



Land Rover Freelander 2

More Freedom, More Happiness

Car review | In a world of two-wheel drive all terrain cars, lifestyle SUV's and off-road combi's Land Rover tries to maintain its position. Between all the marketing wars Land Rover introduces a whole new Freelander 2. Can this newest of Freelanders stay faithful to the brand qualities of Land Rover?

The Freelander is the entry level model for Land Rover. However, that doesn't mean that the Freelander 2 is a small car. The previous model resembled, irreverently said, a whimsical hodge-podge of plastic protection plates and metal panels. This gave the car a playful appearance, but it was neither solid nor sturdy.

The new Freelander is totally different. This newcomer has grown considerably and has the impression of being so massive that the car appears to be one block of steel. The Freelander is immediately recognizable as a real off-road vehicle. It is no longer just some lifestyle imitation vehicle. The overhang on the front and rear bumper is minimal, allowing the possibility of climbing steep slopes. The ground clearance is considerable without nullifying this with either side steps or other unnecessary exterior displays.



A disadvantage of this growth spurt is that the car is now almost impractically large. To say it nicely, the Freelander 2 fills a parking space quite comfortably. To be brutally honest: the car is now too large for most garages or car washes.

Interior

Even the interior feels spacious. The driver looks out over an imposing bonnet. The dashboard is consciously placed down low and is placed at an angle. The passenger's extravagant space is equally good for groceries or holiday luggage.

The dashboard of the previous generation Freelander has over the past years been equipped with more and more knobs. As a result of this evolutionary process, the switches have been placed in the most wondrous of places. The interior of the Freelander 2 is strong, logical and well-organized.

The Freelander 2 is meant as a versatile car for daily use. This is not like the Defender which is a pure workhorse for which off-road capacities are everything. The Freelander 2 is thus a luxuriously finished with high quality materials and fully equipped.



The HSE model, which was test driven, leaves little to be desired. Land Rover is above all proud of its audio system that it has created with the help of the prestige brand Alpine. There are of course top quality components used, but unfortunately due to the poor positioning of the loud speakers and the mediocre acoustics in the car, the audio system does not come quite into its own.

On road

Following the latest trends the engine is started with a button. With a push of a button, either the 3.2 litre six cylinder "i6" petrol engine or a 2.2 litre four cylinder diesel "TD4" comes alive. The diesel engine is stronger, more efficient and from day one a lot better value for

money. The petrol engine is just for show on the price list.

The TD4 delivers well-earned performances on tarmac. The Freelander 2 is not markedly quicker, but the car keeps up with other traffic and always has sufficient reserves in store. The driving noise is minimal and thanks to a considerable wheel base the Freelander is calm on the road. Importantly even at high speeds the Freelander 2 feels stable and trustworthy. For example, a complicated motorway interchange can be taken at exceptionally high speeds.



In town the smallest of Land Rover is less at home. The car feels cumbersome. In small villages it barely fits in a traffic lane. Moreover, the car leans considerably in short, sharp, quick turns. When driving slalom expressly, the electronics kick in to keep the Freelander on course. This is not however usual in cars such as this.

Off road

The performances on tarmac vary from average in city traffic to above average on the motorway. The Freelander 2 really comes into its own once it gets off-road. The first thing that is noticeable is the diesel engine. Too much gas and the car might entrench itself; too little and the engine can cut out. Land Rover has chosen the character of the engine and the gearbox to minimise this risk.

The power source delivers a lot power even with low revs. The power is then built up very gradually, which

makes it easy to give measured doses even from a crawling speed.



Terrain response

The "Terrain Response System" makes off-roading even easier. The alertness of the accelerator, the action of the central differential and the reaction of the anti-slip parameters have been adjusted to the situation. The system has four levels. Normally if the motorway setting is used, the Freelander 2 drives as described as above. There is also the snow and ice setting, which prevents the car from slipping.

For off-roading, there is the mud and sand setting. The latter was used extensively and the effect of which is very noticeable. Although the Freelander doesn't have low gearing (a special gearbox ratio for off-roading), the car does react as if low gearing has been switched on due to the intervention of the car's computer. As an extra aid the position of the front wheels are shown on a display, which in shifting sand it is not always possible to feel what the front wheels are doing.

Off-roading with the help of a computer doesn't take any time to get used to. Mechanical aids are easy to feel and as a result it is easy to react to what is happening. With the computer as such an aid the driver must hope that the programmers at Land Rover have envisaged every scenario. Certainly in reality this seems to be the case.



Conclusion

Is the Freelander 2 a real Land Rover whose off-roading capacities take priority over outward show, life style and image? Definitely. Moreover the Freelander 2 is more than before a successful combination of off-roading capacities and daily usefulness on the open road. ■



Specifications

Land Rover Freelander 2 2.2 TD4 HSE

Size and weight



Length x width x height	450 x 191 x 182 cm
Wheelbase	266 cm
Kerb weight	1.670 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	2.000 kg
Fuel capacity	68 l
Luggage space	755/1670 l
Tyre size	235/60R18

Engine and performance



Capacity	2179 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	160 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	400 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	11.7 secs
Top speed	181 km/h
Average mileage	7.5 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.2 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	194 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 30,935
Price base model	Â£ 20,935