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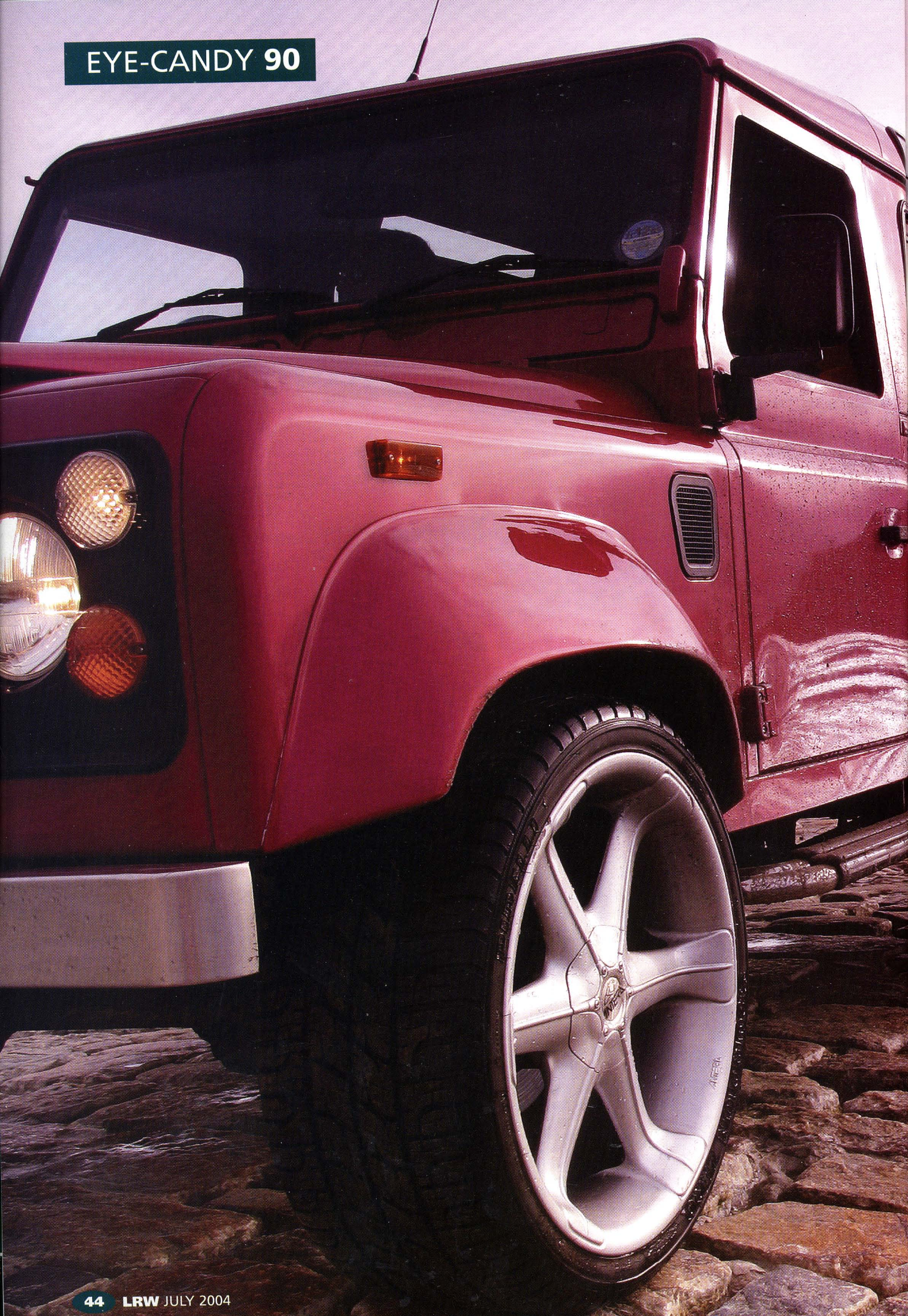
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EYE-CANDY 90



PRETTY IN PINK

Although the raspberry pink is what first catches the eye about this Land Rover, look a bit closer and you'll see that this Cornish custom-made 90 is much more than just a fancy finish

