Land Rover Freelander 2

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by Chris Adamson

Land Rover has given the Freelander 2, the second best selling model in its range after Evoque, what is describes as a premium overhaul – but, at first, you are going to find it difficult to tell the new from the old.

Most of the effort has gone into sprucing up the cabin and taking away some of the clutter, so the first thing you notice is a brand new centre console on the upright dashboard. The original Terrain Response dial has been replaced by switches and a shutter reveals additional storage space.

Gone too is the hand operated parking brake which has been replaced by a new ‘intelligent’ electric parking brake which adjusts brake force according to the slope the vehicle is parked

on and for good measure a start button replaces the key lock.

Dominating the revised dashboard is a seven-inch colour touch-screen – standard from XS trim upwards – with enhanced audio systems from Meridian, which offer a choice of 380W or 825W outputs for the CD and radio audio system plus there is an optional satellite navigation with a faster hard drive-based system.

In addition, responding to customer comments, there is a good old-fashioned analogue clock.

A new instrument cluster with a five-inch screen displaying primary vehicle-related information, such as temperature and fuel levels, gear positions and Terrain Response mode, now sits between the dials and is complemented with steering wheel toggle switches to operate the drop down menus and vehicle set-up details.

Another new feature for Freelander 2 is an optional rear view camera. The view from the back of the vehicle is displayed on the Infotainment screen and incorporates ‘Hitch Assist’, a graphic superimposed on the camera showing the position of the tow ball.

If you are really into your technology a ‘Say What You See’ voice activation system will prompt the driver visually with the commands he or she needs to speak in order to control functions in the audio, optional satellite navigation, climate and phone systems.

You can now specify your Freelander 2 in three new interior colours: Ebony, Ivory or Pimento, each with matching stitching and co-ordinated door casings to complete the look.

DIESEL DRIVES FREELANDER FORWARD

Freelander 2 buyers can choose from two updated diesel engines that last saw major changes in 2011, the 2.2-litre 150bhp TD4 and 190bhp SD4 with four-wheel drive and an automatic transmission – both are fitted with a new turbocharger to improve response times and torque output plus a diesel particulant filter.

For extra economy, the 2.2-litre 150bhp engine is also available in eD4 two-wheel drive only but why would you if you are buying a Land Rover?

With the British brand's all-terrain credentials you know it is going to be able to pull you out of almost any sticky situation thanks to the simple but effective Haldex rear differential.

Equipped with a six-speed manual transmission and automatic Stop/Start, the eD4 promises 47.1mpg and CO2 emissions of 158g/km.

The entry engine can be delivered with a standard six-speed manual gearbox – a six-speed automatic is a £1,505 option on the four-wheel drive version and standard equipment with the range-topping SD4.

With no changes to the suspension set-up the Freelander 2 does an admirable job of soaking up the potholes while being able to clear obstacles up to 210mm high and wade through water up to 500mm deep. For those who need to know it also has a 31 degree off-road approach angle and 34 per cent departure angle.

ADDING LUXURY TO GO-ANYWHERE ABILITY

When it comes to equipment levels the entry level to the range is the Freelander 2 S with cloth seats as standard and is followed by the GS comes which comes with full leather.

The XS gets detail features such as a gloss black grille surround and the 380W Meridian sound system, while the Dynamic version has a full bodystyling kit, and a gloss black finish to the bumper vents, grille bars and grille surround.

Next up the HSE comes with wood interior trim and features a wide range of standard equipment including: panoramic sunroof, memory function for the driver's seat and door mirrors and the 825W Meridian surround sound audio system.

Top of the range is the new HSE LUX which adds that extra special touch with Windsor

leather seats, Grand Black Lacquer finisher, premium carpet mats and 19-inch Diamond Turned Wheels.

If you want to spot the New Freelander 2 from the outside the main give-away is the more contemporary headlights on the corners of the four-square front and new rear tail lights which use the latest LED technology.

In addition the grille and fog lamp bezels now sport a bright finish and there are paint detailing changes to the front grille surround, insert bars and fender vent to harmonise the different elements.

Finally, three new body colours have been added: Aintree Green, Havana and Mauritius Blue, while an additional all new 17-inch alloy wheel design becomes available as standard on the XS derivative which also gains an enhanced body styling pack.

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VERDICT – FREELANDER GROWS UP

Once a budget priced off-roader, the revised Freelander 2 continues to take the model even further up-market into territory once occupied by its bigger sister, the Discovery.

Today it is going to take a minimum of £23,700 to get behind the wheel of a Freelander 2 and, if you want to flagship HSE Lux, you will have to part with close on £40,000.

WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF

Land Rover Freelander 2 SD4 HSE Lux

Engine: 2179cc four cylinder 16 valve turbo diesel, six-speed automatic transmission, four-wheel drive
Power: 187 bhp @ 3,500 rpm

Torque: 420 Nm (310 lb.ft) @ 1,750 rpm
Top Speed: 118mph
0-62mph: 8.7 seconds
Fuel Consumption:

Urban – 32.5mpg
Extra Urban – 48.7mpg
Combined – 40.4mpg
Emissions: 185g/km (VED Band I)

On the road price: £39,805