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Land Rover Discovery Sport – with Jaguar Land Rover’s own Ingenium engines.

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Assessed by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency), who also highlights the continuing good news sales success story for JLR.



When the Land Rover Discovery Sport premium compact SUV with permanent four wheel



drive first went on sale in the UK in January 2015, with five and seven seat options, the only downside to the vehicle was that it still continued to use the long serving 2.2 litre SD4 turbodiesel engine manufactured for JLR by Ford.

Now the Discovery Sport has received Jaguar Land Rover's own EU6 compliant Ingenium family of TD4 2.0 litre four cylinder turbodiesel units. These are more refined, offer better fuel economy and have those all-important lower CO2 emissions. The Discovery Sport was the replacement for the Land Rover Freelander and it shares the same underpinnings and drivetrain as the best selling Range Rover Evoque. The Evoque has also recently received the new Ingenium diesel engines.

Prices for the latest Discovery Sport range start at £30,695 and go up to £46,000 and customers can step into the latest Discovery Sport from £299 per month.

Introduction of the new Discovery Sport boosted Land Rover's total global sales in 2015. A record 403,079 sales were up by 6%. The new Discovery Sport achieved 10,000 registrations a month, second in total only to the Range Rover Evoque. In the UK it was another record year with 66,574 Land Rover registrations, an increase of 18.5% over 2014. The new Discovery Sport achieved 16,484 sales whilst the Evoque found 20,802 UK customers.

UK new car sector sales figures just released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show that Dual Purpose models (their term for 4x4s/SUVs/Crossovers) increased by 21.5% to 355,118 vehicles sold in 2015 compared to 2014 which was the previous highest record year. The Dual Purpose segment is the third largest in the UK's new car market with Superminis (Ford Fiesta type) top and Lower Medium (VW Golf type) in second place.

The new Ingenium 2.0 litre turbodiesel engines in the latest Discovery Sport are also used by Jaguar in their XE and XF saloon ranges. For the Discovery Sport there is a choice of two TD4 power outputs, 150 hp (148 bhp) and 180 hp (178 bhp).



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, designated 'E-Capability', delivers 380 Nm of torque from 1,750 rpm and is available with a six speed manual gearbox - and it has a five seat configuration. The vehicle has a CO2 emissions rating of 129 g/km and an official Combined Cycle fuel economy of 57.7 mpg. The 180 hp version of the same engine in its standard 5+2 seating configuration delivers 139 g/km and 53.3 mpg for both the six speed manual and nine speed automatic versions.

All models are 4WD and have the company's excellent Terrain Response traction system, which allows the driver to easily select the best settings for the driving conditions. Of course it has that all important Hill Descent control which can be adjusted for downhill speeds by using the cruise control/speed limiter function. The E-Capability 150 hp versions are designated by a blue 'Sport' badge, they also feature 18 inch alloy wheels with low rolling resistance tyres and the final drive gearing is 'long-legged' to optimise lower CO2 emissions. All versions now have longer major service intervals, moving from 16,000 to



21,000 miles, which lower the whole life servicing costs.

The full range of five specification levels start at SE and are followed upwards by SE Tech, a new Black level (introduced following customer feedback), Luxury and Dynamic Lux. The choice depends upon the engine chosen so the 150 hp engine with its standard five seats is available with SE, SE Tech and HSE levels with a saving of around £1,700 over the seven seat 180hp comparable spec. versions. Of course there is a huge range of extra cost options including automatic parking at £900, an entertainment package at £2,500, heated and cooled front seats and leather upholstery throughout for £800, premium mats at £191 and an electrically deployable tow bar for £950 - but the list seems endless, so pushing up the final price considerably. My test version, the HSE 150 hp five-seater, had almost £8,000 worth of extra cost options, increasing the price from £35,395 to £43,551.

What are the competitors? Well in the premium brand sector the Audi Q5, BMW X3, Volvo XC60 and the Range Rover Evoque are the main ones and soon the Jaguar F-Pace will be a competitor as well. Moving to more affordable mid-sized SUVs, the new Toyota RAV4, Nissan X-Trail, Mazda CX-5, Honda CR-V, Mitsubishi Outlander diesel and Kia Sorento are competitors in size, but not as accomplished for off-road work.



Whilst the majority of premium brand SUVs are focussed more on providing near car-like on-road handling, the popular Evoque appeals as a fashion statement but is also good off-road and the Discovery Sport is reasonable on-road but brilliant away from tarmac. Mostly the Disco Sport's suspension is compliant but it gets a

little choppy, and the handling fidgets about, on poorly maintained town roads. On country roads the suspension mops up undulations, but with its long travel suspension there is some body roll during cornering. The Disco Sport is more likely to appeal to country folk and those who need an SUV for family and work use. The 150 hp engine is man-enough to cope with heavy duty work such as farming and general family use, especially if towing a caravan, boat or horse trailer is required. With its lower CO2 emissions, for a 4x4 SUV it will be a sensible option for company car drivers.

HOW GOOD IS IT?