Story: Kevin Baldwin Photos: Wayne Mitchelson

MAIN PIC: Cornish outfit Buryas Bridge Garage's 90 certainly has the wow factor
RIGHT: Fatter NAS repeaters better than standard
RIGHT CENTRE: Nigel Heywood (left) with Lindsay Hanson
FAR RIGHT: Bigger-than-most wheelarches made from two standard Defender arches





It's a long way to Penzance from Yorkshire, a complete round trip adding a touch over 1000 miles to my Discovery's speedo. Mind you, it's a blooming long way to Penzance from just about anywhere in the UK, which explains why Buryas Bridge Garage, tucked away on a quiet rural road between Penzance and Land's End remains one of the UK's best-kept Land Rover secrets. I say UK, as judging by its portfolio of overseas customers patiently waiting for floor space in its immaculately-presented workshops, the Buryas Bridge Garage is clearly the rest of Europe's first port of call if you have a large wedge of cash and want your Land Rover to stand out from the crowd.

The Buryas Bridge outfit may only be a small company but it's clearly one with a massive reputation. And having witnessed the standard of workmanship the company turns out first hand, I can appreciate why other higher profile bespoke tuning companies suddenly get rather twitchy at the mention of the Buryas Bridge name.

The company carries out servicing, repairs and MoTs, but a core part of the business is transplanting brand-new Tdi engines and R380 gearboxes into older Land Rovers. The company charges the thick end of £5k for a typical Tdi conversion. Yes, there are people who'll probably do the job for a lot less, but Buryas Bridge can boast a waiting list that's permanently full for good reason. Buryas owner Nigel Heywood makes no excuses for his prices and rattles off the comprehensive list of new parts you'll get with every Buryas Bridge conversion.

You could probably make do without many of the parts he tells me they swap purely as a matter of course, but you get the feeling that the term 'make-do' is the type of phrase likely to cause offence within the workshop. Attention to detail is the company's stock in trade and it's precisely this uncompromising approach to every aspect of their work that has captured the imagination of what Heywood proudly refers to as his 'select group of clients'. Unlike their rivals, Buryas Bridge doesn't advertise their

bespoke Land Rover services. They don't have to. Word of mouth keeps them busy, and it is Land Rovers like this that tell you why.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

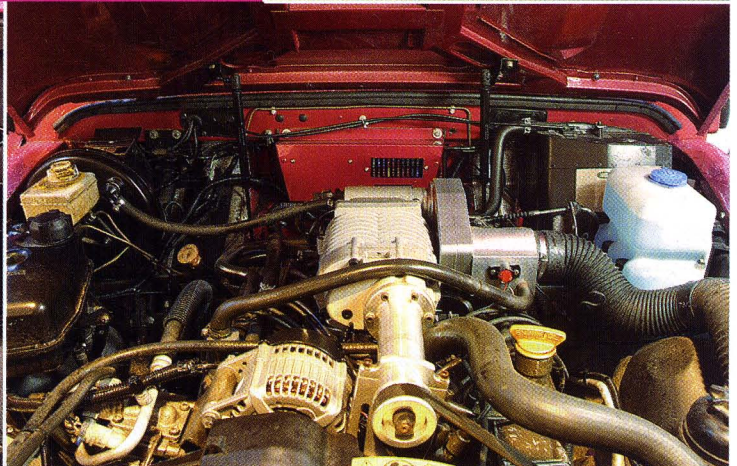
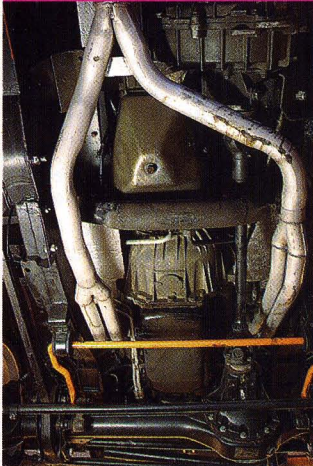
It took Nigel and fellow Buryas Bridge craftsmen Lindsay Hanson and Adam Whitlock five long years to create something that even by their own admission is the wildest Land Rover to have come out of their workshop. Hanson, an ex-pat Yorkshireman explains: 'We're always looking to push the boundaries of what you can do with the Land Rover, and I think we've just about reached the limit with this one...'

