



SERIES-LY Tdi!

Appearances can be deceptive. This Series III's gleaming bodywork hides a 300Tdi engine, R380 gearbox, power steering and disc brakes upgrade

STORY AND PICTURES: DAVE PHILLIPS



IT'S dawn on the desolate north Norfolk coast and, apart from the wind off the sea and the haunting cries of wild birds, all is quiet – so quiet, in fact, that I hear the distinctive rattle of the 300Tdi engine before I see it negotiating the bumpy, muddy track across the saltings. It sounds like just another Defender or Discovery 1 heading for Thornham Harbour, but this Land Rover is very different.

The Land Rover movement is a very broad church, encompassing worshippers from all walks of life. What they have in common is a love of the green oval, although they'll invariably bicker over which model most deserves that coveted badge. Some love new Defender, some hate it. Some enjoy the comforts of the Range Rover branch of the family, others eschew creature comforts. But what they all have in common is an undying respect for the leaf-sprung original Land Rovers that were the genesis of the brand.

Who doesn't love Series motors? To dare criticise them would be like disrespecting the ancestors. It just isn't done. But just as you wouldn't take your great-grandmother



HAYWARD REVIVE SERIES III

clubbing, most of us wouldn't choose a Series Land Rover as our everyday wheels. They come from another era, when traffic was slower and sparse. The 2.25 engines are slow and noisy and, even if you could reach 70 mph, the stopping power of the drum brakes would make you wish you hadn't. The lack of power steering makes them hard to handle, too. 'Not suitable for modern motoring' is the general consensus.

But the Series III now bouncing down the track towards me is more than capable of dealing with today's motoring, because it has got a lusty 300Tdi engine under the bonnet, plus all-important disc brakes on the front axle – anchors every bit as effective as those on the fishing boats moored along the harbour. Meanwhile, power steering makes it a joy to drive. It's a remarkable conversion, made all the more so because from the outside you'd never guess the mechanicals that lurk beneath that distinctive 109 Station Wagon exterior.

It is the work of my old friend and lifelong Land Rover fanatic, Terry Hayward. He comes from this corner of north Norfolk. His dad used to own the local garage half a mile from here and as a boy Terry loved nothing more than being in the workshop among the spanners, oily bits and Series Land Rovers – so much so, that he has spent most of the last 20 years restoring and improving them.

Yes, improving them. This may sound controversial to purists, but Terry doesn't regard every nut and rivet as sacrosanct. While he likes to keep them as original as possible, he doesn't hesitate to upgrade them where possible, taking advantage of the developments made since they were built. And when you consider that the last Series III rolled off the Solihull production line in 1985, that's a lot of developments.

The name of his company, Hayward Revive, says it all really. "Because old Land Rovers never die" is the company motto. And that's something no Land Rover fan would argue with.

The Series III Terry is driving today is a client's vehicle that he has just finished. The client is German, so it is left-hand drive, which made the conversion more difficult than usual. Unusually, the bodywork had already been restored. The owner had come to Terry for the engine and brake upgrade, plus the fitment of power steering.

"I don't know much about the vehicle itself, to be honest," says Terry. "I don't even know the year of manufacture – the owner kept all that sort of information to himself. But I do know that the vehicle had been restored to a very high standard, with clearly thousands spent on it. There was not an item that had not been restored or refurbished that we came across. The chassis was the original that had been



Lowering the new 300Tdi engine into position



The bodywork had already been restored before Hayward Revive took their turn



Double-skinned safari roof (left) and freewheeling front hubs (right)

repaired where needed, so that it kept its identity and provenance as a Series III.

