

Reaching to the converted



Dissatisfied with your standard Range Rover? Fancy a GTi that climbs trees? Well Overfinch can probably help, at a price . . .

Officially, Overfinch says it produces "enhancements" for Range Rovers and the Land Rover Discovery. These can be either mechanical, cosmetic or a bit of both. Basically, it's a bespoke customising service that can be tailored to suit your needs, and your budget.

The latter element is relatively important in this context. Our test car started life as a Vogue SE automatic (listed at £36,500); by the time it had been transformed into an Overfinch 570 Ci, another £17,524 had been spent. Of that, £11,830 accounts for a full sports conversion, the most vital elements of which are a reworked 5.7-litre GM V8, wholesale suspension changes, sports exhaust and new steering rack. A Stage II suspension kit is listed amidst the 'options' which are, otherwise, mostly of a chrome and burr walnut nature.

The transformation is extraordinary. Range Rover produced its own limited edition sports model a few years back, the

three-door CSK (in deference to designer Charles Spencer King). Good though it was, it was still unmistakably a Range Rover, with the mass of body roll and lethargic steering that entailed.

The Overfinch is a different animal altogether.

Chassis dynamics aside, it has a huge spread of torque, and the 344 lb ft peak is sustained from 2900-3700 rpm, so it is as relaxing to drive as it is punchy. Engines are stripped down completely before fitment, and Overfinch adds its own cams, pistons, injection system and other ancillaries, the upshot of which is 284 bhp at 4920 of the 5500 available rpm. Overfinch estimates that it is possible to reach 60 mph from rest in under 7.5s, which is astonishing for something of this size and weight. Top speed is reckoned to be around 120 mph, highly respectable for something with the aerodynamic properties of Ben Nevis.

In addition to its copious performance, the 570 Ci feels, from behind the wheel, to be no bigger than, say, a Mondeo. The steering conversion is most impressive, offering sharp turn-in and plenty of feel. The

vagueness of the standard Vogue has been eliminated. So, too, has much of the body roll. The extra firmness of the suspension has not spoiled the ride quality, though the test example was running on Avon 255/60 road tyres rather than the Michelin 235/70 M&S all-terrain rubber that can be specified.

In short, its capabilities are awesome.

Reservations?

Fuel consumption is potentially horrific, 17-18 mpg if you're careful, but initial outlay is a more obvious stumbling block. However, if you take a good used example as a donor car (a glance through the trade press at the time this was written revealed J-registered 3.9 Vogues on offer for around £17,000), then you have the basis for a viable project. This is the closest thing there is to an off-road supercar, Lamborghini LM002 notwithstanding, and if you shop around it could be yours for less than the price of a new Vogue.

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