

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bowler EXR S: An off-road supercar - for the road

Lead

For 25 years now, Bowler has taken standard Land Rovers and transformed them into fire-breathing off-road competition cars. This weekend the Derbyshire-based firm will reveal the road-going version of its EXR rally raid car at Goodwood – and it's given Classic Driver a peek at the prototype.

If you think the translation from competition machine to street car results in a severe watering-down, the majority of the time you'd be right. But that's not the case with the Bowler EXR S; it's quite the opposite, in fact. Due to competition rules which dictate performance ceilings, the competition-spec EXR has its performance limited to 300bhp. Meanwhile, without FIA constraints, the road-going version wrings 550bhp from the JLR-sourced 5.0-litre V8 – the exact figure that [Jaguar frees from the matching engine in the XKR-S](#). The 0-62mph time of 4.2 seconds is also shared with its feline cousin, although the EXR S's top speed is wisely limited to 155mph.





Billing the EXR S as a road car obviously requires some additions one wouldn't need on a rally stage, such as climate control, leather seats and in-car entertainment. But Bowler unapologetically confirms it 'focuses on the driver and the driving experience - not luxury'. The retention of the competition car's hydroformed chassis and composite bodywork contributes towards similar handling, strength and weight distribution characteristics to its ancestor: the company describes it as 'a rally car for the road'.

The future certainly looks promising for Bowler; it recently announced that after more than two decades of its work being admired by Land Rover from a distance, the pair has announced an official partnership. This will see Bowler take advantage of greater access to parts and the extensive R&D facilities at Gaydon - in return, Bowler will adorn the EXR variants and future vehicles with 'Powered by Land Rover' badging.



The finished version of the EXR S will make its world debut at Goodwood this weekend, with customer vehicles being delivered by the back end of summer. Stick with Classic Driver for a full driving report of the £155,000 Bowler in the near future.

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