

If there's one overarching impression, or surprise, we have from this, it's that we always expect it to be far pricier than it is. The Land Rover brand does have an air about it—refined styling, royal pedigree and so on. And that air remains, even as you realize most of the pricing is right in the mainstream of many a more common SUV brand.

In the main Defender family, 90-110-130 versions by length, base prices run from \$61,000 to \$74,000 base—see sidebar. (An outlier is the 110-based Defender OCTA, at almost \$160,000, though when you come down to it, there are specialty versions of much more mundane brands that get up into that price range, too.)

Ours moves from its max-length Defender 130 base of \$65,000 to the \$100k ballpark by being a

130 X, adding an extensive range of enticing, well-considered upgrades. This resulting 395-hp 3.0L V6 mild hybrid with 8-speed automatic and twin-speed transfer case AWD, atop Active Dynamics air suspension and 22-inch wheels, then adds a number of very reasonably priced function, style and comfort options specific to ours, for just \$3,860 more.

Whether you shop by size, mission, budget or just lust, it's easy to shop this lineup and end up right where you need to be. Value notwithstanding, one look at this long, handsome SUV, and you feel you have arrived, without being outlandish.

Ours arrived set up to unlock on approach, which we usually change, but we left this that way, as it just fits its character—it's here to take care of us. Animated isometric screen graphics upon startup

confirm nice attention to detail by the team.

This vehicle simply has presence—detail, purity, delivering its brand and product promise in a straightforward manner. Psychologically it may feel on a plane with something that could cost \$250 or even 500 grand, yet while those might feel snobbish and lose appeal, this is not like that at all.

Instead, it's purposeful, with tremendous capabilities built in—almost a foot of ground clearance and about three feet of wading depth available, supported by a sophisticated, capable interface to control it all, all in the screen, as opposed to the array of console and dash switches and levers in more classic Land Rover layouts. Premium presentation takes center stage and does it well.

Our Defender 130 X sample is especially hand-

some with its black hood, grille and front fascia—almost a racing stripe look that breaks up a shape that in one color can fall between curvy and boxy. Maybe it's visually ambiguous and that's a plus. This takes it somewhere new and we like it.

At roughly 400/400 horsepower and torque, this is a performance machine on pavement. Its hybrid nature seems to provide a lot of that torque fairly immediately, almost on par with a full electric. (You may feel you have your hands full the very first time, but will quickly get used to it and love it.)

The only time it felt less so was while navigating parking garages at slow speed with uncertain next moves. If this kind of slower, tighter work is in your mix, potentially in town or in the dirt, maybe a shorter Defender, say the 110, is worth a look. And this, of course, is why they come in sizes.

That aside, we loved the presence and the capacity of the 130. It's a familiar tradeoff, common

in the overall segment, generally an easy choice.

No matter how much you crave challenge or drama, our Defender 130 X, while full of conquering attributes and with strong presence, is ultimately a very user friendly experience. It inhabits a pleasant point on the utility-to-humility-to-pride scale, providing a subtle nudge toward a brag. As with, say, personal relationships, a lot of people will tell you that's the one to hang on to. A keeper.

Defender, one of seven Land Rover models, accounts for almost one-third of their sales worldwide. The US, long the number one export market overall, has been swapping that spot with China the past few years. Be all that as it may, just as we close out this issue, Jaguar Land Rover is poised to announce significant cuts to production and to US-bound exports. We will see where this goes, but if you have the itch, it could be one more reason to hustle on out there and find yours right now. ■

EQUAL PARTS OVER THE TOP & RIGHT AT HOME

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

Many specs were European and have been converted. Some are based on Defender 100 or 110. Doublecheck with dealer for the latest.

ASSEMBLYNitra, Slovakia
ENGINE/TRANS BUILDUK / Germany
PARTS CONTENTUK 31% / Germany 19%
US/Canada 1%

ENGINEMHEV 3.0L 24v 6-cyl
COMPRESSION RATIO10.5:1
HP/TORQUE395 hp / 406 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION8-spd automatic
DRIVETRAINAWD
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED6.3 sec / 119 mph
SUSPENSIONadaptive air suspension
STEERINGelec pwr assist
BRAKES(w 22-in wheels) F: 380mm
vented, 4-piston opposed 2-piece caliper;
R: 365mm vented disc, single-piston
sliding fist w iEPB

WHEELS22-in wheels w spare
TIRES275/45 R22 115V
LENGTH / WHEELBASE210.9 / 118.98 in
GROUND CLEARANCE(std) 8.6 in
.....(off-road) 11.54 in
APPR / RAMP / DEPART(std) 30.1 / 22.0 / 24.5°
.....(off-road) 37.6 / 27.9 / 28.8°
WADING DEPTH(air susp) 35.43 in
TURNING CIRCLE42.98 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)40.63 / 40.43 / 38.98 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)39.09 / 38.39 / 31.65 in
CARGO CAPACITY13.7 / 43.3 / 78.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT: only provided for 110:
.....(Euro, converted) 5128 lb
TOW CAPACITY: only provided for 110:
(Euro, unbraked) 1653 lb (braked) 7716 lb
ROOF LOAD (DYN/STATIC): for 110:
220.5 / 661.4 lb / (dyn w expd rack) 370.4 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY: only provided for 110:
.....unknown / (Euro) 23.8 gal
MPG16/20/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$105,000
PAINT: Borasco Greync
INTERIOR: Ebony Windsor leather and Kvadrat™
seats w Ebony interiornc
COLD CLIMATE PACK: heated windshield, head-
light power wash500
TOWING PACK: advanced tow assist, tow hitch
receiver1300
2ND ROW heated and cooled captains' chairs w
winged headrests1000
WHEELS: 22-in Style 7030 diamond turned dark
grey700
WIFI enabled w data plan360
DESTINATION CHARGE1850

TOTAL.....\$110,710

2026 LR DEFENDER LINEUP

Defender 90from...\$ 61,000
Defender 110from.....65,000
Defender 130▼ from.....74,000
Defender OCTAfrom.....158,800

Similarly to specs, pricing has been gleaned from a variety of sources, including limited manufacturer materials, as well as our sample's Monroney sticker, online government references and the consumer website. Check with your dealer for the latest information.