



Trail rides (below) were scenic but hardly taxing for any Land Rover



American Discos, so I've got leather and wood, a CD player, sports-mode auto-box electrics and air-con.

The latter turns out to be a necessity because, along the Eastern seaboard, temperatures are soaring and it's going to be the hottest week on record for 50 years. It's 110 degrees, and the radio is urging people to conserve energy wherever possible. State offices are being closed and workers are being sent home. But I'm going north, up into the cool mountains not too far from the Canadian border where the temperatures should be more manageable.

Driving in America is uneventful, straightforward and slow. It isn't expensive though, and with fuel at about \$1.69 for a US gallon, filling the Discovery is not going to be a painful experience. In fact, I'm amazed at how cheap it really is when I fill up for the first time.

Discos have large fuel tanks, swallowing about 70 litres, and in England it cost £50 to fuel the LRO Disco. And that's a diesel. In the US,

it costs about \$30, equivalent to £20. Okay, so at 17mpg it doesn't go very far, but at those prices it hardly matters.

Despite this, I heard many people complaining about rising fuel costs – a bit like being at home really. Telling the locals that I have to pay the equivalent of \$5 a gallon tended to make them go rather quiet.

With a 55 or 65mph speed limit all the way up to Vermont, and a State Trooper lurking round every corner, progress is slow. America's antiquated speed limits date from the time of the oil crisis in the early 70s when low limits were introduced to cut fuel use. It might have been a better idea to cut the cubic capacity of some engines, but the speed limits stuck and a country that depends almost entirely on its roads for movement (public transport is a non-entity in the US) is also landed with these enforced limits.

It may use a fair bit of fuel, but the Discovery is a belter as a freeway cruiser. It's very comfortable and surprisingly quiet and relaxing to



Series I across the pond

Most people can't believe how old it is, although they tend to call it a 'cool Jeep', says Steve Hoare of his 1948 80-inch. Steve, an expat now living in the USA, bought his SI in England and imported it to the US when he moved. It has been restored, but retains the original chassis, bulkhead and gearbox. "It's got a 2-litre engine, but I've got the original 1.6-litre unit back in England, along with two vehicle's worth of spares in Wales," says Steve. He gets spares from his stash sent over when he needs them – there's a noticeable lack of donor vehicle Series Is in America.

Owning any Land Rover in the States is bound to attract attention, and the Series I makes a statement wherever it goes. "Quite a lot of people think it's a military vehicle, but mostly they can't believe how old it is." No surprise in a country where history is a relative concept. He doesn't have any problems with keeping the venerable Rover going, and it doesn't seem to mind unleaded fuel. "I use a good quality gas, and don't get any problems. Up a long hill, when you've got your foot flat to the floor, you may get a little pinking, but otherwise it's fine."

Steve owns a Range Rover and a Discovery as well as the Series I, but it's the old timer that wins the family's vote.

"The Range Rover and the Disco are great, but they're not as kid-friendly. They love the Series I!" For most of Roverfest, Steve had a posse of kids piled into the back, with the canvas sides up, enjoying the sunshine.