

Monarch Defender LLC – Company Research

Company Background

Monarch Defender LLC is a **boutique automotive restoration firm** specializing in the **Land Rover Defender**, an iconic British 4x4 known for its rugged heritage. Founded with a “visionary mission” to **meticulously restore and modernize** classic Defenders, the company blends **timeless design with modern engineering** to create bespoke vehicles for clients worldwide ¹ ². Headquartered in the Chicagoland area, Monarch’s flagship workshop is in Grayslake, Illinois ¹. In response to growing demand across North America, the company has recently expanded its operations – establishing a presence in **Iowa** and forming strategic partnerships overseas (including in Bursa, Turkey) to support global sales and logistics ³. This growth reflects Monarch Defender’s rising reputation in the luxury 4x4 restoration market.

- **Founded:** Exact founding date not publicly stated; operates as an LLC (Chicago-area business records list addresses in Chicago and Norridge, IL). The team has **25+ years of combined experience** in vehicle restoration ⁴.
- **Specialty:** Complete ground-up restorations of vintage Land Rover Defenders (and select other heritage 4x4s), upgraded with modern drivetrains, technology, and custom luxury interiors. Each project is **hand-built** with an emphasis on craftsmanship and performance ⁵.
- **Scale:** Boutique operation with a **small expert team** (approximately 15 master craftsmen as of 2025) ⁶. Vehicles are built in limited quantity – the company reports **150+ Defenders restored** to date ⁴.
- **Clientele:** **High-end collectors and enthusiasts** globally. Monarch markets to “discerning clients around the world,” delivering tailor-made Defenders often priced in the mid-six-figures (many builds list at \$250K–\$300K+ depending on customization) ⁷ ⁸. Customers seek the blend of classic Land Rover character with modern reliability, luxury, and exclusivity.
- **Brand Image:** The name “Monarch Defender” and its tagline “*Fit for a King/Queen – The world is yours*” reflect a **luxury brand ethos**. The company portrays its restorations as **automotive art** or “masterpieces,” built to **uncompromising quality standards** and worthy of royalty ⁹ ¹⁰.



An example of a bespoke Land Rover Defender restored by Monarch Defender (the “Nomad EV” build featuring an all-electric drivetrain). Each project is built from the ground up to blend classic design with modern performance upgrades, reflecting the company’s mission of honoring heritage while embracing innovation ¹¹ ¹² .

Craftsmanship and Services

Monarch Defender positions itself as a **world-class automotive atelier**, where **heritage vehicles** are reborn with modern performance and luxury. The restoration process typically begins with sourcing a structurally sound Defender chassis, which is then **stripped down and rebuilt** bolt-by-bolt. Key aspects of Monarch’s builds include:

- **Modern Drivetrains:** Most projects swap the original engine for a powerful modern unit. Monarch often uses **General Motors LS-series V8 engines** (e.g. a 430hp Corvette LS3 or newer LT1 V8) paired with modern automatic transmissions ¹³ ¹⁴ . These powertrain upgrades give the classic 4x4 significantly improved performance and reliability while maintaining off-road capability. For instance, one signature build (“Project 24”) features a GM LS3 V8, 6-speed automatic, upgraded axles and Fox suspension ¹³ , transforming the Defender’s driving dynamics. Another recent build “**The Goat**” is equipped with a 6.2L LT1 V8 (~460hp) and a Wilwood big brake kit for modern stopping power ¹⁴ .
- **Luxury Interiors:** Monarch completely overhauls the Defender’s bare-bones interior into a bespoke luxury cabin. High-end materials like **Italian Nappa leather**, custom upholstery with contrast stitching, teak wood flooring, and premium carpeting are used for a refined finish ¹⁵ ¹⁶ . Modern conveniences are integrated discreetly – e.g. heated seats, **touchscreen infotainment with Apple CarPlay**, premium sound systems, digital gauges, and even wireless phone chargers ¹⁷ ¹⁵ . Each interior is tailored to the client’s tastes, making every vehicle unique. Monarch emphasizes that “**every stitch tells a story of luxury and care,**” underscoring their attention to detail in craftsmanship ¹⁶ .
- **Chassis and Body Restoration:** The Defender’s body and frame are fully restored, coated, and painted to show-quality standards. Customers often request special exterior themes or colors – for example, Monarch’s past builds include themes like the “**Gulf Runner**” (with a Gulf racing livery) and

“The Admiral”, each with distinctive aesthetics. The company uses **premium automotive paints (Standex brand)** for a durable, glossy finish ¹⁸ ¹⁹ . They also integrate custom exterior elements: LED lighting, upgraded bumpers (sometimes stainless steel or winch bumpers), roll cages, roof racks and other expedition accessories as desired ²⁰ ²¹ .

