

THE ROUGH WITH THE SMOOTH

Rob's civilised Disco still knows how to put a shift in

Rob McCabe

Gets in a right old grump if he has to pay more than 65p per litre



1994 DISCOVERY 3.9 V8i (LPG)



Mileage 93,109

Fuel Consumption 14-ish mpg (on LPG, that's the equivalent of about 30mpg in purely financial terms)

Who says you have to accept a certain amount of slumming it if you run a utility Land Rover? My Disco spends the majority of its time with the rear seats folded and tumbled, ready to spring into action as a bike-carrying mule, garage-clearance skip or garden-waste removal van.

It has a thumping, great warehouse of a cargo bay behind the front seats – and our household takes full and regular advantage of that. The height of the thing means that bikes are wheeled in and transported upright – open the door, in they go, drive off. Brilliant.

And along comes youngest son's birthday trip to the bowling alley with five of his mates; seats back up, with bickering to see who gets the jump seats in the back. What a din they're making... but I just use the steering column control to turn the stereo up a bit.



Wain's World: nobody's more in tune with V8s than Mark

My Land Rover is a utility vehicle with a big U but I do not slum it. It doesn't cause me any worry or head-scratching, either. In the year since its last MoT, it has started (first time), driven and stopped on demand. I wouldn't take *any* Land Rover's reliability for granted, but this is as close as it gets.

Much of this is down to the V8 engine being attended to by Mark Wain of WCR LPG (wcrllpg.com, 07799 472798), who installed the LPG system more than two years ago and who has serviced the vehicle (and the conversion components) ever since. This



The front bumper used to look like this, but it's all Hammerite now

guy certainly has an ear for a V8: the Disco runs beautifully and sounds gorgeous, in a let's-just-leave-the-window-open-for-a-little-longer kind of way.

The Land Rover's most recent visit to WCR in Norfolk was low-maintenance – quite literally. I left it with Mark to put it through the MoT, attend to any failure issues, service it and give the LPG system its annual health check.

Mark told me of an interesting new development within the LPGA (the industry's trade body) that will see LPGA-approved installation certificates being issued online and stored on a database – in much the same way that MoT and insurance certificates are these days.

Everything in my LPG garden is rosy. Mark checked for gas-tightness, tuned the engine to



Skip on wheels: with a load bay this size, it would be criminal not to use it

sweet-spot perfection and gave the underbody tanks a new coat of black paint, for the purposes of smartness and protection.

That left me feeling decidedly guilty about the awful state of the front bumper, which would become more rust than bumper if I left it any longer.

A cathartic session with a wire brush cleared the way for a couple of thick coats of black Hammerite; and I did the back bumper while I was at it.

I do suffer from occasional bouts of Series Withdrawal Syndrome, the main symptom of which is an urge to sell the Discovery to smooth the way for the arrival of something with a split windscreen.

But when I ask myself the question: 'Why would I want to offload a Land Rover that has already proved to me that it can do nearly everything?' the symptoms disappear rapidly.

PRODUCT TEST CAMPINGGAZ CAMPING CHEF

This recent arrival has provided a huge injection of civility to camping trips (another Disco strong point: four people and a full inventory of camping gear, albeit at a push...).

With two burners and a grill underneath (plus grill pan), it's versatile and efficient. The rotary dials allow precise flame control and the grill does its stuff quickly, although it does help if you hold the pan a bit higher up (or place it on a convenient brick). I've used it in decidedly breezy conditions without any problem.



The whole unit folds away neatly for easy storage – and you can pay a little extra for a carry bag. RRP of the Camping Chef is £60, but it's widely available for much, much less than that – a definite bargain. campinggaz.com.