



AT THE WHEEL

Motors man Bob Arora plays with some serious cars

Operation supercar

Range Rover is more than having a moment so for fans out there, here's the show-stopper



My dad used to work at Ford in Dagenham and apart from a Ford (obviously) his favourite car was always the Range Rover. The Range Rover never really appealed to me - it was just such a big old beast that wasn't very nice to drive at all.

Back in 2005 Land Rover decided to introduce a car that was going to take on the class leading X5. The Range Rover Sport was introduced and it went on to become a real sales phenomenon. Waiting lists grew and the car was a real cash cow for Land Rover. Owners were selling cars for a profit and even used cars were not losing money at all.

At my current gym the car of choice for everyone is the Range Rover or the Sport. When I first joined the BMW X5 was the car of choice. The only problem now is Range Rovers were always a rare sight on the road but with the introduction of the Evoque and the Sport I personally think an Alfa is a rarer sight on the roads.

When the Sport was introduced it was a revelation to drive, not only was it great to drive on the road it was also very capable off-road too. The range-topping Supercharger was a great car to drive but it wasn't quite as focused as the Cayenne Turbo: this 4x4 was like a 911 on stilts. Fast forward ten years and Land Rover have taken the bold step of introducing not only the most expensive but the most powerful Range Rover Sport ever in the guise of the SVR. This car has been created by a special operations department, their clear aim is to take on Audi with their Quattro division, BMW with their M division and Mercedes with their AMG division.

I was amazed to read that in America alone last year over half a million people became millionaires last year. When

you factor in China and India's new millionaires there is obviously a captive market for this amazing car. This car has been fitted with a 5.0lt V8 engine that produces 542 bhp and its top speed is 162mph and it hits 62mph in 4.7 seconds. It's Range Rovers first real competitor to the Cayenne Turbo S, ML AMG 63 and the X5M.

The Cayenne Turbo S is still a faster car but the turbochargers don't sound as good as the engine and exhaust in the SVR. The car sounds more like a Jaguar F Type, which if you have driven one you will know that's not a bad thing at all. The car's price starts at £93,000 but the car I drove had quite a few extras and its price jumped up to £108,000. The standard SVR is over £10,000 more expensive than an Autobiography, putting both cars together and the subtle sporty changes just make the SVR look amazing.

The car has been given quite a sporty makeover with SVR badging, enlarged front intakes, revised front bumper. This car also gets new grilles on the nose, bonnet and the front wings. A sporty roof spoiler, rear valance, rear diffuser and quad pipes help make the car look the business. The optional 22" wheels are an expensive option at £2400 but cars fitted with them really did look the part. Despite the larger alloys suiting the car they also improve wet weather performance over the 21" alloys.

The new sporty look make the car look like it's had the magic touch from the Overfinch or one of the many other aftermarket specialists. Believe me when this car approaches you from behind it looks very menacing indeed. The 8-speed gearbox has been programmed to give the car much sportier changes. Land Rover have also fitted an electronic locking rear differential; this helps give the car enhanced traction and much more directional control. Power can be either sent 100% to either the front or rear wheels. The standard air suspension has been reprogrammed to trade ride comfort for grip.

The Sport's interior has always been a totally stunning place to be sitting over distances, the extra bolstering for the seats just adds to the special feel of the car. The interior still beats all of its competitors hands down. Over long distances this car is more of a comfortable 4 seater. Spending a few days in this car and you can't but love it.

The SVR can only be described as a fantastic car for long journeys, the sound of the engine makes you want to really drive this car hard and to its full potential.

At the time of writing this, the SVR is demanding premiums of around £20,000 for any lucky owners with the foresight to buy one.

Car supplied by Land Rover

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