No danger there. One guaranteed way to get a dyed-in-the-wool Land Rover enthusiast's back up is to paint their favourite car in a retina-bursting shade of raspberry pink metallic. If you're looking at the colour and have already decided you don't like this car, then I urge you to stick around before you toss the magazine on the fire. You might even learn something.



MAIN PIC LEFT: Glass-like quality of exterior is impressive but look closer and so too are interior and engine mods **ABOVE:** NAS-influenced upgrades on the outside include WVA swingaway carrier **BELOW:** Serious exhaust pipes for a serious V8 engine **BELOW RIGHT:** Electrically-adjustable and heated Recaro seat conversion not cheap!

ABOVE: Italian Alcantara-clad armchairs part of the 90's luxurious upholstery **ABOVE RIGHT:** Built from the ground up using only brand-new parts means build quality is stuff of dreams **RIGHT:** 295/30/22 Pirellis used, wheelarches loom large **BELOW RIGHT:** 3.9-litre Discovery V8 engine has Easton Supercharger attached



This is no ordinary bastardisation of the Land Rover Defender. This 90 has been built from the ground up using only brand-new parts and is blessed with a build quality that the boys at Solihull could only dream about. If Bentley made Land Rovers they'd probably build them the Buryas Bridge way.

The starting point for the project was a shiny new 50th anniversary Defender 90 chassis, Nigel Heywood explains the company never use anything but genuine factory chassis for rebuild work: 'We've found aftermarket chassis are never quite right, so we use only genuine Land Rover-sourced chassis, although getting hold of them from the factory is getting harder and harder'. The first trick mod to be carried out with the brand-new chassis was to cut off the existing suspension mountings, to enable the fitting of modified suspension bracketry to take a pair of Series II Discovery axles and their radius arms. The traditional A-Frame that locates the standard Land Rover rear axle has been ditched in favour of the Watts rear linkage to hold

it all together. Standard Discovery II shocks were used because 'when we started to build it, that's all there was around at the time' Worth remembering that when the guys started this project, the Discovery II had only just been launched, so in true Buryas Bridge tradition, this was probably the very first Defender to use the DII suspension/axle configuration.

The wider stance of Discovery II axles called for some labour-intensive work on the wheelarches to reign over the shoulders of those 295/30/22 Pirellis. That's not a misprint by the way. Those 22-inch thin strips of rubber enveloping the Anterra wheels will set you back £350 a corner so just pray you don't get too many punctures.

The subtle yet nonetheless voluminous wheelarches are each made from two standard Defender arches seamlessly grafted onto one another. A massively labour-intensive task involving plastic welding, filling and lots of rubbing down means bodywork specialist Nigel's eyes roll into his head when asked just how

long the whole painstaking process took. The flawless paint finish on the arches matches that covering the rest of the bodywork and is testimony to Nigel's spray-gun prowess.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

If beauty is more than skin deep then this Land Rover is no exception. To really appreciate the level of skill, time and effort that's gone into this truck then you have to peer a little closer underneath the glass-like quality of the exterior lacquer to see where the really radical changes have been made.

For starters, underneath the hood lives a 3.9-litre Discovery V8 engine. Nothing too flash about that you might think, except this one has a wailing Easton Supercharger nailed to it that's good for around 280bhp. Putting hulking great V8s into Land Rovers is just one of the things that Buryas Bridge is renowned for among its inner circle of customers. In the workshop a Norwegian client's Defender sits awaiting the arrival of a special delivery from Blackpool. Namely

EYE-CANDY 90

a TVR 5.2-litre V8, which, if that weren't muscle enough, would also be receiving the supercharging treatment. Now can you see why the typical invoice here runs to tens of thousands of pounds?

The outfit also specialise in German cars and recognise that the Rover V8 has just about had its day as far as being the first and only choice for serious power gains. Self-confessed Land Rover and Mercedes fan Lindsay Hanson explains that 'there are far better, more modern engines around now that are easier and cheaper to tune than the Rover V8. The next obvious step for us will probably be starting to look at fitting the big Mercedes and BMW engines into Land Rovers.'

