

Tyres and Wheels

PERFORMANCE WHEELS

Expanding Tyre Choices for Land Rover Discovery 3 and 4

No, all you Discovery owners running 18- and 19-inch wheels: don't get excited. Our way to widen tyre choices for our Discovery 3 has been to swap the stock 18-inchers for 17-inchers. We're tired of waiting for tyre makers to come up with 18- and 19-inch light truck (LT) tyres, whereas nearly all of them make LTs in 17-inch sizes.

Why the move, you may ask.

Our experience with 18-inch tyres is that the passenger-car construction used isn't ideal for hard-core bush work. We can sympathise with tyre makers, who must produce rubber capable of handling the high speeds modern 4x4 wagons can achieve.

To do that they have to make the carcass as light as possible, so that it doesn't build up excessive heat. (You may think that high-speed tyres need to be built more heavily than lower-speed tyres, but the reverse is the case.) The challenge of achieving LT strength and a high-speed rating is proving difficult for tyre makers.

We're not saying that 18-inchers won't do the bush touring job, but we've found that they bulge out excessively when the Land Rover is packed for a long trip and it's the same with other large wagons. Putting more pressure in to take out the bulge is a no-no, because a typical 18-inch casing is rated for a maximum pressure around 45psi. Even then, it's desirable to run tyres at lower pressures and speeds on gravel roads, but drop the 18s below 45psi and the sidewalls bag out.

The Solution: Fit 17-Inch Wheels, Shod with LT Tyres

Discovery 3 and 4 models powered by the 2.7-litre V6 diesel have the original brake package, so fitting 17s isn't a problem. The new three-litre donk comes with bigger brakes, so the swap isn't possible.

We looked around the 17-inch wheel options and found a stand-out choice in **Performance Wheels'** BB-6 aluminium 17x8s, which are competition-rated spokers with 1400 kg load capacity, compared with the standard Land Rover 18s mere 950kg. A bonus is that they're Australian-made and weren't very expensive.





Offset is a tad greater, so track goes out marginally, but the stock flares shroud the tyres comfortably. The stock Land Rover nuts won't fit, so the Performance wheels come with chromed dome nuts to replace them. Interestingly, the nuts have stepped flats, so they can be fastened with a 19mm or 16mm socket.

We could have had them 'blinged', with machine-faced spokes and rims, but opted for a plain, platinum gloss finish.

Test 'boots' for the new wheels are Bridgestone Dueler 694s, in 255/65R17 size, with a diameter of 765mm that's almost identical to the original Land Rover fitments of 235/70R17 (for Disco 3s ex-factory on 17-inch wheels) and the 255/60R18 tyre that's standard with 18-inchers.

Check out our [Bridgestone Dueler D694 LT report on Tyres and Wheels page.](#)