

**WIN!** A re-map of your ECU from Paramount Performance

# LAND ROVER enthusiast

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**Cossetting luxury comes as standard with the Range Rover – but this kind of acceleration doesn't!**

**Autobiography interior is both restrained and tasteful**

**T**o the casual observer, Rob Dubsky's black L322 is just another Range Rover. A closer look – if you get a chance – reveals an Autobiography badge on the tailgate and the grille and wing vents associated with the supercharged models. And as it accelerates away from you, you might assume that it is in fact supercharged.

But it isn't. Rob's Range Rover is actually a TDV8 diesel model that's had its ECU carefully re-mapped to deliver

maximum acceleration. "Try booting it at between 25 and 35 mph," suggested Rob as he handed me the keys. "That's where the improvement is most obvious." He's not kidding, either: planting my right foot down hard, I felt the shove in the back that you only get with cars that can really get a shift on. And this one can.

## Experience

Rob admits to being a bit of a petrolhead. He's had an Audi S3 and a

Volkswagen VR6, and now this is his third Range Rover. One of those was a Lichfield conversion with the TVR V8 that gave blistering acceleration but did severe damage to his wallet. "I only kept that about a year," he says, "because the fuel consumption was usually in single figures and I just couldn't afford to run it!"

After a Lichfield (one of only about six made to the full-house specification in the early 1990s), a standard Range Rover would have been disappointing,



so Rob had the next one chipped. "It went all right," he remembers, "but the people I took it to took forever to do the job. I think they had it for about four weeks or something like that! So when I got this one, I decided to take it somewhere else."

That "somewhere else" turned out to be Paramount Performance in Slough. "I found out about them through the Pistonheads web site," says Rob. "The most important thing as far as I was concerned was that they had their own rolling road, so I went along to talk to them about what they could do for me."

## Performance

Rob's not shy to admit that it was performance he was after. Now, the TDV8 Range Rover is no slouch in standard form, but Rob had owned his 2007 model for just a couple of months before he decided he wanted more from it. "I liked the Paramount approach," he explains. "There are lots of companies that will sell you a one-size-fits-all chip off the shelf, but they said they would re-map the ECU to get the best out of the engine that was actually in my car. I found I could actually talk to them and that they obviously knew what they were talking about."

"I've also been impressed with their customer commitment. I had a problem with a sensor in the exhaust. The engine would sometimes stutter under

acceleration. I'd taken the car along to my local dealer and they'd spent several days trying to work out what was wrong, and in the end they returned it and said they couldn't find a fault!

"Well, I knew there was a fault because I was driving the car every day. So I took it along to Paramount and they looked at it for me, identified the problem and fixed it for the cost of the parts. That was pretty impressive!"

## Restraint

Rob uses his Range Rover as an everyday and business vehicle and, he says, "I drive fairly hard!" So you might expect to hear tales of poor fuel consumption, but no – Rob reckons he gets 24.9 mpg on a regular basis, "however I drive it!" In fact, the best he's ever seen on the Range Rover's on-board readout is 32 mpg, which he achieved on the run home after he'd collected the re-mapped vehicle from Paramount. "I couldn't believe my eyes!" he says now. It wouldn't be fanciful to suggest that the drop to a regular 24.9 has something to do with increased use of the car's new-found acceleration, but that 32 mpg shows what could be possible with restraint.

However, restraint probably isn't on the agenda. Although the vehicle itself has a restrained and extremely tasteful Autobiography interior in black and cream with ebony wood and matt silver highlights, and although Rob prefers the discreet look on the outside, there is evidence of hard use: the outer

edges of the tyre treads are wearing significantly more quickly than the centres!

Rob agrees. "You have to remember that it's still a Range Rover," he says. "It won't go round roundabouts as quickly as it will go into them! I've looked at uprating the suspension but I haven't found the solution yet."

He's also considered uprating the brakes, which are the standard-issue items. There are several options, not least the Brembo racing callipers from the supercharged models, but Rob hasn't decided which way to go yet. He's in full agreement with my verdict that braking hard from speed reminds you that the Range Rover is a heavy vehicle, though!

## And more!

For the future, Rob has some other tweaks in mind. "I've been talking to Overfinch," he says, "and I rather like the idea of getting a bit more performance from their exhaust back boxes. I was also rather disappointed that my steering wheel wasn't two-toned to match the seats, and I know that they could do the job for me."

There are, though, other things to consider. Rob's wife drives a BMW 530d to ferry their three children around, and he's thinking of taking that to Paramount next, to have its engine re-mapped. "That's if we don't swap it for a Discovery 3 and get them to work on that instead!" he says. ■



## The figures!

On the rolling road at Paramount Performance, Rob's Range Rover TDV8 now delivers 307.5 bhp (standard is 272 bhp)

**From the outside, Rob's Range Rover looks pretty standard. The Paramount re-map has made driving it an exhilarating experience**

