



A CELEBRATION OF STYLE

Range Rover Turns 55

There are birthdays, and then there are Range Rover birthdays. And when the original luxury SUV turned 55 this year, it wasn't going to mark the occasion with a supermarket cake and a few balloons.



Earlier this year, the Land Rover Experience Centre played host to an unforgettable anniversary event that paired British motoring heritage with a decidedly Wimbledon twist. Guests were greeted with flutes of champagne, the scent of fresh strawberries and cream in the air, a spread of delicate canapés, and a sumptuous lunch – all enjoyed courtside as a friendly but fiercely competitive celebrity tennis match played out.

On court, Karen Zoid, Nandi Madida, Bohang Moeko, and Bryan Habana

brought both charm and showmanship to the game, entertaining the crowd with rallies, banter, and the occasional well-timed lob. A DJ kept the atmosphere mellow with laid-back Sunday afternoon beats, while Range Rover aficionados mingled and admired the brand's latest models glittering under the winter sun.

But this wasn't only about glamour and champagne flutes. True to the spirit of the brand, guests also took to the Experience Centre's off-road and high-speed tracks in the capable hands of professional Experience Centre drivers. It was an opportunity to put 55 years of engineering

expertise to the test – from crawling up near-vertical inclines to effortlessly powering through tight, twisty asphalt.

A LEGACY BORN IN 1970

To fully appreciate the significance of this milestone, it's worth casting back to where it all began. Launched on 17 June 1970, the first Range Rover was unlike anything the motoring world had seen. Conceived by Spen King, nephew of Land Rover founders Maurice and Spencer Wilks, it was designed to combine the comfort of a luxury saloon with the all-terrain capability of a Land Rover.



Sceptics within Land Rover weren't convinced such a vehicle could be built without compromise – but King's creation silenced them from day one. The Range Rover was as at home in London's Mayfair as it was on muddy farm tracks in the Scottish Highlands. It was the first car in the world to be equally adept on-road and off-road, instantly earning fans among royalty, celebrities, and well-heeled adventurers. Its design was so widely admired that the original even took a place in the Louvre's industrial design exhibition soon after launch.

Technical firsts have defined Range Rover's evolution over the decades. In 1970, it debuted with four-wheel disc brakes and coil springs – unheard of in an SUV at the time. By 1989, it became the first SUV to feature ABS brakes, followed by electronic traction control and height-adjustable air suspension in 1992. More recently, the aluminium monocoque body structure, Terrain Response systems, and All-Terrain Progress Control have kept



the brand at the forefront of both luxury and capability.

This year's introduction of the Range Rover Sport SV's 6D suspension system – designed to eliminate body roll while enhancing comfort – is the latest proof that innovation remains central to the badge. And with the brand's first fully

electric model now in advanced testing, the next chapter promises to be as groundbreaking as the last five decades.

From the moment it arrived, Range Rover was eager to prove its mettle. In 1971, just over a year after launch, two Range Rovers set off from Alaska to attempt the first north-south crossing of



the Americas. Six months and one Darien Gap jungle crossing later, they reached Tierra del Fuego in Argentina – having averaged just a mile a day through the toughest terrain imaginable. The brand has twice won the gruelling Paris-Dakar Rally, crossed the Himalayas, and set the record for the fastest traverse of the Empty Quarter desert.

A FAMILY OF ICONS

What started as a single model has since grown into a four-car family: the

flagship Range Rover, the performance-focused Range Rover Sport (launched in 2005), the compact Range Rover Evoque (2011), and the design-led Velar (2017). Each has carved its own niche while staying true to the original's blend of refinement and go-anywhere ability.

Despite its international success, the Range Rover remains inherently British – shaped by a national love affair with the countryside and a design philosophy rooted in understated elegance. It's a fixture in the fleets of the British Royal Family and a favourite among Hollywood A-listers, sports stars, and business leaders.

Over the years, Range Rover has expanded beyond cars, introducing luxury lifestyle collections and hosting exclusive Range Rover House events in some of the world's most desirable locations – from St Tropez to Sydney Harbour.

A CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER

As Karen Zoid's forehead met Habana's smash and the courtside crowd cheered, the day felt like a perfect embodiment of Range Rover itself – sophisticated, rooted in tradition, and always ready for adventure. And while the champagne flutes and strawberries may be a distant memory, the magic of Range Rover – its ability to make any journey feel special – remains as fresh today as it did 55 years ago. ⑩

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