

# The Designer’s Bespoke Defender Blends Color Blocking with an Adventurous Spirit



PAUL SMITH

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LAND ROVER

The British designer’s custom vehicle transforms the Land Rover Defender with a mix of custom colors, luxurious interiors, and playful details, celebrating the car’s final year of production.

The Land Rover Defender is an iconic British 4x4 known for its rugged durability, off-road capabilities, and spirit of adventure. First launched in 1948, its boxy design and reliable performance have made it a favorite among thrill-seekers, military forces, and outdoor enthusiasts around the globe. Among these dedicated fans was designer Paul Smith, who was drawn to the car’s rugged charm and versatility. In 2015, after owning several Defenders over the years, Smith decided to take things to the next level: that year he joined forces with Land Rover’s Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) team to create a bespoke version of the iconic car, blending his unique aesthetic with the vehicle’s legendary design.

The resulting vehicle featured an exterior painted in a camouflage-esque patchwork of 27 individual colors, each carefully selected by Smith. For the palette, he drew inspiration from the British countryside and the historic military Defenders, selecting deep, rich tones, which he then offset with bright accents of cobalt blue and Chartreuse yellow. The end result is as

surprising as it is cohesive—a tour de force of color blocking. To achieve his vision, Smith personally provided the SVO team with custom Pantone references, ensuring that each color was mixed specifically for this vehicle. Playful yet refined touches like a hand-painted bee on the roof or the image of a set of keys printed inside the glove compartment reflected Smith’s attention to detail and wit. A custom Paul Smith fascia replaced the traditional Defender clock, adding a contemporary flair to the classic design.

The collaboration, unveiled at Smith’s Mayfair store in London, served as a fitting tribute to the Defender as it entered its final year of production. The bespoke model also sparked a broader interest in limited-edition Defenders, with Land Rover unveiling three other special models that year. To further celebrate the iconic vehicle, the partnership extended to a collectible, die-cast miniature version, allowing Defender enthusiasts to display a piece of history at home, adding another layer to this distinctly British tribute.



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