COMPANY SPECIALITIES

Automatic conversions have long been another Buryas Bridge speciality so no surprise to see an auto bolted to the back of the V8. The company have been doing V8 auto-conversions for a long time, as Heywood says: 'we were putting automatics into Defenders before Land Rover. I suppose you could even say we were doing NAS 90s before Land Rover were building NAS 90s!' He promptly digs out the company portfolio full of soft-top V8 auto 90s the company has

built over the past ten years to prove it.

The auto-box comes from a Discovery II with the line pressures altered to suit the extra load placed on it when the blower's on full song. The auto has had the sport mode disconnected, a) because it never makes that much difference in a Discovery anyway and b) when you want to go faster in this Defender you just push your right foot into the carpet that little bit harder to get the blower spinning faster. A Range Rover Borg Warner viscous transfer case splits the drive front to rear while the standard Discovery II brakes are retained since they're more than man enough to cope with the lighter weight of the Defender. Anti-roll bars have been fitted to keep things on an even keel through the corners.

More NAS-influenced upgrades on the outside include a full compliment of NAS side lights, NAS side marker lights/repeaters, a WVA swingaway carrier and a genuine NAS rear tow-step with a class three two-inch receiver. Land Rover's standard headlamp units have been swapped for a pair of Cibie ones with uprated bulbs; an easy conversion that the Buryas' boys reckon every Land Rover owner should fit if they want to make a really worthwhile modification to their vehicle.

This Land Rover is more than a nice paintjob, snorting engine and some pretty bolt-ons though. Pull back the

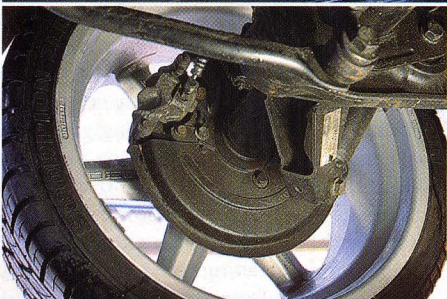
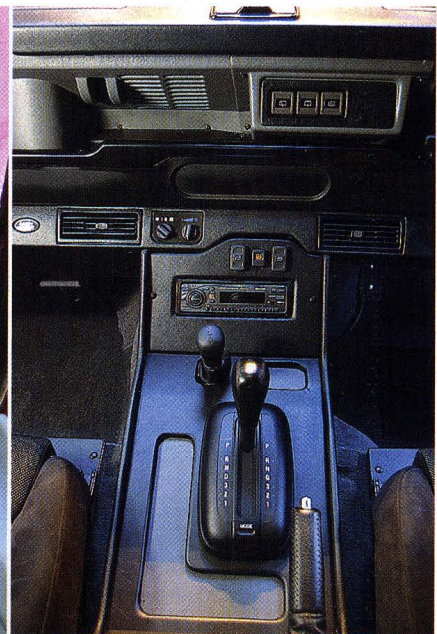
driver's door, peer inside and you suddenly start to understand why that same Norwegian customer who had entrusted Buryas Bridge with his TVR conversion has already booked his double-cab 110 in for some similar treatment.

For starters, there are no door locks; keyless entry and central locking are two mods that once again, Buryas Bridge can proudly claim to have been equipping its custom Land Rovers 'years before Land Rover did'. Windows are not surprisingly electrically-powered using a kit of their own design and the front screen is of the latest heated variety, cleared by a Discovery II wiper mechanism that when fitted in the Defender gives an improved wipe pattern.

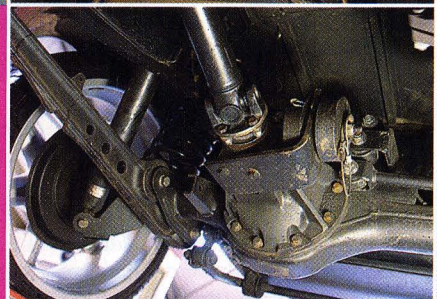
How they figured this out I've no idea, but it's no doubt the same method of automotive tinkering that has resulted in them finding the right type of gas struts to lift and support the bonnet's weight and discovering that a single finger action Td5 bonnet release works perfectly for earlier vehicles. Adam Whitlock is happy to pass on this Buryas Bridge trick tip to *LRW* readers: 'The Td5 bonnet release is a dead-easy retro-fit upgrade on any Defender. You only need to drill a couple of holes to mount the new mounting bracket and the new cable doesn't cost much more than the older type.'

