



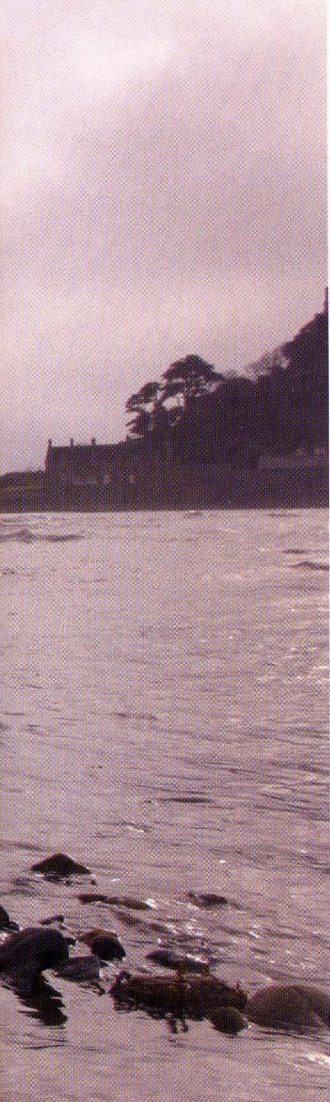
Kevin Baldwin reveals the Cornish customising collective behind this punk Defender, the product of five obsessive and expensive years' work.

A good way to upset a traditional Land Rover enthusiast is to paint their hallowed car a retina-bursting metallic raspberry pink, slap on the largest damn wheels you can find and wrap the alloys with the skinniest strips of rubber possible. Then light the touch paper and retire to Cornwall. Buryas Bridge Garage near Penzance may have been in the Land Rover business for many years but even die-hard fans of the green oval probably won't recognise the name. However, for the sort of owner who wants their Land Rover to unapologetically demonstrate how much cash they have or who wants something beyond 'different', Buryas Bridge Garage is the first port of call. It's only a small company but

SHOCKING PINK



Pink 90 in sight, shepherds take fright.



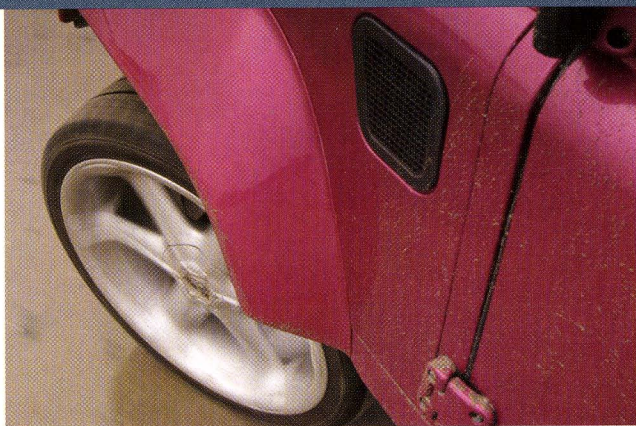
it's got a massive reputation. Witness first-hand the standard of custom workmanship the company turns out and you appreciate why higher profile, bespoke tuning companies get twitchy at the mention of Buryas Bridge.

Painstaking attention to detail is the company's hallmark. It's precisely this anally-retentive approach to their work that captured the imagination of what Buryas Bridge owner Nigel Heywood proudly terms his "select group of clients". Unlike their rivals, the company doesn't advertise their bespoke Land Rover services. They don't have to. Word of mouth keeps them busy all year – it's Land Rovers like this that tell you why.

Nigel, along with fellow Buryas Bridge craftsmen Lindsay Hanson and Adam Whitlock, took five long years of overtime to create what by their own admission is the wildest Land Rover to emerge from their workshop. Hanson, an ex-pat Yorkshireman explains: "We're always looking to push the boundaries of what you can do with the Land Rover. We've just about reached the limit with this one."

This is not your ordinary bastardisation of a Land Rover Defender. This particular 90 has been built using only brand new parts and is blessed with a level of build quality the boys at Solihull could only dream of. If Bentley made Land Rovers they'd build them the Buryas Bridge way.

