





# ROAD TEST



**“If you think you might enjoy astonished looks on the faces of BMW drivers who simply can’t believe that they’ve been passed by a range rover, then the Overfinch is the vehicle for you . . . .”**

That cars make statements about people, can hardly be denied, but there is probably no vehicle available in Britain (a Rolls Royce is a possible exception) that makes a clearer statement about its owner than the Range Rover. Because a Range Rover, lightly spattered with mud, draws up an instant picture of genteel country living; of tweed jackets and corduroy trousers, Barbour and shooting sticks, riding boots and Jodhpurs. It is a vehicle that, parked anywhere, will gently hint that your lifestyle takes you to the occasional Grouse moor or polo match. And, after all, if you *do* have to visit the odd Grouse moor or polo match, what better transport could you possibly find?

Eighteen years ago Range Rover solved the problem of combining full off-road capability with on-road speed and comfort. On top of that, they managed to package those features into a car that looks as good as any

off-road vehicle is ever likely to. Why then, should anyone want to change a winning formula? Does a Range Rover really need sports car performance and if it does are there many people who are prepared to pay extra for it? Overfinch 2 Ltd., based near Ascot, believe that the answer to both those questions is yes, and they recently lent us their 500S conversion to test over a weekend.

Apart from a subtle Overfinch badge on the rear door, and a tiny additional vent aft of the bonnet, the vehicle looks exactly like a standard Range Rover. There is however, a very considerable difference under the bonnet. Overfinch remove that standard 3.5 V8 and replace it with a massive 5 litre Chevrolet V8 which they have updated to 248 bhp at 5000 rpm and 275 lb/ft at 3000 rpm. As well as the huge increase in power, Overfinch add an anti-roll suspension conversion with front and rear anti-roll bars and

replacement rear dampers adjustable to owners preference. 5 Avon 255 x 60 VR 16 special low profile tyres are also fitted to the standard Range Rover wheels (as fitted to the Aston Martin Virage) to improve road holding and a modified spare wheel mounting, to allow normal parcel shelf installation despite the wider tyre.

The complete package will set you back £11,995 on top of the cost of your Range Rover, (less a part-exchange discount for your old engine depending upon age and condition).

If that is not enough power for you, then Overfinch also produce the 570 S2 with a sports engine producing a massive 330 bhp at 5500 rpm as well as a specially built heavy duty transfer gearbox and extensive improvements to the ride and handling which will set you back an extra £21,875 for the complete package.

Interior fittings are completely standard except for a sporty leather steering wheel, bearing the Overfinch logo, and attractive burr walnut trim on the doors and dashboard. Overfinch build some 25 to 30 vehicles a year at their Rotherwick factory for a small but growing market.

Start the engine and you immediately notice a difference, even when it is idling there is a pronounced whoofle, a gorgeous throbbing engine tone that immediately gives away the vast power under the bonnet. Pull away from the kerb and you can hardly believe that you are in a Range Rover. It sprints away from a standstill with true sports car performance and you soon begin to realise that this is a vehicle that you can have a lot of fun in. Acceleration and torque are staggering throughout the powerband and the top speed levels out at a figure well above the 110 mph maximum shown on the standard Range Rover speedometer. If you think that you might enjoy astonished looks on the faces of BMW drivers who simply cannot believe that they’ve been passed by a Range Rover, then this is the vehicle for you. Equally impressive are the greatly improved ride and road handling that make all that power safe to handle in such a large vehicle.

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