

Ride of the Week

Ian Kelly's '62 Land Rover is all function and all fun

[by Fireball Tim Lawrence, Contributing Columnist](#)

Pictured is Ian Kelly with his 1962 converted Land Rover. photo:Fireball Tim Lawrence/22nd Century Media. ...
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There's a lot to be said about Land Rover, but even more about Ian Kelly's 1962 five-door dormobile station wagon. But in a world of design, styling, emotion and performance, this particular version, like Ian and his proper English love for cars, has some unique traits.

It was factory-converted by Martin Walter Ltd. to include a lifting roof with fold-out bunk beds, cooker and wash basin unit plus wardrobe. It also has dormatic bench seating that reverses for seating around a table and then folds flat to form a double bed.

C'mon, is that cool or what? Get in line behind me for the next excursion.

The forerunner of Dormobile Ltd was a well-established company known as Martin-Walter Ltd, founded in 1773 as harness manufacturers, who progressed to building carriages and coaches. So, these guys knew what they were doing. At the dawn of the motoring age, the tradition continued with the manufacture of bespoke coachwork on marques such as Daimler, Rolls Royce and Mercedes-Benz. The history of this traveler is beyond most vehicular contraptions.

There's no way to know how many miles it has on it as the odometer was broken when he got it, but it was imported from the United Kingdom around 2002 and had lived in Wales made at least two trips to Croatia.

With its original 2.25-liter, 4-cylinder engine with 7:1 compression head — meaning that it will run on anything vaguely flammable — Ian is planning on upgrading to a higher compression head this summer. That'll beat the current 67hp.

Ian has owned it for about eight years. He bought it on Ebay from Seattle, sight unseen, and then drove it 1,000 miles down to California.

"I flew up to Seattle to pick it up on President's Day weekend and the seller met me at the

airport in his Porsche," mentions Ian. "He never said a word. Weird. We had corresponded many times via email, but there was complete silence on the drive. It wasn't until we were almost at his house that I realized that he was completely deaf and mute (as was his wife). When cleaning out the truck I found pencils and notepads everywhere," Ian said.

With an overwhelming love for the Land Rover brand, Ian's blue beauty was one of only 850 such conversions, designed for long distance overland trips. It provides self-contained living facilities and everything you need for travel.

If you went around the world overland in 1962, you did it in this.

Ian has also had a 1970 88" station wagon for the last 16 years. They're easy to work on and tough.

When Ian is not working as a video engineer for small movies — "Avatar," "Forrest Gump" and "Batman" to name a few — he's on long-distance trips in this baby. He went to the Overland Expo in May of last year in Flagstaff, AZ, then back via Sedona.

"In September, I took a 1,500 mile, three-week trip to New Mexico and Colorado via Monument Valley. This year, I'm planning a trip to the Mendocino forest for the Joe Lucas not-a-rally. Lucas made the electronics for Land Rovers and other British cars of the period and is generally considered to be the Prince of Darkness."

Ian's Land Rover is a very serious function machine, although under that tame and composed exterior, like Ian, there's a mountain of adventure to be had. I for one, felt like I had been to the Congo and back just from our conversation. Much thanks, Ian, and congratulations! You're this week's Ride of the Week!

Want to be featured as Malibu'S Ride of the Week? Let Fireball know what you've got. He may even bring you chocolate! Don't forget to watch his talk show "5MINUTE DRIVE" on Youtube, askfireball@fireballtim.com.