The starting point for the project was a shiny new 50th



Anniversary Defender 90 chassis. The first trick modification was to cut off the existing suspension mountings to fit the modified suspension bracketry to take a pair of Series 2 Discovery axles and the necessary suspension

standard Defender arches seamlessly grafted onto each other. Another massively labour-intensive task was the paintwork, involving plastic welding, filling and lots of rubbing down. Bodywork specialist, Nigel's eyes roll

"WE LOOK TO PUSH BOUNDARIES. WE'VE REACHED THE LIMIT WITH THE THIS ONE"

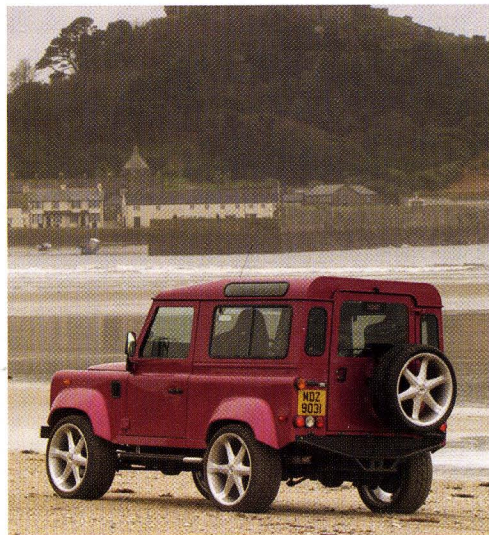
hardware. When the guys started this project in '98, the Discovery 2 had just been launched, so in true Buryas Bridge groundbreaking tradition, it was probably the first Defender to use the then new Discovery 2 suspension/axle configuration.

The wider stance of the Discovery 2 axles called for some labour-intensive work on the wheel arches to rein in the shoulders of the 295/30/22 Pirellis. (That's not a misprint by the way). The 22in-thin strips of rubber enveloping the Anterra wheels would set you back £350 a corner so just pray you don't get a puncture. The subtle if voluminous wheel arches are each made from two

when asked how long it took. The flawless paint finish on the arches matches that covering the rest of the bodywork, testimony to Nigel's prowess with the spray gun. (Paint quantity? Lots.) But to appreciate the degree of skill, time and effort that's gone into this truck it helps to know what's gone on underneath the exterior's glasslike lacquer, to where the really radical changes have been made.

For starters, under the hood lives a 3.9 Discovery V8 engine. Nothing too tricksome about that you might think, except this one has a wailing Eaton Supercharger and it's good for around 280bhp. Putting hulking great V8s into Land

Below left: "It's Land Rover, Jim, but not as we know it." The 90 stands out on this Cornish beach, but then it would stand out anywhere.





"FORGET THE CANDY PINK PAINT, THE MAXIMUM WOW FACTOR LIES INSIDE"



Even the interior fitment is carried out on the premises. The suede seats and leather dashboard surely belong in a luxury car not a Defender?

Rovers is just one of the things that Buryas Bridge is renowned for among its customers. Currently in the workshop a Norwegian client's Defender awaits the special delivery of a TVR 5.2 V8 from Blackpool. Now you see why a typical invoice contains so many zeros.

But this Land Rover is even more than a nice paint job, snorting engine and pretty bolt-ons. Open the driver's door and you're confronted with levels of luxury normally unthinkable in a Defender. With any custom car, no matter how well put together or how smoothly the oily bits run, it's usually the interior finish where things go wrong. Luckily in Lindsay Hanson, they not only have a bloke who's a dab hand with the tools the Snap-On God blessed him with, he's also an

automotive upholstery genius. Forget the candy pink paint, the maximum wow factor lies inside. Check out the hand built, leather-trimmed transmission tunnel that houses the shifter for the Disco's auto box. It took Hanson a week, working every day just to make the tunnel. The result is a glove-like fit around every curve and one that's so well finished it could be an original fitment, were it in a luxury car and not on a Land Rover.

The electrically adjustable and heated Recaro seat conversion wasn't cheap but is one of the company's signature modifications. Buryas Bridge customers know what they like and aren't afraid to pay for it. "A customer will often bring their car in for an engine

change, see a Recaro seat conversion and tell us add it to their list of work," said Hanson. But fitting them isn't like installing a set of old Ford Capri seats in some oily Land Rover. The seatbox, loadspace bulkhead and transmission tunnel all had to be cut, shut and altered to make the most of the extra movement afforded by the Italian Alcantara suede-clad armchairs. Fitting the forward-facing rear seats also involves some serious chopping of the rear wheelboxes, adding additional strengthening to remove the seat mountings and seatbelt anchorages for the revised rear seating. Fabricating and trimming is done in-house and although the job would be hellishly daunting for your typical driveway DIY-er, Buryas Bridge has done enough of

these to take the drastic amount of bodywork hacking in their stride.

In the luxury car business they say if you ask the price you can't afford it. I couldn't afford it, but asked anyway. I'm informed it cost over £30,000. But to them it's just a job and Nigel's mind is already thinking about the next project. If you've got 30 grand burning a hole in your oversized pocket, are a bit of a show off and want your Land Rover to stand out from the ranks of green, then this car's for you.

For similar treatment on your own Land Rover contact Buryas Bridge Garage Tel: 01736 365464

Words: Kevin Baldwin
Photos: Wayne Mitchelson