



Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 HSE

For sheer ability at pulling power down onto a road, a rutted track or slipway and pulling the largest of loads out of trouble, Discovery 3 is in a league of its own.

Words: Tim Barnes-Clay

You'll find it hard to find a better multi-purpose vehicle than the Land Rover Discovery 3. It is family friendly and, in diesel spec, it is a good car to own.

It weighs an amazing 2.7 tonnes and is based on the same sturdy underpinnings as the Range Rover Sport. The Discovery, however, offers a more traditional image than the 'there must be a celebrity behind the tinted glass' impression the Range Rover oozes. It's still cavernous, though, with plenty of space for seven full sized adults.

To be honest the Disco feels better matched to US roads than our narrower congested streets. At 4835mm long and 2009mm wide it's actually shorter than an Audi Q7, but wider and only slightly smaller than the Range Rover. The height also means you're ever so slightly worried about taking the roof off when going into multi-storey car parks. All that said the Discovery 3 never feels too nerve-racking to drive. There is no denying it feels big but the stocky, sharp styling means you know where the edges of the car are.

Unlike the Range Rover Sport, the Discovery isn't meant for goading boy-racers. Steer around a roundabout with a heavy foot and it lurches, but unwind and drive it like it's a 2.7-tonne beast and you'll be amazed at what it is capable of. The Discovery grasps the road with good grace

although you're always aware of the mammoth masses at play. At least its size mashes all bumps in the road to a barely noticeable blip in the smoothness of the ride.

Some people may use its mud-plugging talents, many won't. But negotiating a boggy, pot-hole ridden car park or ploughing through a country ford is a piece of cake. If you need to go further into the wilderness, a spin of the Terrain Response dial will adjust the electronics to suit the land.

The interior of the Disco 3 still isn't quite up there with the Range Rover. The top-spec HSE model on test here cost a steep £45,360, but you still get plastics that creak when you rest your knee against them. You do however get four heated seats, leather everywhere, audio controls for all three rows, climate control, electric everything, TV screens and a DVD player. The seats are superbly comfy and you have a feeling of invincibility cocooned inside this monster.

With a max towing capability of 3,500 kg the Disco will effortlessly pull a fully laden horse-box with a full load of passengers and luggage on board. Add to that a top speed of 112mph and a 0-62mph time of 11.7 seconds it makes a great car to have for people who want to pursue a country lifestyle.

