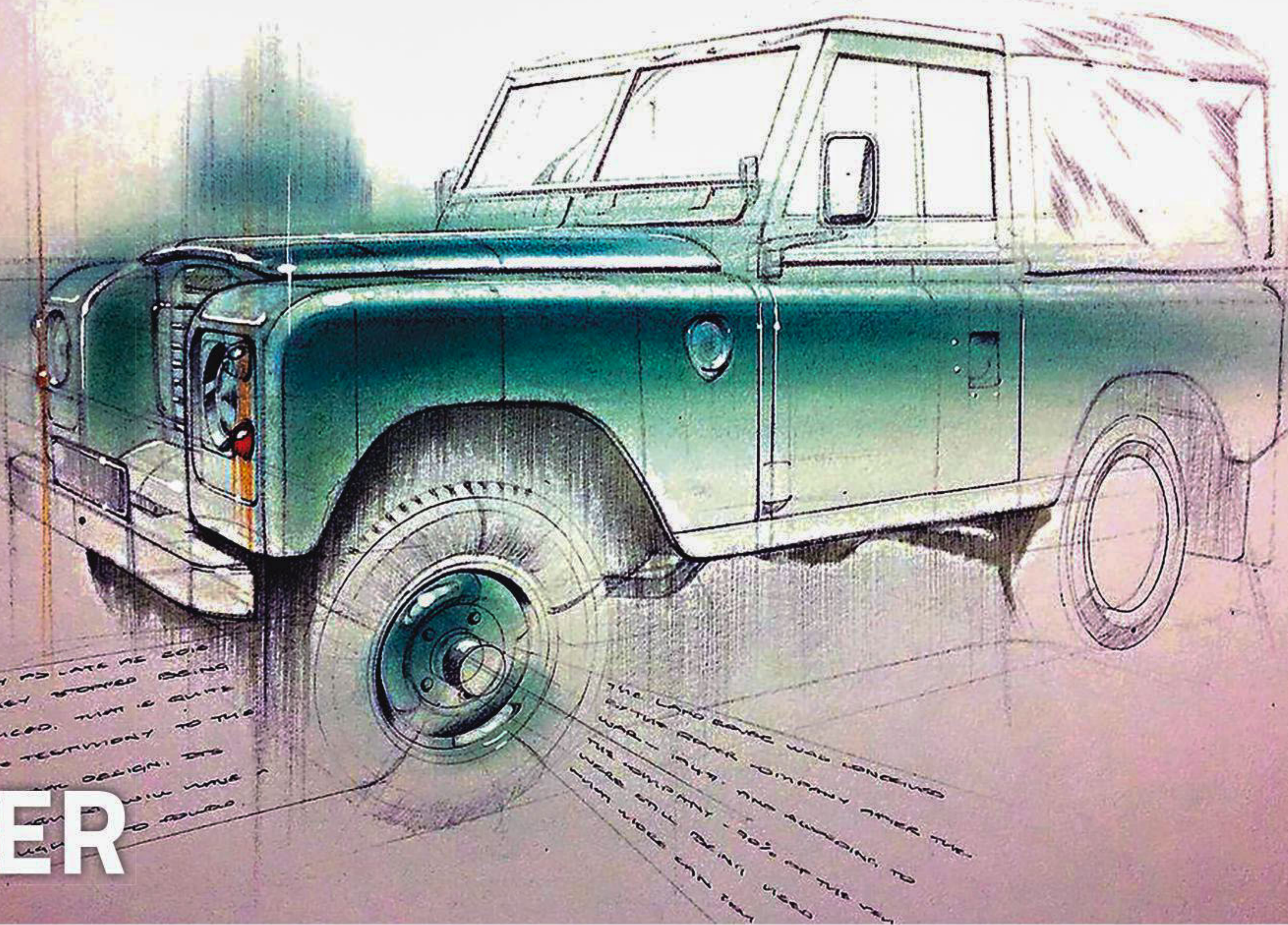


A LOVE LETTER TO THE LAND ROVER DEFENDER



What makes the Land Rover One-Ten/Defender such a sensation world-wide? For the most part, it's an old hat of a car—impractical and cumbersome. It's adorned with wonky, serrated plastic bits and bobs that threaten to inflict gashes on your body. If your body wasn't enough, be prepared to make matrimony with a prominent banker's daughter because it'll soon lead to a barren wallet and an insatiable borrowing habit as your brain and eyes attempt to keep pace with the overwhelming spectrum of 'polyurethane this', 'adjustable that', and 'strengthened other'—I think owners will know what I'm droning about. On the subject of loans, do channel some of the credit towards a gold membership at a gym because it'll be a nightmare helming it around narrow and congested town-roads—no pinky-finger twirls

of the steering wheel like your Toyota. On a more emotional level, you might as well rehearse stunts at driving these things well in advance. Should you fail, precondition your mind to demeaning laughs from your friends as you ingloriously make your way into its disproportionate cockpit—with an utter absence of grace and poise. It's a monumental blush on your cheeks on just about everything. So, why bother tolerating one? Well, if I may say so, you'd be missing out on the critical details of owning it.