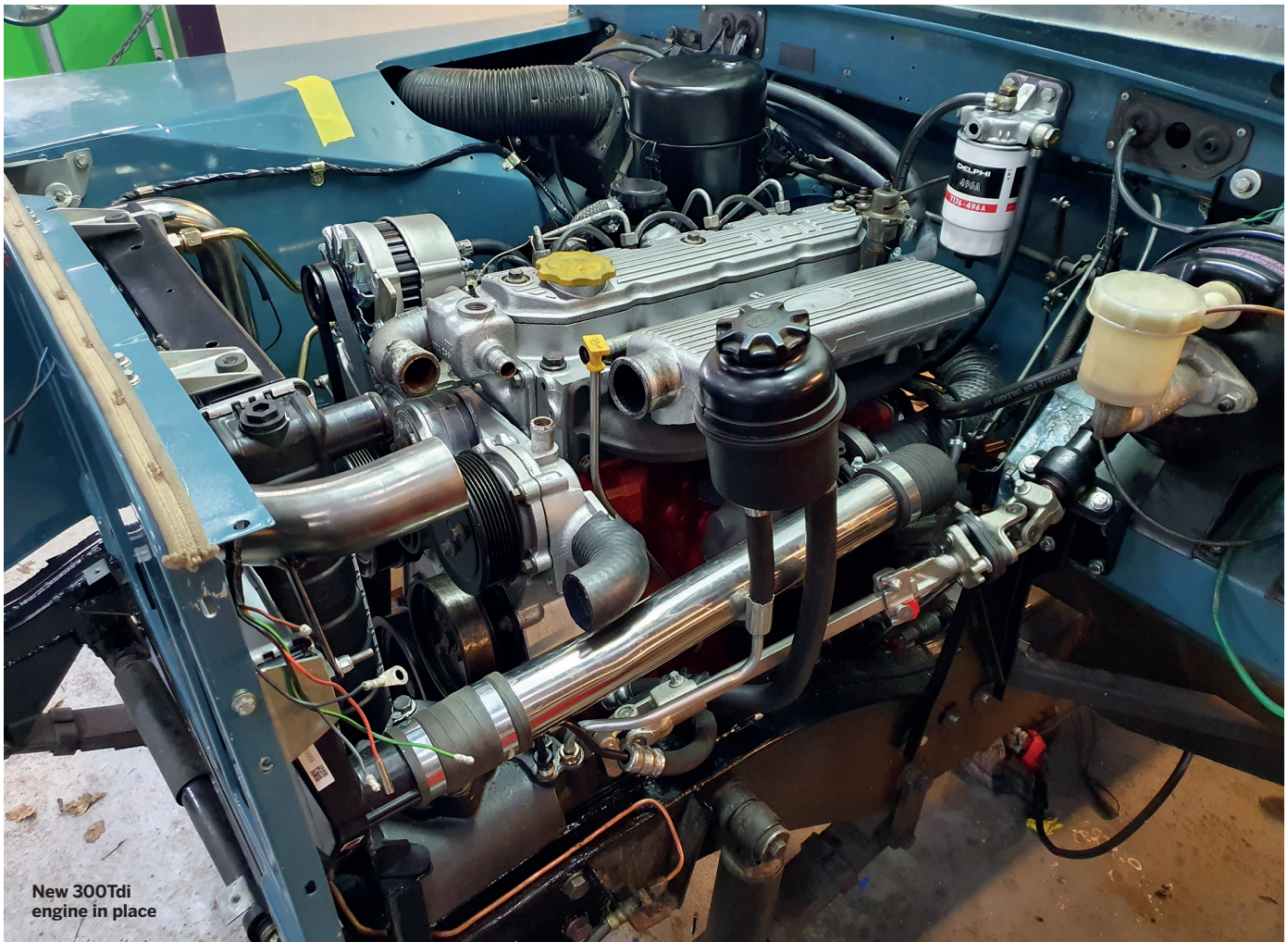
"The reason for the upgrade was to make it a more usable vehicle. In its original form it had a 2.25-litre diesel engine that was slow, noisy and when hitting its maximum speed of 75kmh (47 mph) the owner said it sounded like being inside a jet engine! It had the standard four-speed gearbox, with overdrive.

"The build was very professional, with a high level of detail. It was however all-original which most people love, although it's not necessarily my passion. Conversion to 300Tdi engine was the owner's choice, and it would have been my choice, too. Although not always considered the stronger engine [compared to its 200Tdi predecessor] by many, I reckon the 300Tdi is a lot more usable and less agricultural, as well as giving ample power and performance."

But it wasn't an easy fit, as Terry explains: "The fact that it was left-hand drive was a challenge, due to the positioning of the steering box and the fact that most of the engine ancillaries and pipework run the same side as the steering. But I love a challenge. As always, it was not a case of we can't do it, but a case of how we would overcome these issues.

"Whenever we tackle a job like this, everything is dry built, which means we can adjust and modify as we go, overcoming any issues and problems. When we get to the point where we are happy with everything, it is then disassembled and we start all over again. Every part is reconditioned or renewed ready for assembly. That way, in theory at least, we should then have no major problems when it all goes together.

