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New 2017 Range Rover First Impressions

Published: March 7, 2017

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/new-2017-range-rover-first-impressions/>



New Range Rover Sport Autobiography Dynamic tops the 2017 range.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The most powerful Range Rover yet, the SV Autobiography Dynamic, heads the 2017 model range. A product of Land Rover's Special Vehicle Division based in Coventry, the vehicle

has a supercharged 5.0 litre, V8 petrol engine with 550 hp and a massive 680 Nm (501 lb.ft) of torque, with an equally high price starting from £132,800.

It's a busy time for Land Rover who are undertaking the global media launch of their all-new Land Rover Discovery, which we media types drive in the UK towards the end of March, plus they are just about to unveil their all-new Range Rover Velar at the Geneva Motor Show - and of course in the UK it's the new '17' registration plate sales month of March as well. The new Velar will be the fourth Range Rover model range. It is a five door coupé-styled



SUV, positioned to sell between the Evoque and the Range Rover Sport, and it's due to go on sale around the middle of this year – but prices are yet to be revealed.

In the meantime other new 2017 changes to the Range Rover models includes a new 2.0 litre 240hp Ingenium twin-turbo diesel engine for the Range Rover Sport models, priced from £59,000, and a revised 3.0 litre V6 supercharged 340 hp petrol unit – costing from £64,400.

2017 specification updates for the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport models include the introduction of semi-autonomous driving technologies, an enhanced all-terrain 4×4 system, InControl connected functions and an upgraded infotainment system.

With record global and UK sales behind them in 2016, Land Rover will have a raft of new models and updated variants and engines to increase sales further in 2017, at both the bottom and top end of their Land and Range Rover ranges.



Power Play...

For now we start at the top end of the Range Rover range with the new SV Autobiography Dynamic, priced from £132,800. This is the most powerful production Range Rover to date (not including Range Rover Sport variants). At its heart is a potent 5.0 litre, V8 supercharged petrol engine with 550 hp and delivering 680 Nm (501 lb.ft) of torque. It has a top speed restricted to 155 mph with a zero to 60 mph acceleration time of just 5.1 seconds – not bad for a luxury SUV weighing over 2.5 tonnes. In fact it is the same engine with the same power/torque as already used for the Range Rover Sport SVR, priced at £95,150. This



version has the same top speed but the time for acceleration from zero to 60 mph is marginally less at 4.5 seconds, due to its lighter weight. Both have an eight-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel drive. There is also a long wheelbase Range Rover SV Autobiography version – but not with Dynamic specification – which has the same engine with 186 mm (7.32 in) extra rear seat legroom and costs from £166,400.

Whereas the Range Rover Sport SVR, priced from £95,150, is hardcore tuned for outright sports performance in terms of handling and sharper steering, plus it also benefits from a fantastic exhaust tone under hard acceleration, all geared up to meet the demands of the enthusiastic driver, the Range Rover SV Autobiography Dynamic is described by the manufacturer as being ‘Our pinnacle model still combining luxury but with more driving satisfaction’. It offers the same space and luxury of a full-fat Range Rover without losing any of its overall refinement.

Range Rover would not give any sales numbers for the SV Autobiography Dynamic model but it has been previously reported that around a 1,000 units a year will be built, with approximately 12% going to UK customers. The largest market will be the USA and the oil-rich Arab States. UK customers are likely to be Royalty, heads of industry, ‘celebrities’ and Premiership footballers.

Jaguar Land Rover’s Special Vehicle Operations division has produced this new model that allows the Range Rover SV Autobiography to live up to its Dynamic label. They have lowered the ride height by 8 mm (0.31 in) and tuned the springs, dampers and anti-roll bar to sharpen the handling without destroying ride comfort. The steering rack is the same as used in Range Rover Sport SVR, which offers sharp steering response but it has been retuned to accommodate the extra size and profile of the heavier, larger luxury SUV.

