

Motoring

IS IT INVINCIBLE?

By *Tim Saunders, Motoring Correspondent*

HMS Invincible, a popular name for a Royal Navy ship, was an aircraft carrier, in operation for 28 years before being decommissioned in 2005. I am reminded of this as I confront the gargantuan Toyota Land Cruiser Invincible.

Finished in a pleasing metallic blue it is a huge presence on the driveway, dwarfing everything in sight including my little son, Henry (4). And when behind the wheel it feels like you're taking your settee for a spin. Sit back and relax while this 2.8-litre diesel effortlessly transports you to your destination. The harder it is worked the louder the engine gets but it's a comforting roar. It'll cover around 400 miles on a tank returning around 30mpg, which considering its sheer weight isn't bad really.

It can wallow a bit when slowing down, mainly due to its height and large tyres, but it can be driven at speed, if necessary.

This very capable vehicle is extremely well suited to a large family but also makes ideal transport for a farmer needing to traverse his many acres of land. I like the external design and the high up driving position where you look down on all other off-roaders. I particularly like the vast amount of space inside. This is a seven-seater and the third row is put in place by simply pushing a couple of switches in the boot. All very easy, which is much appreciated because there are cars where getting the third row into position can be a bit of a nightmare. This function alone allows us to take a family friend on a trip with us as well as collecting Grandma.

Accessing the third row of seats is easy enough; simply pull the lever beside either the left or right seat on the second row and this will pull forward giving access to the back row. Henry and Heidi (7) baggy the back row, giving Harriett (9) a bit of space in front of them. It works well with little bickering as is so often the case with them these days.



Tim Saunders is an advanced motorist and journalist. He has always been passionate about motoring and regularly reviews cars from the leading manufacturers. His first report on a BMW 520i was published in the Dorset Echo when he was 17 (just after passing his driving test) in 1995. He went on to become business and motoring editor at the Bournemouth Echo.



The hardwearing leather seats are comfortable. The driver's seat is electrically adjustable and proves to be supportive over a long journey.

The cruise control allows this beast to be driven in the most efficient manner but generally cancels out at speeds below 30mph. It cannot always be relied upon when hills are encountered either - over revving the engine when confronted with a steep drop. We meet a dustcart travelling up one of these steep hills and slamming it into sports mode and pushing the accelerator to the floor sees Invincible safely overtake and that fuel gauge drop a little...

We drive across West Sussex, which is completely saturated by persistent rainfall. As the water soaked roads result in us being engulfed on occasions, the wipers make light work of the situation and calm is quickly restored. Tempted as I am to slip off into a field I resist the temptation as the children and my wife are pleasantly relaxed and I don't want to upset the apple cart.

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FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Toyota Land Cruiser Invincible 5dr 7 seat
2.8 auto diesel**

Top speed: 109 mph

Economy: 30 mpg

0-60mph: 13 secs

Power: 177 bhp

Watch the video at www.testdrives.biz