

Throwing down the gauntlet



Land Rover is now taking on the likes of Audi with their Q5 and BMW's X3, with a new refined and classy family SUV; the Discovery Sport. Which bears more than a passing resemblance to its thoroughbred stablemate, the Range Rover Evoque.

A proper family SUV too, it's a shorter car than many of its rivals, yet there's room for seven thanks to two cleverly concealed, full sized, seats that fold neatly into the floor deck of the luggage compartment until needed.

Aesthetically, the Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) has a very self-assured exterior and lavish interior. The cabin, for instance, mixes style and sumptuousness with elegant lines. Even the entry level model comes with top quality materials including: part leather upholstery, climate and cruise controls, heated front seats and spoonfuls of sporting character.

What's more, the Discovery Sport's high driving position instils a sense of self-assurance and the whole driving experience is spot on. Very comfortable, refined and rewarding to drive, while retaining the breadth of all-terrain capability for which Land Rover is world-renowned. I must say I was taken aback by how light and intuitive it feels to drive. The Disco sport also grips well and its precise steering makes it an absolute a pleasure to drive both in and out of town. It also comes with Terrain Response® technology, and the ability to wade to 600mm, which affords the

vehicle something others in its class just don't have - class-leading capability both on and off road.

As one would expect from the marque, safety is a key priority, resulting in a first-in-class pedestrian airbag, autonomous emergency braking, and a state-of-the-art bodysell featuring both ultra-high-strength steel and lightweight aluminium.

This represents a fraction of the advanced equipment available in the vehicle, which also includes an all-new eight-inch touch screen infotainment system, and standard tilt-and-slide row-two seating for maximum interior configurability.

From launch in the UK, the new Discovery Sport has been equipped with a powerful and refined 2.2 litre SD4 turbo-diesel engine producing 190 PS. It features stop-start technology, high-pressure direct injection, low-friction internal components and smart regenerative charging for outstanding performance and economy. Both nine-speed automatic and six-speed manual transmissions are available. The line up has just been made even better too with a highly efficient two wheel drive eD4 turbo diesel engine joining the range boasting

FAST FACTS

Max speed: 117 mph

0-62 mph: 10.4 (manual) 8.9 (auto)

Combined mpg: 46.3 (manual) 44.8 (auto)

Engine 2179 cc, four cylinder 16 valve turbo diesel

Max. power (Ps): 190

Max. torque (Nm): 420

CO2: 162 g/km (manual) 166 g/km (auto)

Price (as tested) from: £32,395

CO2 emissions from just 119g/km.

The garden-fresh Discovery Sport is bound to build upon the outstanding success of the outgoing Freelander, which quickly became one of Land Rover's most admired models and with prices starting at just over £32,000 on the road, that might even put a smile on your bank manager's face (assuming they do crack a smile from time to time...)

Test car courtesy of Duckworth Land Rover, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire.