

# Add diesel. Shake and stir.

Range Rover welcomes diesel to the lineup | BY SUE MEAD

We head north from Phoenix, driving the 2016 Range Rover Sport through the Verde Valley, headed toward Schnebly Hill Road outside Sedona. It's a vehicle we know well; we love its sumptuousness and high-speed prowess married to some of the world's top 4WD capability. We will be driving both the larger Range Rover and the Sport—both engineered for pavement duty as well as the tough stuff. We would drive the Range Rover Sport—which has the edge at highway speeds—on unpaved Schnebly Hill Road one day, then the big Range Rover over the notoriously rigorous Greasy Spoon and Diamondback Gulch four-wheel-drive trail the next.

Since its debut in 1970, the four-wheel-

drive Range Rover SUV has been lauded for both its luxurious trappings and its extensive off-road capabilities. Now in its fourth generation, Range Rover has added a diesel engine to its powertrain options, promising exceptional quietness, efficiency and performance—and giving buyers another reason to praise the premium utility vehicle.

Refinement is inherent in Range Rover: when you're spending this kind of money for a luxury vehicle, indulgent premium materials and abundant technology are expected. The interior is sophisticated and modern, incorporating distinctive Range Rover design cues and wrapping its passengers in sumptuous leather and satin chrome trim.

But the news here is more about what's

under the hood than what's inside the passenger cabin: Land Rover's new 3.0-liter turbocharged V6 diesel engine, boasting 254 horsepower and 440 lb-ft of torque, mated to an eight-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission. Because peak torque arrives at 1,750 rpm in the Td6 (the gasoline V6 produces 332 lb-ft at 3,500 rpm), Land Rover expects the diesel powertrain to be particularly well-suited to towing heavy loads and to off-roading, where reaching maximum torque at a lower gear is extremely beneficial.

The first two new diesel-powered Land Rover models to go on sale in North America will be the Range Rover Td6 and Range Rover Sport Td6. Starting price for the entry-level range Rover Sport Td6 is \$64,950, and \$86,450 for the Range Rover Td6—about \$1500 more than the gasoline-powered versions.

Land Rover expects a 32 percent improvement in fuel economy over their supercharged V6 gasoline equivalents. Preliminary figures for both the Range Rover Sport HSE Td6 and Range Rover HSE Td6 are predicted

at 22/28/25 MPG (city/highway/combined).

Not only is the new diesel engine powerful and efficient, it also promises to be especially quiet—an unexpected alternative to the clattering sound so familiar in diesel engines. Land Rover says its quiet operation is thanks in part to a compacted graphite iron engine block and new isolating engine mounts, which reduce overall vibration and refine the character of the engine, as well as to an acoustic laminated windshield that buffers the cabin from the outside world.

There's been much talk lately about today's clean diesel technology. Land Rover's selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system uses diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) to reduce NOx emissions, ensuring the Td6 achieves US LEV 3 status. The DEF is injected into the exhaust, and, as the resulting mixture passes through the SCR, NOx is turned into harmless nitrogen gas. The reservoir for the DEF holds enough fluid for approximately 10,000 miles, but DEF is commercially available and owners can top the fluid level off themselves or take it to their nearest Land Rover retailer if the reservoir needs replenishing.

Both the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport ride on full-time intelligent all-wheel-drive suspension with Terrain Response 2 technology that allows drivers to select one of several modes to optimize performance on a variety of different surfaces. The new system is able to switch completely automatically among five settings—General, Grass/Gravel/Snow, Mud/Ruts, Sand and Rock Crawl—to ensure the vehicle is always using the optimum mode. As with previous Terrain Response systems, each setting optimizes drivability and traction by adapting responses of the engine, transmission, differentials and chassis systems to match the demands of the terrain. Additional standard driving technologies include hill descent control, dynamic stability control, electronic traction control, cornering brake control, electronic brake-force distribution, emergency brake assist and, of course, anti-lock brakes.

Land Rover expects its new diesel engine to become a popular choice for its customers, predicting that 15 to 20 percent of buyers will pick the Td6 engine (for both the larger Range Rover and the Sport). ■

## Schnebly Hill Road

This historic 4WD trail climbs 2000 feet in elevation for breathtaking views over Sedona and the Verde Valley. Originally built in 1902 as a wagon road to reach the Flagstaff railroad station, this may still be a shortcut, but smooth is nowhere to be found. High clearance and tough kidneys are required—if the views don't take your breath away, the bumps in the road will.

## Diamondback Gulch aka Greasy Spoon

What started as a cattle trail, and later a pipeline, has become one of Sedona's most famous 4WD trails. Descend into deep canyons of ancient limestone with hang-by-your-seatbelt moments, then climb up to the top of ridges, with nothing but blue sky through the windshield until you reach the top, where you are greeted by expansive vistas right out of Western movie scenes.



Range Rover HSE Td6



Range Rover Sport HSE Td6