

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This Land Rover enthusiast from Hamburg built the Series III of his dreams](#)

Lead

Oliver Jost got bitten by the Landy bug as a kid. Now he's built the 1978 Land Rover Series III of his dreams. We met Oliver for a chat and an evening drive through Hamburg's Hafencity.



Last time we saw you you were still putting the car together. Now, finally you're getting to drive it. And I have to say that the pastel green colour is looking wonderful in the late evening sun...

"Yes, actually I finished the car around three months ago, but only last week was able to finally get the TÜV inspection sorted so that I can get my historical plates on. The car passed fortunately."





It looks pristine, so I'd be surprised if it didn't.

"Well at first it wasn't so obvious. I was running an incorrect wheel size, and in order for the vehicle to be deemed historically correct, and also not to get into trouble with insurance, I had to change to the original set. Today I've put those wrong, bigger ones on the car just for the sake of the photoshoot, but it's true that I get an incorrect speedo reading when they are on, so not ideal. But yes, I can now say I am finally done with my project."



What is it about these old Land Rovers that makes people want to restore them themselves? I have friends who did the exact same thing, because of a bet. But what gave you the idea?

"I quit my previous job and decided to road trip for a year in a T3 Volkswagen bus. It was an amazing experience, but I had to come down to earth at some point. When I got the job of a commercial realtor and real estate investment consultant in Hamburg I simply needed a new hobby to keep me sane. Especially as the pandemic had just hit."



But why a Land Rover? And not a Lancia, MG or BMW?

"The first car I ever drove was my dad's 1987 Defender 90, a car which he has kept to this day. He is a hunter, so the car is painted a dark military green and he uses it to go into the woods. It's a workhorse not a garage queen and far from beautiful. Then again, Land Rovers of yesteryear are not a thing of design, at least not in the sense the company sees design today. What they are is as close as anyone can get to the concept of a purposeful, self-propelled, very... mechanical machine that just eats up - slowly but surely - any kind of terrain you throw at it. There is some poetic beauty in that relentlessness. Just like there is in the sound of a Maserati or Ferrari V12 race engine."



And you went online and decided to buy one...

"It wasn't that easy. I wanted that particular pastel green colour, but what I also wanted was the rare 2.6-litre, six cylinder petrol engine. It took me a while to find the right car, but one day, there it was parked on Ebay."

Why a Series III and not something older?

"To be honest I like the look of the series 2A better, but the 3rd generation is just slightly better engineered. I run a 2012 Defender 110 diesel as a daily driver. Of course, these two cars are a world apart, but I didn't want to go as far down the rabbit hole with my older car choice to possibly create frustration. Also this Series III, even if it had 3 previous owners, was preserved in a very good, although not entirely original condition."



What do you mean by that?

"The previous owner took good care of it. When he wasn't driving it, he kept it off the ground on a lift. The paint looked original, but the entire undercarriage was painted white. When asked why the guy said: "I've done some rustproofing and this way I can easily spot corrosion on the chassis elements"."



If the car was in such a good condition why even restore it?

"First of all, I am pedantic. And yes, I drove it for a while, but then I looked at the peeling paint, the dents, the scratches... and decided that I should do something about it. My aim wasn't to restore it completely, but one thing led to another and the project got out of hand quite quickly."



A nut and bolt restoration followed?

"Yes. I rented a garage from a friend and decided to do everything myself. Well, almost. The body panels were repainted by a professional as I don't have a spray booth and you need a steady hand to do it properly. The engine had also been overhauled by the previous owner, but I did separate the body from the chassis. I cleaned, repaired, or changed all the worn chassis elements. I sandblasted and cleaned the frame. The look of the entire engine compartment was refreshed and repainted by these here hands. I also put in new seals, a new wiring harness - a nightmare - and re-galvanized all the original parts. Put new rivets in etc. Then put the car back together."

Anything apart from the seals that had to be thrown away?

"Yes. The doors unfortunately. But I transplanted the original windows, so no one will be the wiser."



What now? Has dad been given a ride yet?

"Well, I have another Series 3, a petrol 90, that I want to restore, but first I will enjoy this one. Dad hasn't been able to sit in it even, but I'm planning a trip to Scotland for his 70th birthday, which is coming up soon. I'm sure it'll be an adventure of a lifetime because the car is noisy, hard to drive and only goes up to about 80 kph - I mean it will go faster but your eardrums will explode first. Then again, with these old Land Rovers it's the passion that makes you want to drive them, not the ease of use, nor the speed."

Photos:

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Gallery

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