



Toyota Land Cruiser

Tim Saunders gets lost in the vast expanse of Toyota's flagship SUV

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 (aged four). 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.

To access the third row of seats, 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 (aged seven) baggy the back row, giving Harriett (aged nine) a bit of space in front of them. It works well with little bickering as is so often the case with them these days.

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. 🍏

The big numbers

Power:.....177bhp
 Top speed:.....109mph
 0-60mph:.....13secs
 Economy:.....30mpg

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