



Range Rover Sport Autobiography Dynamic

Style and *luxury*

The Range Rover Sport Autobiography Dynamic is amongst the most sumptuous of its kind. It competes against German heavyweights such as the BMW X5, Porsche Cayenne, and the Mercedes-Benz ML-Class.

The Autobiography Dynamic line-up consists of three diesels and one petrol engine. I drove the 335bhp 4.4-litre V8 oil-burner – and it pulls like a train. The vehicle costs a whopping £82,660 on the road; only the super high-performance SVR is more expensive.

What's more, running costs are not that bad for a muscle-bound Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV), averaging an official 32.5mpg. On an 80-mile drive from Northamptonshire to the Norfolk coast, laden with family and luggage, I teased a good 30mpg, driving at a steady pace.

The top-of-the-tree, fully-decked-out Range Rover Sport makes any journey a pleasure. Standard spec includes sat nav, leather seats, a full-size panoramic sliding roof, xenon headlamps, a heated steering wheel, electric seats, electric folding mirrors, a top-quality sound system and mammoth 21-inch alloy wheels.

Indeed, the comfortable cabin mixes style and luxury with well-designed lines, quality materials and ladles of sporting character. The athletic air of the car's cocoon is also reflected in the smaller, thicker steering wheel, higher centre console, configurable mood lighting and generous seat bolsters.

Additionally, I loved the leather seats, dashboard and

headlining; these bring out a sense of spaciousness on board and give the car a modern architectural, rather than stuffy stately home feel.

Behind the wheel, the Range Rover Sport's high driving position injects a sense of confidence – and the steering feels light and direct. It is paired with a velvety-smooth automatic gearbox, which makes driving on or off road straightforward and, apart from anything else, it leaves you free from weariness.

This Range Rover is rapid for such a giant, surging from standstill to 62mph in 6.9 seconds. It also sounds marvellous – the pounding V8 diesel engine releases a delightful guttural noise when you give it some welly. Top end is 140mph.

Of course, the Range Rover is a capable off-roader, although most will stay firmly on the black stuff. Maximum ground clearance has been increased, while Land Rover's Terrain Response 2 gadgetry instinctively chooses the most appropriate programme for whatever the wheels are driving over.

Today's Range Rover Sport is bound to continue the exceptional success of its forerunner, which quickly became one of Land Rover's most well-regarded models.

Tim Barnes-Clay

