

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## From the depths of space: First ride in the Range Rover LWB

### Lead

To be taking a test drive not in the pilot's chair – but perched in the second row – is a little unusual. But it's wholly appropriate to the latest Range Rover, where an extra 20 centimetres of body length caters solely for rear passengers...

If you voluntarily take a seat in the rear of a car, it's usually for good reason. Very often, it'll be because there's an 'L' badge on the car's bootlid – more often than not, the technical definition of a chauffeur's car. And although it's only a minor typographical addition, it could well be the deciding factor behind your purchase.

### Three credit cards



After this year's L.A. Motor Show, drivers and their fleet managers need to expand their spectrum, since the British successor to the quintessential luxury SUV, the Range Rover, is now available as a LWB model. But what's 20cm - just three credit cards arranged longitudinally? Well, no, it's like the difference between taking a long-haul flight in Economy... or Business class; all of a sudden, the preferential place in the new Rangie is now that second row. And even British Airways can't offer you a panoramic roof through which to stargaze.

### Between spa and gentlemen's club



The extra space is immediately noticeable and provides welcome freedom of movement for your legs, while those 'unlucky' enough to ride up front will find the same spatial arrangement as in the standard-wheelbase version. In the rear, it's a well-resolved mixture of spa and gentlemen's club – particularly if you choose the individual seats with multiple adjustment angles and the ability to massage, heat or cool. With these, the recline angle is an impressive 17 degrees (8deg further back than usual), perfect for taking an in-transit nap after a hard day's work. Those who didn't meet their deadlines will find an upgraded centre console with USB charging ports and electrically extendable, leather-covered tables – not to mention more light sources than the festive seasonal decorations back at the office.

### Destination: Bentley and Rolls-Royce



Whether on the rather dilapidated highways of the West Coast or Beverly Hills' famous shopping mecca Rodeo Drive, that longer wheelbase seems to amplify the lofty car's composure. Thankfully, the comfort benefits offered by the extension have little effect on the car's visual proportions: in fact, even the well-informed would need to look twice to notice the difference. Of course, the compromise comes at the bottom line: even the entry-level 4.4-litre SDV8 diesel comes in at more than £100,000, which pushes it firmly into territory occupied by the finer British marques. The Autobiography trim ensures it's far from upstaged by its newfound domestic peers; Autobiography Black, with its LED mood lighting and other goodies from the 'Engineered To Order' division, places it even further inside the realm of Bentley and Rolls-Royce.

Photos: David Shepherd  
**Gallery**















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