

FISH STORY

How a Bass Inspired the Buildup of This D110

This Land Rover Defender 110 Crew Cab is unique on so many levels, it is hard to find a place to start. For example, even though there were only 500 Defender 110 wagons imported to the United States, and only as '93 models, this D110 is a '98 crew cab. The frame was shipped from the U.K. for this buildup, as was the body, even though this is a North American-spec D110. And, on top of all of that, the entire project was inspired by a fish named Luke. Intrigued? Curious? Confused? Read on.



By Allyson Harwood

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLYSON HARWOOD & COURTESY OF ROVER ACCESSORIES

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This Zambezi Silver Defender was lifted 2-1/2 inches with the addition of an Old Man Emu suspension system. A Hannibal tent was mounted to the roof, and two winches were installed.

Meet Luke, the inspiration for this project. He was a little shy, but eventually posed for the camera.

Charles Edward D'Andrade, president of Rover Accessories in Torrance, California, was eager to start a new project. After he'd finished work on a Camel Trophy-replica Defender 90 and a Sahara Discovery II (both seen at SEMA 2000), helped build the Kalahari Discovery that was displayed at SEMA in 2001, and built the Destination Discovery Series II show truck, he clamored for something new to tackle. Hands folded neatly behind his head and feet propped up on his desk, his eyes wandered over to his fish tank, holding a single bass, Luke. That's when it hit him – Charles' next project was going to be the ultimate fly-fishing vehicle.

Charles found a '93 Defender 110 wagon, number 400 out of 500, which was in rather bad shape. The previous owner had exposed it to a lot of salt air, which had caused much of the frame and its crossmembers to rust. Making things worse, the body had been damaged at some point in its past, and the previous owner did a marginal job of repairing it. Charles, lead builder David Jenden, and the guys at Rover Accessories had a huge project on their hands, and had until the first week in November 2002 to finish the vehicle.

They brought the Defender into the shop and disassembled it to see what they could keep and what needed to be replaced. The frame was mostly rust and holes, so Rover Accessories

imported a new extreme-duty Land Rover military-specification D110 chassis from England. Because they could decide what the Rover would look like, they spent a little time determining what the body would become. Because there had been so much damage to the original body, it was scrapped and replaced with a D110 crew cab body, also shipped from the U.K. Its four doors and short bed provided a combination that matched up with

the project's fly-fishing theme – it offered plenty of room for people going on the trip and a separate area for gear. They retained the original engine and other key items, and were ready to build Flyfisher.

The panels were sent to the paint shop, while Rover Accessories worked on the frame, engine, transmission,

wiring, brakes, and anything else that needed attention. The new frame received an Old Man Emu suspension, which provided 2-1/2 inches of lift. OME coil springs, Nitrocharger shocks fore and aft, and an OME steering damper were mounted on the Defender. With an extra 2-1/2 inches under the chassis, there was room for the new wheels and tires, 16x7-inch OE D110 aluminum alloy wheels, with P285/75R16 Firestone Destination mud-terrain tires. Rover Accessories wheel spacers made sure the combo fit on the Defender. Behind the new wheels and tires, Rover Accessories opted for ventilated discs up front, and converted the rear to solid disc brakes from a late-model Defender



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After the new frame arrived, it was given a set of useable wheels and tires while the guys installed the OME suspension.

There are heavy-duty coil springs in the rear, OME coils up front, Nitrocharger shocks, and an OME steering damper.



The Hannibal tent provides plenty of space to sleep after a long day of fishing.



BIG ENOUGH

110. There are extended stainless steel brake lines in the front and the rear.

Charles retained the original 110's 3.9L V-8 engine, which made sure the vehicle would pass smog tests and would stay reliable. However, Charles wanted to replace the stock manual transmission with a four-speed automatic, a swap that required the use of a Rover Accessories conversion kit. The transmission came from a late-model Discovery Series II. Flyfisher has its stock transfer case, but the rear axle was replaced by a Land Rover Salisbury unit, which is similar to a Dana 60.

The body returned from paint, freshly coated in OE Land Rover Zambezi Silver with dark-gray trim and ready to be reassembled. The body was fitted using new Land Rover rivets. Next, the Safety Devices rollcage was mounted, with eight solid frame-mounting points. Safety Devices also provided the aluminum alloy steering guard. Up front, a black powdercoated Mantec steel winch bumper and Warn 9500 TI winch were installed. IPF headlights were installed in the stock locations, and there are IPF driving lights, turn signals, and taillights on the Land Rover as well. Mantec supplied the rock sliders seen on both sides of the vehicle. Up top, a Hannibal tent was installed. This tent provides plenty of sleeping space for

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The interior was done in charcoal gray and carbon fiber.



A Safety Devices rollcage keeps everyone on-board safe in the great outdoors.

Wheels are new OE Defender 110 rolling stock, wrapped by P285/75R16 Firestone Destination mud-terrains.

the adventurous outdoorsman. There is also a 12-volt Indel B refrigerator/freezer on board, to take care of any beverage necessities.

On the inside, the front seats were custom upholstered with Enduralex, a material made for marine applications that is made to be water- and dirt-resistant. The seats have a carbon-fiber-style look with gray piping, and the Rover Accessories logo was embroidered in each headrest. The rear seats, which are flip-up jump seats, were also given the Enduralex treatment. Matching the gray carbon-fiber look of the seats is a Rover Accessories carbon-fiber center console built to hold the automatic transmission shifter, and charcoal gray carpeting.

From the time the frame arrived at the shop to the time the vehicle was complete, a mere six weeks had passed. A handful of people had turned a rusty, abused, damaged Rover into a thing of rugged beauty. The Defender was complete in time for its debut at SEMA 2002, where it stood its ground as most likely the only modified Defender 110 Crew Cab in America, and absolutely the only one dedicated to, and inspired by, a fish. Too bad Luke couldn't make it to the show to see what Charles, David, and the guys at Rover Accessories had built in his honor. •



There is a second Warn winch mounted on the rear bumper.

