

CLASSIC DRIVER

Adventure awaits in this iconic continent-crossing 1957 Land Rover Series 1

Lead
Looking slightly like a mountain-scaling school bus, this 1957 Land Rover Series 1 has adventure coursing through its veins and is a true piece of Land Rover history. Now, thanks to RM Sotheby's and their upcoming Monterey Sale on August 18th, this iconic will embark on an entirely new adventure!



As humans, we are all naturally curious. Curiosity is what drives us to think outside the box, sometimes destroy the box entirely, and other times, go where no other person has ever dreamt of going. Discovering the deepest, darkest section of the ocean, finding sources of water on another planet, or venturing into land that has never been inhabited are the stuff of every explorer's dream, and for Canadian artist Robert Bateman and his boyhood friend, Dr Bristol Foster, the dream was to embark on the adventure for a lifetime, and bring a Land Rover Series 1 along with them as the ultimate companion.



Land Rovers are no stranger to an adventure or three, but in 1957, Bateman and Foster wanted to up the ante with a 60,000km adventure spanning the entire world. Known affectionately as the “Rover Boys” by the submitted articles the pair wrote for the Toronto Telegram, these two dreamers successfully experienced every adventurer’s dream, all thanks to their highly modified Landy.



Just like the pair were given a nickname early on, it was only fair that the Landy got one too and was christened as “The Grizzly Torque”. It was a special order for 1957, complete with an 107-inch long wheelbase “Station Wagon” chassis, made in-house at Land Rover’s Solihull factory. Equipped with a 2.0-liter inline four-cylinder petrol engine, the rolling chassis was sent over to Pilchers of Wimbledon, who crafted the wonderfully unique creation you see before you. Ready for just about any situation they may find themselves in, the Landy sports aluminium bodywork, green leather upholstery, an observation hatch, two bunks, external sun visor, capstan winch, crank windows, and some durable Sand Beige paintwork.



Starting in Africa’s Gold Coast in July 1957 and worming their merry way across Central Africa via Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, the two friends soaked themselves in the culture of each passing country. Once they’ve run out of African countries to explore, the pair then travelled by boat to India, and onwards through Nepal, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and finally, that little country called, Australia.

The remarkable 60,000km adventure gained both the friends and the Land Rover some worldwide acclaim, but upon returning to Canada, Foster sold “The Grizzly Torque” to a Texas-bound graduate student, something he would regret almost instantly. Upon the sale, Foster relentlessly tried to relocate the trusty Landy, where it was finally located in a derelict barn in 2008.



What followed was a heart-felt restoration to return this trepid explorer back to its former glory, with Foster supplying a trove of period photographs for study, while Bateman recreated the hand-painted vignettes that run around the off-roader's bodywork representing each of the countries visited during their original journey.

"The Grizzly Torque" is a truly remarkable, well-documented and world-famous Series I example which perfectly showcases the strong-willed Land Rover spirit. The adventure continues for the vehicle, as it will head to RM Sotheby's upcoming Monterey Sale on August 18th!

Gallery

