

Land Rover Range Rover Sport 4x4

WhatCar? verdict



For:

The Sport is comfortable, spacious and very desirable. It's great off-road, too

Against:

The handling doesn't live up to the Sport moniker and interior quality disappoints



On the road verdict

Performance



Good as long as you avoid the smaller diesel. Buyers can choose from 187bhp 2.7- and 267bhp 3.6-litre turbodiesels, or a supercharged 4.2-litre V8 petrol that churns out a whopping 391bhp. The entry-level diesel is best avoided because it struggles to shift the car's considerable bulk. However, the 3.6 is much stronger, and the supercharged 4.2 delivers performance truly worthy of the Sport tag.

Ride and handling



Competent and comfortable, but not sharp enough. The Sport uses an adapted version of the Discovery's chassis, and top-trim cars come with Dynamic Response, which uses active anti-roll bars to counteract body roll through corners. The changes don't go far enough, though; although the car handles securely and rides well, a BMW X6 is far more rewarding to drive.

Refinement



Smooth engines, but wind and road noise intrude. There's some clatter from the 2.7 diesel when you work it hard, and the 3.6 emits an appealing warble under acceleration, and the petrol unit is suitably silky, apart from the whoosh from the supercharger. The Sport's bluff shape and big wheels generate a fair amount of wind and road noise.

Ownership verdict

Buying



Pricy to buy and run, but residuals are strong. The Sport is more expensive than the Discovery - despite having two fewer seats - but cheaper than the Range Rover. All versions require deep pockets to buy and run. You'll pay tax at the maximum 35% rate and fuel consumption ranges from 17.8mpg for the supercharged model to 28.3mpg for the smaller diesel.

Quality



Sturdy, but some of the plastics feel cheap. The Sport's cabin is solid enough, but it doesn't feel as special as a Range Rover's, because the switchgear and gearlever surround are rather plasticky. Owners of the Discovery, on which it's based, rated their cars below average for mechanical reliability in the last JD Power customer satisfaction survey.

Safety and security



A strong showing in both areas. As well as the reassurance of four-wheel drive, the Sport comes with stability control to help you stay on the road in slippery conditions, and Terrain Response, which lets you optimise the car for different conditions if you wish to venture into the rough. Deadlocks and an alarm help it fend off thieves.

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In the cabin verdict

Behind the wheel



Excellent visibility and a fine driving position
 The Sport has the king-of-the-road driving position that makes the Range Rover's cabin so appealing, although its sloping centre console creates a more cocooned feel. There's a good range of seat and steering wheel adjustment, but the dash is loaded with switches, so it takes a bit of time before you get used to where everything is.

Space and practicality



Roomy for four, but the rear doors are small
 The Sport seats four in comfort and five at a push. However, its rear wheelarches takes a big bite out of the door openings, impeding access to the back. The boot is a good size, and a separately opening rear screen means you can drop in smaller items without having to lift the whole tailgate.

Equipment



Top-trim cars come well equipped
 Entry-level S cars come with four electric windows, a CD player, electrically adjustable front seats and dual-zone climate control, but you have to upgrade to SE to get leather upholstery, reversing sensors and a CD changer. Top-trim HSE and supercharged HST models have satellite-navigation, voice-activated controls and metallic paint as well.



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