# Now you can get a Land Rover restomod with a Tesla electric powertrain




## reader comments

38 with 26 posters participating, including story author

## Share this story

- At first glance this looks like just another Land Rover Defender, but this one has been restomodded by ECD Automotive.
- Normally you'd find a GM V8 under the hood of one of ECD's restomods, but not this time.
  ECD Automotive
- Why yes, that is a Tesla drive unit.
  ECD Automotive
- The Defender's large ladder chassis makes mounting battery boxes pretty easy. With 100kWh on board, range should be about 220 miles, ECD says.

ECD Automotive

- Every ECD vehicle is a ground-up restoration, and there's an eight-month design process for each customer. ECD Automotive
- This won't come cheap—expect to pay supercar money for one—but surely it's a cooler SUV than one of those 6×6 Gwagens that people seem to adore?

There's just something about Land Rovers that makes people want to fill them full of batteries and an electric motor. A few weeks ago, we learned about the Twisted NAS-E, a restored and modified Land Rover Defender that now runs on electrons instead of gasoline or diesel. But if you've got a hankering for an electric Land Rover but you think the NAS-E is too common, you might be interested in ECD Automotive Design's newest restomod, the Electric Defender, which combines the right-angles of a Land Rover with the battery and electric motor from a Tesla.

The first Land Rover went into production in the aftermath of World War II as Britain's answer to the Willys Jeep. A boxy off-roader meant for farmers that predated the SUV by several decades, in recent years, old Land Rovers have become quite the It Car here in America. ECD Automotive bears a lot of responsibility for that—it's been restomodding Land Rovers since 2013, stripping them down and rebuilding them to a standard commensurate with the six-figure price tag. Think Singer, but with more right angles and slower lap times.

Until now, part of its process has involved replacing the Land Rover's original engine with one of General Motors' V8s. But over in the UK, Electric Classic Cars—who you might know from the TV show *Vintage Voltage*—recently figured out how to convert the four-wheel-drive Land Rover Defender into an electric vehicle, using the rear-drive motor from a Tesla Model S, along with a Model S battery pack. And ECD has partnered up with ECC to offer this powertrain option as an alternative to a GM LT4.

“It’s that mix of ultramodern with ultraclassic,” said Scott Wallace, one of ECD’s founders, to me. “I mean, it doesn’t get much more classic than a Defender. And there’s always a thing about making old vehicles more and more reliable. Obviously we did that with a GM drivetrain, and I think the electric side of it just gives it another dimension.

“We’re starting with basically a ladder frame, so we’ve got a ton of space,” Wallace went on. “It’s a battery box, control unit, and it’s a drive unit, and then it’s just a case of packaging it and getting it to fit the car. The nice thing with Land Rovers is there’s acres of space for us to play with.”

## As seen on TV

ECC has had plenty of experience electrifying classic cars with Tesla motors, and that wealth of experience—and an OEM feel to the end product—was what convinced ECD to work with the British specialists.

“The big thing for us was that we wanted this to feel like a real install would have been done by Land Rover or by Tesla,” Wallace said. “What we found was a lot of companies that offer these electric kits and electric conversions is that they always keep a manual transmission, and you have to start the vehicle and put it in third gear to pull away, [and] when you get to the highway you can put it into fifth—it just felt shoddy. So, we were going for that direct drive—you’ve got forwards, backwards, and park. And that’s what we wanted.”

The Electric Defender should be at least as capable off-road as it was when it left Land Rover’s Solihull factory. ECD uprates the differentials to cope with the 335kW (450hp) generated by a Tesla drive unit, and the benefits of an electric motor mean that this restomod should drive significantly better on the road.  The weight of a finished conversion isn’t even much greater, despite carrying 100kWh of

lithium-ion (also repurposed from a Tesla).

“If you compare it to a V8 with a full tank of fuel, it’s almost the same—maybe a touch heavier,” Wallace said. “But the weight is situated lower, so you get a better center of gravity on the car.”

Unfortunately, none of this comes cheap. A restomodded Defender from ECD with a conventional powertrain starts at $165,995, and the build process involves an eight-month design process and then another 100 days in the workshop. Making it electric bumps that up even more—expect to pay between $195,000-$265,000 if you want one in your life.

*Listing image by ECD Automotive*

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1703499