I recently had a week long driving spell with the 2.0 litre TD4 150 hp HSE five door model with its standard six-speed manual gearbox. The overall impression was just how good this version is as an all-rounder, impressive in the country, relaxed on motorways and easy to drive in towns. Perhaps an automatic transmission option (not available with this 150 hp engine) might have added to the overall refinement but the six-speed manual gearshift is short-throw and light to use.

Unlike the previous 2.2 litre turbodiesel engine, the new Ingenium unit is relatively 'clatter-



free' on start up and hushed during acceleration. Power delivery is linear and strong with a useful 380 Nm (280 lb.ft) of torque delivered from 1,750rpm. The tall gearing means that motorway cruising speeds offer a relaxed drive and should help with the fuel economy. Top speed is 112 mph and zero to 60 mph takes 11.0 seconds, so it's no 'road-burner' but it is adequate. Choosing the 180 hp version will give more in the way of performance, and slightly more torque will make it more responsive, but I doubt it is worth the extra money for most customers, unless the standard-fit extra two seats or automatic transmission are must-haves.

With an official 57.7 mpg in the Combined Cycle my test driving, using motorways, A/B country roads and a small amount of in-town travel, returned just 40.9 mpg. That figure is acceptable but not so when compared to the official figure. However the low 129 g/km of CO2 emissions mean VED road tax is £0 cost for the First Year rate and then only £110 after that. Company car drivers will appreciate the relatively low 23% Benefit-in-Kind tax cost.

If a practical mid-sized SUV is more important than fashion, then the Discovery Sport is a much better choice than its Evoque stablemate. They might use the same platform, same Ingenium new engine, all-terrain drive and suspension, but the Sport is roomier especially for headroom and rear seat space. With its higher roofline the windows are larger so visibility is much better and the ride feels more compliant. The rear seats usefully slide fore-aft. Should the 5+2 Model be chosen, (Land Rover carefully do not claim the Discovery Sport to be a seven-seater), these are only occasional seats with very limited leg and headroom. Usefully they fold flat into the boot floor.



The Discovery Sport's exterior design is less angular than the Evoque's. The rounded corners give it a more modern look and the larger windows make it look less bottom heavy. The overall length is 4,599 mm (15.09 ft) with an overall height of 1,724 mm (5.66 ft) and long travel suspension allows for a 600 mm (1.97 ft) wading depth. At the rear is a huge tailgate, motorised for most versions, offering plenty of width and headroom giving access to a 689 litre (24.3 cu.ft) boot but fold the rear seats forward and this goes up to an impressive 1,698 litres (59.96 cu.ft). For those who tow the braked towing weight is 2,000 kg (4,409 lb). It is expected the 'full-fat' new Land Rover Discovery due late in 2016 will take much of its styling from this smaller Discovery Sport.



The Disco Sport with the HSE spec level is not short on equipment, with all the usual features including DAB radio, sat-nav, powered windows and door mirrors, heated front seats, heated windscreen, panoramic roof, Xenon headlights, auto lights and wipers, cruise control, keyless entry and start button, powered tailgate, front/rear parking sensors, reversing camera and 8.0 inch infotainment/nav screen. The only thing missing, a real negative point for me for a proper 4×4 SUV, was a spare wheel – just the dreaded inflation kit. A lesser gripe is the fact that the real-life fuel economy was good but not close to the official figures. To complete the range choices perhaps the 5+2 seating option with this 150 hp engine would also had been a good idea as would an auto transmission option.

VERDICT

Apart from the very few reservations (mentioned above), the new Land Rover Discovery Sport was the best 'proper' 4×4 mid-sized SUV brought to market in 2015. Now with JLR's own Ingenium 2.0 litre turbodiesel engine it is even better for 2016.

For: Strong, quiet new and low CO2 new Ingenium engine, low tax costs, practical design for work or leisure, compliant ride, well equipped, good on-road and brilliant off-road, best mid-sized SUV all-rounder by far.



Against: No spare wheel for a hard-core SUV – not good at all, real-life fuel consumption was not close to the official figures, gets very expensive if options are added, no 5+2 seating option or auto transmission with this 150 hp engine.



MILESTONES AND WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF:

Land Rover Discovery Sport 5 Seat, E-Capability TD4 HSE 2.0 litre 150 hp, 4WD.

Engine: Ingenium 2.0 litre, 4 cylinder, turbodiesel 150 hp, 380 Nm (280 lb.ft) of torque



from 1,750 rpm. Transmission: 6 speed manual gearbox, permanent 4WD with Terrain Response.

Performance:

0-60mph: 11 seconds

Top speed: 112 mph

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 57.7mpg (40.9mpg on test for on-road driving).

Emissions and taxation: CO2, 129g/km, VED £0/£110, BIK company car tax 23%.

Insurance group: 36E.

Warranty: 3 years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,599 mm (15.09 ft), W 1,894 mm (6.21 ft), H 1,724 mm (5.66 ft), boot/load space 689 to 1,698 litres (24.3 to 59.96 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), 5 doors/5 seats.

Price: £35,395.