

# MOVE OVER, BENTLEY

Can you really make a luxury  
limousine from a builder's wagon?  
Jerry Thurston finds out



PHOTOS: TOM GRITCHELL



Dave Mummery enjoying the fruits of his labours

## TECH SPEC

### MODEL

2012 2.2TDCi  
Defender 110  
station wagon

### POWER

121bhp at 3500rpm

### TORQUE

266lb ft at 2000rpm

### TRANSMISSION

Six-speed manual

### MAX SPEED

90mph (limited)

### WHEELS

18in Kahn 1983 alloys

### TYRES

Bridgestone Dueler A/T  
255/70 R18

### SUSPENSION

Two-inch lower springs,  
adjustable dampers

### PAINT

Santorini Black Metallic

### FRONT SEATS

Exmoor Trim Elite,  
heated

### STEERING WHEEL

Wood-rimmed  
Mountney

### INTERIOR TRIM

Bentley-style

I'm in a Defender that's been designed specifically for the road. Nothing for it but to snuggle down in the comfy seats, turn up the stereo, watch the scenery flit by the subtly tinted windows and enjoy the ride, while I explain why it's been built and what's been done to transform it.

## 'The owner wanted a Land Rover that was primarily to be used for taking the family dogs out, but was also super-comfortable for occasional trips to his office in London'

The owner wanted a Land Rover that was primarily to be used for taking the family dogs out, but was also super-comfortable for occasional trips to his office in London. It had to be ultra-capable on-road while retaining the ability to climb out of trouble if necessary. He ordered a brand-new 110 and commissioned Nick Kerner 4 Wheel Drive to fulfil his brief, duly presenting the company with the factory-fresh vehicle for a serious makeover.

Enter senior technician Dave Mummery, who took enthusiastic charge of the job and is largely responsible for what you see here. Although the exterior has been heavily reworked, the finished result is very subtle. In fact some of the mods are so subtle that it would be easy to miss them if they weren't pointed out. But then this was very much the point of the build and one of the most impressive aspects of the conversion. It proves that bespoke is not necessarily about shouting: 'Look everybody, I'm different.'

### DEFENDER MAKEOVER

The once flat-black Defender is now resplendent in a very special metallic black finish. Subtle. A NAS-style (North American-spec) rear bumper,

LED rear lights, and a plated and colour-coded rear crossmember bring the '1950s' rear end well and truly into the 21st century.

The 70 per cent-tinted Masai rear windows complement the coachwork and give a completely new look to the load area. The rest of the windows are tinted too, not by as much

(that's illegal) but enough to calm the glare on a sunny day and to help with the overall restrained look of the vehicle. Colour-matched mirror housings, mirror arms, door handles and wiper arms represent an attention to detail

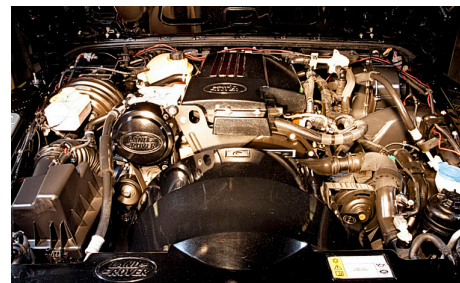
that might go unnoticed if it weren't pointed out. The same goes for the chequerplate on the tops of the front wings – by design it practically disappears when colour-matched to the rest of the body.

The front has also received its fair share of attention. HID headlight units pierce the darkness in a way that Joseph Lucas never dreamed of, and the different light surrounds and radiator grille help change the front aspect. The most obvious change is the bi-plane front bumper – a one-off created by Dave just for this build. Already fitted to it are LED day running lights, and by the time this feature appears it will also have been fitted with parking sensors to complement those on the rear.

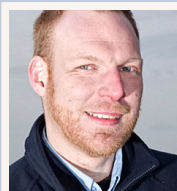
With the on-road brief in mind, the final task was to fit new springs to lower the vehicle



Standard brake callipers detailed in orange



Standard 2.2TDCi engine got a make-over too



'I've been at Nick Kerner 4 Wheel Drive for nine years; senior technician for almost two years. I had great fun building this car, including the suspension that was made specifically for it. Apart from the paintwork, I did everything. I've got a 3.9 V8 off-road Disco 1 with a straight-through exhaust, a DSE Range Rover and a Discovery 1 that I'll restore to Camel Trophy specification for my son when he passes his test. At the weekends, everyone here goes off-roading together.' **DAVE MUMMERY, SENIOR TECHNICIAN**



## LUXURY INTERIOR

Stunning as the exterior is, it's the reworked interior that truly blows you away. 'Opulent' hardly begins to cover it. The standard front seats were thrown out in favour of a pair of Exmoor Trim's heated versions, and that was just for starters. All the seats have been re-covered in soft, supple tan hide and stitched in a diamond pattern – the sort of thing you'd find in a sporting Bentley. Once you've had the seats re-done

like this, the rest of the interior will look decidedly second-class unless brought up to a similar standard. So the door cards and dashboard have been covered in the same leather, while new wool carpets of a slightly different shade to the seats further lift the ambience.

Normally I would shy away from a wood-rimmed steering wheel because in so many vehicles they look plain wrong, but this is the

exception that proves the rule. The headlining has been replaced with one made from Alcantara suede, and the door pillars are trimmed in the same material.

Driving the 110 evokes a strange but far from unpleasant conflict of senses. The luxury interior with its wonderful smell and all that extra trim gives you the feeling of driving a Bentley or something of that type, but the view through the screen and

the oh-so-familiar control layout still scream 'Land Rover'.

Frankly it's a bit odd at first, but you soon begin to enjoy the experience of driving the world's most luxurious workhorse. Its on-road manners are impeccable; the low-profile road-orientated tyres and two-inch suspension drop will limit its off-road performance a tad. But, for what the owner intends, that's neither here nor there.

by two inches and team them with a set of adjustable dampers to tune the ride. Key to completing the outside look is a set of ultra-sexy 18-inch Kahn Design alloys wrapped with low-profile tyres.

## WHAT HAS IT COST TO BUILD?

The owner wishes to be discreet, but having added up the known cost of the additional items and making an educated guess about the cost of a re-trim to this standard (about £5000, in case you were wondering) plus a high-quality respray, it would be safe to say that it must now stand at about double its initial circa-£25,000 on-the-road cost.

While this probably makes it one of the most expensive Land Rover Defenders ever, let's put things into perspective. A new Range Rover 3.0 TDV6 Autobiography weighs in at £88,000; for a little more than half of that the owner has a brand-new and truly bespoke vehicle that's completely different from any other Defender on the road. If he'd spent nearly double on a shiny new Autobiography, he'd have found Windsor full of them. **LRO**

■ Nick Kerner 4 Wheel Drive can be contacted on 01344 885222.

City slicker Defender looks stunning on-road