Although the pink paintwork is what first catches your eye, it's on the inside

BELOW: Interior so well-finished, could well be an OE fitment **BELOW RIGHT:** Automatic conversions are a Buryas Bridge speciality



FAR LEFT: Discovery II brakes retained; they're more than man enough to cope with lighter weight of the Defender **LEFT:** Front axle also taken from a Discovery II **RIGHT:** Rear axle located by Watts linkage arrangement **MAIN PIC (RIGHT):** Unique 90 cost over £30k to build; no cutting corners here



where the maximum wow factor really hits you. With any custom car, no matter how good the nuts and bolts have been put together and how well the oily bits run, it's usually the finish on the interior where things can go horribly wrong.

Luckily for Buryas Bridge, in Lindsay Hanson, they not only have a bloke who's a dab hand with the tools that the Snap-On God provided him with, but is also clearly a genius in automotive upholstery. Check out his handbuilt leather-trimmed transmission tunnel. Why didn't they just use a NAS tunnel? 'We used to use those, but they're a bit nasty really aren't they? They never fit right and you always end up with a two-inch gap all the way round them. Typical Land Rover fit really! We decided we could do better so started to make our own'. It took Lindsay a full week, working every hour, just to make the tunnel, but the result is a glove-like fit around every curve within the interior and one that is so well-finished that it could well be an OE fitment, were it in a luxury car, not a Land Rover.

SIGNATURE MODS

The electrically-adjustable and heated Recaro seat conversion wasn't cheap but was necessary on account of it being one of the company's signature modifications. Buryas Bridge customers know what they like and aren't afraid to pay for it. 'Quite often a customer will bring his

car in for an engine change and will see a Recaro seat conversion on a car in the workshop and just tell us to add it to his list of work being carried out.'

Their fitting isn't simply a matter of fastening down some different seats in the style of some oily hybrid-equipped with a set of Ford Capri seats, the seat-box, loadspace bulkhead and transmission tunnel all have to be cut, shut and altered to make the most of the extra movement afforded by the Italian Alcantara-clad armchairs. If you want the works and go for the forward-facing rear seat option too, then that involves serious chopping of the rear wheelboxes and additional strengthening to take the seat mountings and seat-belt anchorages of the revised rear seating layout.

Again, all of the fabricating and trimming is done in-house. Although these jobs would be a daunting task to your typical driveway DIYer, the Buryas Bridge team has done enough of these to take this level of drastic bodywork hacking completely in their stride. They know exactly just how much to cut and where. Which kind of makes their tale of horror as they describe their attempts to get the 2002-style door trim to fit the older aluminium-style door all the more surprising: 'When we'd started building up the Land Rover, the 2002-style all-steel door hadn't been released, hence we used the only style of Defender door

there was at the time. Trying to get the newer style trim to fit the older door was purely an afterthought but once we'd started we realised we'd opened a real can of worms. The problem was that the new trim is narrower than the older type of door frame so there was nothing for the trim to attach to. We had to figure out a way to make it fit and still look right. It's definitely not a job for the fainthearted.' But it does fit and look right, but then you know, like everything else about this Land Rover, the Buryas Bridge team clearly wouldn't stand for anything less than perfection.

IF YOU HAVE TO ASK...

There's a saying in the luxury car business that if you need to know the price then you probably can't afford it. I knew I couldn't, but shamelessly asked anyway. I'm informed it cost over £30k to build, but already Nigel's creative mind is working overtime on their next project so has decided to let the pink Defender go.

So if you've got the price of a brand-new Defender burning a hole in your oversized pocket, don't mind drawing attention to yourself and want your Land Rover to really stand out in a world of chequerplated excess, then this car could be the one for you. Seriously interested parties should call Buryas Bridge Garage on: **01736 365464** ■