"As always, I have learnt this the hard way. That's where 20 years' experience in this business comes into it. The



New 300Tdi engine in place



R380 gearbox more user-friendly than original



Brake conversion a welcome improvement

hardest part of all these jobs is not the work itself but really living up to my own expectations and what I want to achieve. I am a perfectionist and every time we do a conversion or restoration I always think: 'Maybe we should do this next time, or this could be better if we...'

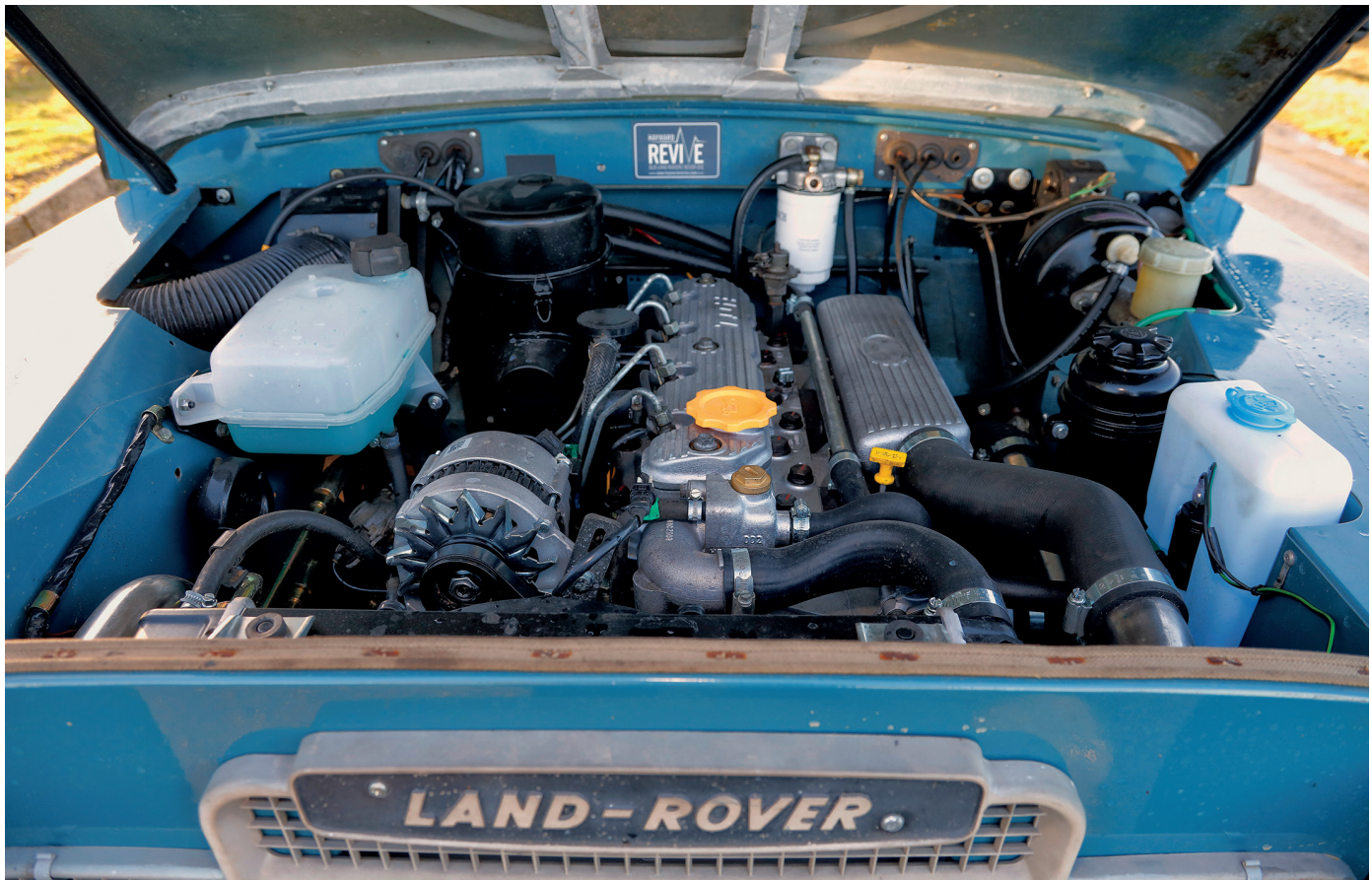
Both the engine and R380 gearbox came from a donor Discovery that had been scrapped due to the usual rust issues. Both were fully reconditioned in-house before being fitted in the Series III. "The R380 is again a much more user-friendly gearbox than both the original and the later LT77 from a 200Tdi Discovery," says Terry. "It's more work to fit, but it's worth it."

