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"Big Mac and Fries to go." Dan gets into the spirit of things



The man behind the customs desk at JFK Airport is not impressed with my immigration form. "Killington, Vermont, is not an address," he says in that manner only customs officials can muster.

Trouble is, I don't know where I'm staying and I don't really know where Killington, is. I don't really know where Vermont is for that matter. All I know is that I'm trying to get to the annual Roverfest gathering in the Green Mountains, and that I'm driving there in a Discovery. After that, it all gets a bit indefinite.

My customs man continues: "So, are you staying in the woods up there or something?" Very possibly I believe, and decide to tell the man why I'm here. I'm going to Killington because I'm covering a big gathering of Land Rovers, and I work for a British four-wheel drive magazine. Sounds a bit daft when you say it, but the official's face changes. "Land Rovers? Those Brit four-wheelers? Yeah, one of my neighbours once had one of them. Real slow, but it would show a Chevy the way to go on the trail. Kinda thirsty, though." And with that he stamps my passport, waving me through with the customary "have a nice day"... I even think he means it.

Land Rover is a universal language, but strangely America is one of the few countries where it's not spoken that much. I was lucky



Discoverys leave Roverfest's base camp in search of off-road action

Across the pond, Land Rover mania is on the up. LRO heads for the East Coast's annual Roverfest to sample driving, off-roading and trialling US style

with the guy at customs, but historically the USA has not been Land Rover's greatest market, and there have been long periods when it has been impossible to buy any officially imported vehicles.

You can't buy a new Defender in the States – they don't meet Federal safety legislation – and the supply of Series vehicles dwindled and vanished in the early 70s when increasingly complicated safety and emissions legislation killed sales. Older Land Rovers, the vehicles found working and playing across the rest of the planet, are a rarity and novelty in America. Range Rovers and Discoverys have kudos and status, just as they do anywhere else, but anything else is a curio.

In a country where Detroit is the Mecca of automobile manufacturing, made in Solihull is, to most people, a meaningless phrase.

But it's certainly not an unknown UK town to the people who will be converging on the small town of Killington in the Green Mountains of Vermont over an August weekend. These are the true believers; men and women (and their children) who, instead of buying a Ford Bronco or a Chevy Blazer, spent their money on a Land Rover. Not only have they made the choice to drive something so very British, they've made the commitment to keep the vehicles on the road, and bring them to events like the Roverfest. All I have to do is get there.

Killington is not exactly well served by airports and besides, freedom and car ownership is a defining feature of the American dream. So I've arranged to borrow a vehicle from Land Rover North America to drive the 450 miles from Baltimore to Killington. It's a Kent Green Discovery SE7, with the four-litre V8 and every conceivable extra. SE7 is the top-flight spec for

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