Honestly, its infallible nature is what deepens its master's relationship with it—I've had quite an eye-opening experience with an '89 300Tdi to assure you of that. Yes, it has terrible ergonomics and inferior fixtures peppered throughout it, but that's why the experience is unlike any other. Take the horn

for example, it would've been just fine on the steering wheel, like every other car. But no, sir! It had to be a Lilliputian 'press' on the steering-column stalk. The seating position is so horrid and the structure so snug that you're forced to hang your elbow out of the window like some 60s Italian casanova to be anything close to comfortable. Regarding the spending, that perhaps is the most enlightening bit about the whole experience. It commands you to read and gain knowledge on the subject, and before you know it, you're spewing Biblical dialogues on affairs related to galvanised turrets, bulkhead and outrigger replacement, polyurethane and OEM rubber bushes, steering geometry, castor angle, et cetera. You just cannot own a Land Rover without a working knowledge on at least the fundamentals. And exercising that

knowledge on remoulding the car and its performance, especially when you get it right, is most rewarding. It's a bit like old, musky timepieces—if you're into vintage and oh-so manly mechanical movements, I might as well guarantee you'll enjoy the clunking and clacking of the transfer-case, complemented by the intoxicating turbo whistle and gearbox clicks. It just renders you smug, leaving a few new strands of hair on your chest in the process. Talk about a manly experience.

Sure, a Land Rover One-Ten/Defender can be as hot-headed and demanding as your girlfriend/wife but does any of that ever wither the charm that characterises the bond between the two of you? I doubt, and it's quite similar here. The more you spend time, the better you'd know her, which just prepares you for the rough patches ahead.

Needless to mention, a Landie offers low-range capabilities and a lockable central differential, unlike your better half, so the transition ought to be a lot smoother.

Bear in mind, you simply cannot relish a Land Rover without being committed in the ways I described earlier and this most rugged of experiences is not for the feeble-hearted and impatient. A Land Rover project is capable of leaving you in tears, so you might just have to be brazen and intrepid during the dark hours of a crisis. That being said, once you've made the necessary effort, it's bound to be a most fruitful experience, and trust me, you will have gained a faithful companion for the rest of your life.

MOHAMMAD MUSA KHAN

AUTO NEWS

2020 Audi Q7 refresh

Audi has decided to drag the slightly aging Q7 into another few years before a full re-do is implemented. The 5 or 7-seater SUV has been in production for a while now, tracing its roots back to 2003's Pikes Peak Quattro concept, and the rest of Audi's dynamic range seems to have left it behind a little bit.

For 2020, the Q7 gets updated HD Matrix LED and Laser light options, a chrome strip at the rear, updated grille



and bumpers, as well as new wheels and paint options. Mechanically, it receives dynamic adjustable stabilisers that reduce body roll, as well as all-wheel steering that improves manoeuvrability both on and off-road. Inside, the refreshed Q7 gets Audi's latest screen technology in the MMI navigation and infotainment system, while benefiting from the all-digital Audi Virtual Cockpit which is as customisable as ever. The Q7 is also safer for 2020—an array of sensors and systems keep the Q7 on the road, in-between lanes and out of the bumpers of cars in front of you.

The new Q7 will come to Bangladesh once it reaches dealerships in September. Progress Motors Imports Ltd., the local Audi dealership, might get it sometime after.



AUST team building car to compete in Formula Student UK



Team Primus, a student engineering team composed of 28 members from varying disciplines at Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST), is preparing to place an entry into Formula Student UK (FSUK), a motorsport competition for engineering students worldwide.

With a car powered by a 600 cc motorbike engine developing 84 HP at 11,500 RPM and 40 lb-ft torque at 10,500 RPM, Team Primus looks all set to smash performance barriers, especially with a curb weight of approximately 300 kg. The chassis, designed in-house, features seamless tubing for an optimum balance of weight and cost savings, strength and stiffness. Grip is provided by MRF slicks, while cornering performance is enhanced by inboard shocks. It'll stop efficiently too—cross drilled and ventilated discs lifted from sport-bikes

provide stopping power at each corner.

Team Primus is putting the final touches to the car and getting it ready for the competition, which will be held at Silverstone Circuit, the home of the British Grand Prix, a week after the Formula 1 camp moves on.

"We're aiming to win at least two categories of the FSUK, as well as continuously develop the car for future iterations of the competition. We don't want this to be a one-off attempt," said Antony Biswas, team leader and the mastermind behind the chassis design.

The specs look promising and Team Primus looks poised to be the first major entrant into the world of motorsport engineering from Bangladesh. We wish them the best of luck.

PHOTOS: FARHAN AHMED

