

The Man

Jeremy Ainsworth,

The Machine

Land Rover

The World

Adventure

This combination came together to make the story for the classic Land Rover featured in our car show today. Jeremy Ainsworth, from Watermillock, England and now living in Calistoga, CA bought this car in 1969. It is a military spec vehicle delivered to the British Army in 1964 and sent to the Persian Gulf where it served for 5 years before being driven back to England. Jeremy knew what he was getting into by purchasing the car because he already had a little Land Rover experience.

In 1964, Jeremy and a buddy fresh from graduating from Kesteven Farm Institute decided they weren't ready to go to work, so they did the logical thing instead; they bought a Land Rover and drove it around the world! Sponsored by some 35 different companies supplying equipment; three and a half years, seven continents and 110,000 miles later, Jeremy knew what a Land Rover could do, so he bought this car you see today and started off on an epic life journey exploring the world, its places, and people. Over the years, Jeremy has visited 114 countries. Today at 81 he is still a world rover, traveling a couple times a year to foreign countries.

After purchasing this car in '69, which by this time it had also been driven twice to and from India, Jeremy decided that a visit to Africa was in order. Through 1969 he explored Northern Africa, drove back up through Europe and back to England. By the end of that year, North America was calling, so Jeremy shipped the car to Nova Scotia where he picked it up and drove across the U S, ending up in Fairbanks Alaska. Upon hearing that Oregon was a good place where he might put his college education to practice, he drove down there and bought a farm where he intended to breed Arabian horses. The Land Rover became his all-purpose farm car.

As idyllic as this bucolic life might sound to most of us, an opportunity came calling that Jeremy could not resist. In 1972 the British Trans America Expedition was being launched to try to forge a new crossing through the jungles of Central America to open a driving route between South and Central America and ultimately to North America. Known as the Darien Gap, this was a virtually impenetrable land of jungle, swamps, poisonous snakes, alligators, biting insects, diseases, and stifling heat that had up to then defied all attempts to cross. Unknown to the leaders of the expedition, Jeremy had more knowledge of this challenge than anyone else. Back on his earlier around the world trip, Jeremy had shipped his Land Rover from Australia to Peru and spent 6 weeks trying to drive through the Darien Gap. Rebuffed by jungle so dense that light could hardly penetrate, mired in swamps, and covered with insect bites he

exercised better judgment and shipped his car from Cartagena, Columbia to Panama and casually zig zagged up and around the US, back to his farm. A couple of months later he drove to New York and shipped this Land Rover back to England. Having learned the process of buying, shipping and importing cars, Jeremy bought a number of Land Rovers that he exported to various countries. He decided to deliver one of the cars himself and drove it to North Africa to personally turn it over to its new owner..

Restless again, he shipped this car back to America and drove back to Oregon to resume his farm life. Although quite happy as an Oregon farmer, upon hearing of the British Trans America Expedition that would attempt to go through the Darien Gap he communicated his previous experience to the Expedition leaders, and they eagerly invited him to join the expedition. So, off he, his lady friend, and the Land Rover went from Oregon to Panama to join the expedition.

The Expedition with 2 new Range Rovers, 62 people with machetes for cutting the way through the jungle and 27 horses and mules carrying gear, plus a doctor, a dentist, veterinarian, scientists to study flora and fauna and an anthropologist to study the indigenous tribes encountered. The expedition set off about two weeks before Jeremy arrived. Upon arrival in Panama, Jeremy learned that the expedition was bogged down and stuck in the swampy muck. Immediately, from his previous experience in this jungle, Jeremy knew what was needed to liberate the expedition members and equipment from the grips of the jungle. He found a dilapidated old Land Rover, bought it and transferred his better suited wheels and tires and his powerful winch and drove that vehicle back to the entrapped Expedition. This equipment and Jeremy's previous experience in the Darien Gap enabled him to pull their cars out of their swamp imprisonment and then to proceed on their expedition plan. Ultimately the Expedition was successful and became the first such venture making it through the Gap and into Columbia. What Jeremy did next is the stuff of epic adventure, daring and unimaginable effort. He shipped his car from Columbia to Panama, bought five horses and supplies and ventured overland 200 mile through the Darien Gap jungle to arrive in Columbia before the expedition!

After the successful crossing of the Gap the expedition continued to demonstrate the capabilities of the Range Rover by traveling down to the tip of South America. From the vantage point of Columbia, Jeremy also decided that it was a good time to explore South America. Traveling to the tip of Chile he crossed over and came up through Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay Equator, Venezuela, back to Columbia and shipped the car to Panama and then drove back to Oregon. Soon after, he sold the farm and drove back to Alaska to take up his other passion of flying airplanes.

Unmentioned before in this story was the fact that Jeremy was a licensed pilot, so back in Alaska it was logical that he spent the next many years as a bush

pilot, with his Land Rover serving as his bush car. This happened to coincide with the opening of the Prudhoe Bay pipeline which triggered an economic boom. Seeing an opportunity that particularly suited him, he became the primary rep for the Maule Airplane Company. The Maule is a quintessential bush plane with short take and landing capabilities due to its powerful engine, unique wing design and tundra tires. So along with shuttling people to and from the oilfields he sold numerous Maule's to many people with new money from the oil boom. In those and later years Jeremy delivered Maule airplanes to customers all over the world. He is still at 81 an active pilot and representative for Maule!

In 1985 Jeremy drove down to California, was impressed with the town of Calistoga and moved there. We met some 30 years ago when we were both among only 5 pilots given permission by the new owner of the Calistoga Glider Airport to fly power planes into Calistoga. While the old Land Rover's big travel days are now over, this trip to Tiburon an exception, Jeremy is still a word traveler who rarely sits still for more than a couple of months at a time. Just this month he has been to and back from Alaska to buy an airplane for a customer.

Folks, this is a story of a life of travel adventure that could not be made up; it can only be true. And, I have just relayed about 5% of his story that was directly relevant to Land Rover being our featured car. You are encouraged to visit Jeremy at his Land Rover space to get the true flavor of this amazing pairing of Jeremy and his 1964 Land Rover. It has some 400,000 miles of adventure on its odometer, and he has the tales to back them up in his memory bank.

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