There are also some minor exterior styling changes to differentiate this new sportier model and these include new finishes for the side vents, bonnet, grille, bumpers, red Brembo brake callipers, four round exhaust tailpipes and badging. Inside there is diamond quilted leather with contrasting stitching, a bespoke veneer for the fascia and knurled finishes for the



rotary gear selector and pedals. The specification list is huge; suffice to say it has everything from a panoramic sunroof to privacy glass, 360-degree parking assistant, adaptive cruise control, heated steering wheel, head-up display, sat-nav with traffic sign recognition and the latest new InControl and Touch Pro infotainment system.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Battling Storm Doris weather conditions, with fallen branches from trees and huge puddles of standing water – not to mention spinning wheelie bins, from the horrendous gale force winds, the country roads and village streets around the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire borders proved to be a very suitable obstacle course for my test drive in the SV Autobiography Dynamic. Whilst it is not as agile as the Range Rover Sport SVR, it was noticeably sharper in its handling than a conventional Range Rover, and all this without unsettling the ride-comfort for the driver or passengers. For such a large SUV the overall handling balance and poise was superb and yet still very civilised to drive. On more open roads the vehicle just eats up miles with absolute ease so fast touring driving will give the most obvious advantages over other versions.

I did try, at the same event and for comparison purposes, the £95,150 Range Rover Sport SVR with the same engine and drivetrain, and this gave a noticeably firmer ride but with sharper cornering body control and a more precise, better-weighted steering. This would be the version for those hard-core SUV enthusiastic drivers but has less appeal overall with its 'cosier' interior due to the lower roofline and marginally less opulent specification.

Whichever variant is chosen the 5.0 litre, V8, 550 hp supercharged petrol engine matched with the eight-speed automatic gearbox is a real joy to experience. It revs so smoothly but has a wonderful soundtrack during acceleration. The supercharger blows in to provide up to 680 Nm (501 lb.ft) of torque at 3,500rpm but even below that engine speed the acceleration urge is memorable, getting this big machine to 60 mph from standstill in a shade over five seconds.



Of course running costs are also huge but if you can afford the £132,800 purchase price no doubt running costs are of no significance. Officially the Combined Cycle fuel consumption is 22.1 mpg and on my brief driving spell the real-life figure was 19.8 mpg. Unfortunately along with all this power and performance the CO2 emissions are very high at 299 g/km so VED road tax is currently £1,120 for the First Year rate reducing to £515 for Year Two. However, a new car bought after 1 April this year will see VED rise to £2,000 for the First Year but then the new rules see the Second Year rate reduce to only £140, the same as any other petrol or diesel cars of any engine size. But being over £40k in price the catch is an additional £310 a year VED cost for the next five years, so in fact VED after the First Year will be £450 every year for five years which still makes it cheaper than it is now. I'm still scratching my head to understand how the new VED system was thought out (Kim adds, 'You are not alone David...'). Company car executives will pay the maximum 37% Benefit-in-



Kind tax and the insurance cost of course is huge with a Group 50E rating.

VERDICT

A top line machine!

For: Prestigious high performance image, scarcity value, impressive acceleration, sharper handling with the same high quality interior and specification, ride comfort, overall refinement, retains is impressive 4WD off road performance.

Against: Huge costs to buy and run.





Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Range Rover SV Autobiography Dynamic.

Price: From £132,800.

Engine/transmission: 5.0 litre, V8, supercharged petrol 550 hp, 680 Nm (501 lb.ft) of torque at 3,500 rpm, eight speed automatic, 4WD.

Performance: 155 mph (restricted top speed), 0-60 mph 5.1-seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 22.1 mpg (19.8 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 299 g/km, VED road tax currently £1,120 First Year rate then £515 Year Two onwards, BIK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 50E.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,999 mm (196.81 in), W 1,983 mm (78.07 in), H 1,827 mm (71.93 in), boot/load space 550-2,030 litres (19.42-71.69 cu.ft), braked towing weight 3,000 kg (6,614 lb), four doors/four-five seats.