Power steering was also fitted, based on a standard Defender set-up. Says Terry: "A lot of people would opt for the [Range Rover] P38 box set-up, which works well, however the Defender route gives a neater finish in my opinion. Again all parts are fully reconditioned or new, with the steering column being a Defender unit, modified to fit the vehicle and give the correct steering wheel position. If done this way it is not obvious to the untrained eye that anything has been touched and just looks like a standard Series III interior." He's right there – it certainly fooled me. The existing suspension set-up, with parabolic springs, was retained.

Of course, turning a sub-50 mph Series III into a 70 mph-plus motorway cruiser means its stopping power had to be improved. The owner requested the drum brakes at the front should be replaced with discs. "The brakes upgrade is one of the best overall features," he says. "The original front axle is used with the only major changes being replacement swivel housings and hubs, which mount the discs and calipers."

"The main benefit of doing a brake conversion like this is the confidence it gives the owner. Not only do you have better and more positive braking, but the age-old risk of drum brakes pulling to the side heavily at the one time you rely on them most is no longer an issue. We can also convert the rear axle to disc brakes, but in most cases these retain the drum fitments."





The overall effect of engine, gearbox, power steering and brake upgrade is remarkable. Says Terry: “To drive a Series III that has been converted in this way doesn’t compare to the original vehicle. There just isn’t any comparison.

“The whole idea of these upgrades is to make for a more user-friendly, safer and enjoyable driving experience without taking away the character of the Series vehicles. Although the engine is a massive part of the vehicle with its extra power, the items you really notice are the steering, brakes and gearbox. Steering is positive and it moves with ease, the brakes there when needed and ready in case of any unknown danger ahead. Add in the five-speed gearbox and you no longer have that thought of ‘what gear am I in and where is it?’ That fifth gear gives a more than adequate cruising speed, reduced noise and better fuel economy, too.

“The whole package gives you a vehicle that will keep up and cruise with modern traffic. It’s safe because of its upgrades but more so due to the fact you no longer have to drive it hard to attain a happy cruising speed, making it suitable as a daily driver if that’s what you want.

“The enjoyment of driving one is immense. It will never be a Defender, but if that’s what you want then you should go buy a Defender!”

Engine looks like a factory fitment – impressive considering LHD

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The whole conversion took Terry three weeks. The Hayward attention to detail is obvious when you pop the bonnet. The way the 300Tdi occupies the engine bay, along with the power steering and varied pipework and ancillaries makes it look like a factory fitment – all the more remarkable considering the challenge involved with a LHD model.

Having said that, this is a conversion within the scope of the home mechanic, although many will opt for the slightly easier 200Tdi swap. The biggest drawback is that the once-plentiful supply of 200Tdi lumps from early (pre-1994) Discovery 1s are now drying up. In fact even 300Tdi engines from later Disco 1s (1994-98) are getting scarcer as the years pass.

“The 200Tdi was always a more popular conversion in a Series vehicle,” says Terry. “These are a very easy and straightforward fit, but I think the 300Tdi is a better engine and worth the extra work involved to ensure it fits correctly. All engine conversions should look like they belong.

“There are companies offering kits to fit the Tdi engines, which I think are fine for the DIY enthusiast working at home, but where I feel we differ is we want the conversion to fit as much as possible as if it was designed for that application, which means we go a lot deeper into the fitment process spending hours upon hours taking measurements to make sure everything fits perfectly – and of course that it can be maintained long term.”

For those who prefer to go to the experts, Terry’s company, Hayward Revive, specialises in this type of project. Says Terry: “We are currently launching a whole range of options with this in mind in our Revive Classic Range. These are resto-mod vehicles, all fully restored to how we feel the Series Vehicles need to be in this modern age – and all come with the upgrades fitted to this Series III, as well as many more including various engine options.”

There certainly are some interesting options, too. Remember that when the Series III went out of production there were only two models bearing that green oval: the Land Rover and the Range Rover. These days there are four Range Rovers alone! But what that means is there is a virtually limitless list of possibilities when it comes to Land Rover-based upgrades for older models.

Will we be seeing Td5-powered Series Is and TDCi Series IIIs in the not-too-distant future? I wouldn’t bet against it.

