the company introduced what's frequently been named the most significant 4x4 vehicle ever: the Range Rover. It was the first 4x4 to be equally capable on the road and off.

Together with the Defender, Discovery 3, Freelander 2 and Range Rover Sport, this Range Rover completes Land Rover's fivesome.

Land Rover's spirit of adventure has been evident from the earliest days. Explorers, farmers, scientists,

naturalists and outdoor sport enthusiasts have used Land Rovers' legendary capabilities to access some of the world's most inhospitable regions.

For 60 years, the company's vehicles have worked for a multitude of humanitarian and conservation organisations, represented today by Land Rover's formal ties with the Born Free Foundation, Biosphere, Earthwatch, the Royal Geographical Society and the China Exploration and Research Society.

After that build up, let's hit the road. I know you have to show respect towards iconic legends and I am trying – remember, I've owned one. It's an enthusiast's car, a modern classic, restricted by a 60-year-old design. A dedicated Defender customer wouldn't go for anything else.

I'll begin with the seats. The Recaros are the first proper seats ever used in a Defender. Before, Land

Rover just bolted some sort of camping chairs onto their chassis. So that's an improvement, but only for people of average height. If you're over 1,85 metres – oops – you won't be able to turn the steering wheel, even with the seat slid fully back.

Another problem: there's no recognisable acceleration. Forget about quickly merging into moving traffic, you'll turn into an instant obstacle. For a bling poser like the SVX, they should've fitted a V8 instead of the lame tractor diesel. In addition to the lack of power, a school bus-like turning circle makes city driving quite a nightmare.

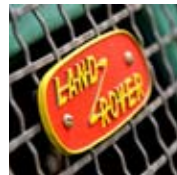
But beyond urban areas and off all tarmac classified with an 'N', the Defender is in its element. Bumpy dirt roads are just ironed out and a cruising speed of 120km/h is more than acceptable. Get to more difficult stuff and the Defender shines. You



The Camel Trophy days – when the going got tough, the Defenders still pulled through.

just can't drive it naked and it needs weight to get more comfortable, so add a snorkel, a roof rack, roof tent, gas cylinders, spare water and petrol cans and it's happy.

A Defender is the ideal vehicle for adventurers – real ones and wannabes. But I wonder how many of the special SVX models will ever be taken cross-country? Anyway, I sincerely hope I'll look as good as the SVX when I turn 60.



footnotes

Where we stayed

\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$ A Room With A View and A Hundred Angels sits high above the cool suburb of Melville, Johannesburg, where there are countless restaurants to choose from. Large and castle-like, its rooms have bathrooms with double showers and tubs, great views and a pool with a Roman feel. B&B is from R400 to R600 a person a night sharing. Tel 011-482-5435, e-mail lise@aroomwithaview.co.za, web www.aroomwithaview.co.za.

\$\$\$\$ The Peech Hotel is one of the hippest boutique hotels in Melrose, Joburg, run on eco-friendly principles. The trendy décor in the 16 bedrooms and suites include top-quality bed linen, wi-fi and iPod docking stations. Stay in for dinner at Bistro @ The Peech, which serves excellent food. Room rates start from R1850 (sleeps two).

Tel 011-537-9797, stay@thepeech.co.za, web www.thepeech.co.za/index.html.

\$\$\$\$ Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill are relaxed, rustic bush homes in a private game reserve in the malaria-free Waterberg area with spectacular views of the mountains. Wildlife includes buffalo, rhino, eland, zebra and sable. They offer guided walks, game drives, mountain biking and horseback safaris (45 horses to choose from, very child-friendly). Rates are from R2700 a person sharing, all inclusive. Tel 014-755-3584, e-mail reservations@waterberg.net, web www.waterberg.net.

\$\$\$\$ Garonga Safari Camp is in a private game reserve in the Makalali Conservancy west of Kruger National Park. It has six beautiful luxury tents and a pool with a view of a riverbed, where elephants often graze. Game drives with knowledgeable rangers are offered. It's a great romantic getaway for couples. Rates are from R2000 a person sharing, all inclusive. Tel 087-806-2080, e-mail reservations@garonga.com, web www.garonga.com.

The low-down

Land Rover Defender 110 SVX Limited Edition

Price: Available in South Africa in three variants, with pricing starting at R370 000 for the SVX 90 Hard Top, R410 000 for the SVX 110 CSW and R417 000 for the SVX 90 Soft-Top. 'Normal' Defender models 110 cost R371 000 and the Defender 90 R335 000.

Engine: 2,4 litre Tdi turbo diesel – 90kW/120 hp

Torque: 360Nm

0–100 km/h: forever.

Top speed: about 120 km/h

Consumption/100km: 12,9 litres (average consumption during 1 200 km trip)

Fuel tank: 75 litres

Range: 581 km

Approach angle: 47,7°

Departure angle: 34,6°

Ground clearance: 314 mm

Wading depth: 500 mm

Weight: 2 041 kg

For a similar amount of money, (R370 000 to R417 000), you could buy:

Hummer H3 3,7 R393 000

Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon A/T R339 000

Jeep Cherokee 2,8 DRD Limited R369 900

Toyota Land Cruiser 4200 Diesel Station Wagon R380 200

For more information: www.landrover.co.za

Wheels etc

Tank up with a handy bag

The innovative Quick Lock Tankbags from Bags Connection are shaped to fit most models of motorbike and lock into place without any additional strapping, using a devilishly clever tank-socket connection mounted onto the fuel cap (this takes some DIY skills). Simply clip it off when you wish to fill up. Made from durable, 1200 denier high-tenacity ballistic nylon, they come with an additional shoulder strap and carrying handle to convert into a tote bag. Most versions are expandable, with over 20 litres of space and a separate rain cover to keep your valuables dry. The latest models have a 12V connection so you can charge electronic equipment such as iPods, mobile phones and video cameras. Priced from R730.00inc VAT. Tel 041-466-2553, web www.bikegear.co.za. – Rob House



Don't do it!

The Luma bodykit offered by Sportech is the perfect example of how to destroy a brilliant original design and simultaneously waste R90 000. In trying to give BMW's X6 more 'street cred' (it has so much already, it doesn't need any-more) with a body kit, they created a plastic Frankenstein monster. Advice: leave the magnificent X6 as it is and go for a holiday with the R90 000 you've saved.



Join us on a two-wheeled *Getaway* exploration in Namibia

In April, *Getaway* is planning a 10-day adventure through Namibia. It starts from Windhoek, with stopovers at Sossusvlei, Swakopmund, the Doro Nawas Conservancy in Damaraland and Anderson's Camp adjacent to Etosha.

You can either bring your own bike or hire one in Windhoek from our adventure partner, Motorrad Rentals.

Interested? Contact fatimaj@ramsaymedia.co.za for details.



Stuck



Mother Nature seemed to take exception to the Land Rover name on an evening game drive in a private Big Five game reserve and we got stuck in this river. My tracker and I carried our six guests out of the river on our shoulders. In true safari spirit, they enjoyed the experience.

Andre d'Hotman, Lydenburg

If you have photographs of a 4x4 getting stuck, e-mail them to wheels@getaway.co.za or post them to Getaway Wheels, PO Box 180, Howard Place, 7450 Cape Town. You could win a Nissan Securetech recovery kit worth R1 500, comprising a recovery kit bag, nine-metre kinetic energy snatch recovery strap, five-metre pull/winch extension recovery strap, two alloy recovery bow shackles, leather gloves, key ring and Offroad Tactix instruction DVD and manual.



