

## First Drive: 2008 Land Rover LR2



The 2008 Land Rover LR2 is a new premium compact SUV with styling cues from other Land Rover models.

by [Mike Meredith](#)

A new compact SUV combines classic Land Rover styling and off-road prowess with balanced ride and handling for the street.

Land Rover has built its reputation on luxury SUVs that have the ability to handle just about any terrain, even if most owners don't need that ability. But since the compact [Freelander](#) was discontinued in the U.S. a few years ago, the brand has not had a small vehicle offering. Enter the new [Land Rover LR2](#).

All-new from the ground up, the 2008 Land Rover LR2 possesses excellent on-road performance while still delivering legendary [Land Rover](#) off-road prowess when needed. The intention is to give the premium compact SUV the greatest breadth of capability in the segment, with an excellent balance between handling and ride comfort for the street.



Beginning with the [Range Rover](#) in 2002, followed by the [LR3](#) in 2004 and the [Range Rover Sport](#) in 2005, the LR2 is the fourth new model from Land Rover in just five years, giving the automaker its most complete U.S. model range to date.

**Message Board: Is the compact LR2 a good move for Land Rover? Would you buy it? Voice your opinion on all things SUV [here](#).**

With styling cues derived from the flagship Range Rover, such as the vertical egg-crate grille; blacked-out D-pillar and metallic front fender vents; and the stepped-up roof design similar to the LR3, the LR2 presents a contemporary look immediately identifiable as a Land Rover.



"LR2 combines the advantages of a premium sedan—such as polished ride, accomplished performance and an attractive cabin—with the attributes of a robust SUV," said Richard Beattie, executive vice president, marketing and sales, Land Rover North America.

### **Premium Equipment, Improved Road Manners**

With the emphasis on everyday on-road performance, the LR2 benefits from an all-new powertrain and shares the same engine with

the **Volvo S80** sedan—a 230-horsepower 3.2-liter inline 6-cylinder that produces 234 lb-ft of torque. Characteristic of an inline 6-cylinder engine, the 3.2-liter unit delivers smooth power that adds to the luxury feel and sedan-like ride.

A first in the compact SUV segment, the transversely-mounted inline 6-cylinder engine improves interior space and helps with the design of safety systems. EPA fuel economy ratings for the LR2 are 16 mpg city and 23 mpg highway, based on the new EPA rating system for 2008 models designed to produce ratings closer to real-world results.

### [Read more about how the U.S. EPA is changing fuel economy ratings](#)

The LR2 also benefits from a sophisticated new 6-speed automatic transmission developed to address Land Rover's blend of both on- and off-road performance, including unique attributes to support the LR2's ability to travel through nearly 20 inches of standing water in off-road conditions.



The transmission features three different modes: fully automatic, Sport and CommandShift. Each has different gear-change mapping, as well as adapting when one of the special Terrain Response programs is selected to maximize transmission performance for the appropriate conditions.

During our test drive, we found the 3.2-liter inline six-cylinder smooth and quiet, with enough power to make the new SUV fun on the highway. The 6-speed automatic does an excellent job, even in automatic mode, shifting to the right gear quickly and smoothly based on what the driver has requested with the throttle pedal.



In Sport Mode the transmission downshifts more aggressively and holds the lower gear longer when more power is needed. CommandShift manual shift mode easily engages by simply moving the shift lever to the left, then shifting by moving the lever forward or back in a sequential motion.

Like all Land Rovers, the LR2 delivers power through an all-wheel-drive system. Developed in conjunction with Haldex, the all-new system includes an electronically controlled center coupling that continually alters the front-to-rear torque split. This system is exclusive to the LR2.