- **Modernized Suspension & Components:** To ensure the classic Defenders handle and ride well, Monarch upgrades suspensions (e.g. performance lift springs with **Fox shocks** ¹³), steering, and braking systems (often installing heavy-duty brakes like Wilwood, as noted). They may also strengthen the drivetrain with **updated axles and differentials** to handle the added horsepower ¹³ . Despite these modern parts, the goal is to retain the **Defender’s rugged character and off-road prowess** – many builds are designed to be fully trail-capable as well as street comfortable.
- **Electronics and Wiring:** Rewiring a 25+ year-old vehicle is part of the process. Given your background in wiring harnesses and ECU programming, it’s worth noting Monarch’s builds often require custom wiring looms and modern engine management integration. Ensuring electrical reliability and integrating new tech (from engines to infotainment) is a key aspect of their craftsmanship.

Monarch Defender prides itself on *“meticulous craftsmanship”* and **quality control** at every step. According to their site, each build requires **500+ labor hours** and undergoes stringent inspections ⁶ . The company only starts with solid donor vehicles and employs **exacting restoration standards** to ensure the finished product not only looks stunning but is mechanically sound and dependable ¹⁰ . This level of detail has positioned Monarch among the **top-tier custom Defender specialists**. In fact, third-party reports describe Monarch Defender as a **“bespoke, high-end Defender” builder known for elevating these vehicles into “modern masterpieces”** ²² ¹¹ .

Company Values and Culture

Monarch Defender’s core values center on **excellence, innovation, and client collaboration**. The company explicitly highlights several guiding principles ⁹ ¹⁰ :

- **Master Craftsmanship:** Every vehicle is hand-built by skilled artisans who understand the Defender’s legacy. The team’s pride in workmanship is evident in the custom fabrication, paint, and upholstery work on each project. No detail is too small – whether it’s aligning body panels or the finish of an interior stitch, the standard is *perfection*.
- **Bespoke Innovation:** Monarch embraces new technology **without compromising heritage**. They integrate modern powertrains, suspension engineering, and electronics in a way that respects the Defender’s classic identity ¹⁷ ²³ . The builders are encouraged to be creative and solve unique engineering challenges for one-off custom requests.
- **Uncompromising Quality:** Quality control is paramount. The workshop maintains **strict quality benchmarks** at each stage of a build ²⁴ ²⁵ . Materials and parts are top-grade (often OEM or better), and there is a culture of “doing it right” rather than cutting corners. This is critical given the six-figure price tags and the brand’s reputation.
- **Client Partnership:** Projects are highly collaborative with customers. Many clients are automotive enthusiasts or collectors themselves. Monarch involves them in design choices (colors, features, etc.) to ensure the finished Defender reflects the owner’s personality ²⁶ . This bespoke, consultative approach means communication and project management are integral to the workflow.
- **Legacy Preservation:** The company ethos shows a reverence for the Land Rover Defender’s history. They strive to **“honor tradition while embracing modern luxury”**, meaning every build should still

feel like a true Defender – just enhanced ¹¹ ²³ . This respect for the legacy likely creates a sense of purpose and passion among the team, as they see their work as continuing the story of an automotive icon.

In terms of **work culture**, Monarch Defender can be characterized as a **high-end, detail-driven environment** ²⁷ . The shop operates more like a custom studio than a mass-production facility. Each team member's craftsmanship impacts the final product and the company's name, so excellence is expected. Safety and organization in the shop are also stressed (maintaining a professional workspace that reflects the luxury brand's values is one of the manager's duties) ²⁸ .

The organization is still relatively **small and growing**, which often means a tight-knit team and the ability for employees to wear multiple hats. For example, technicians might handle a wide range of tasks (from tearing down axles to wiring dashboards), and the Shop Manager must be comfortable coordinating all these moving parts. The **leadership style** seems to value hands-on involvement, mentorship, and motivation – the job description emphasizes **leading and motivating the skilled craftsmen** on staff ²⁹ . This suggests a culture where management is expected to be present on the floor, guiding the team and fostering pride in their work.

Because the company is in a growth phase, there are **"growth opportunities within an expanding luxury automotive brand"**, as noted in the job listing ³⁰ . This could mean chances to take on new responsibilities, help define processes, or advance as the company scales. For a new hire, especially a managerial one, it's an exciting environment but likely also demanding – requiring initiative, adaptability, and a genuine **passion for classic/collector vehicles** to fit in ³¹ . Monarch explicitly states that passion for the product (especially Land Rovers) is a major plus in candidates, indicating the team takes pride in the niche they serve.

Recent Developments and Innovations

One reason Monarch Defender stands out in the classic 4x4 restoration scene is its push toward **modern innovation**. Most notably, in 2025 Monarch announced a partnership with UK-based EV technology firm **BEDEO** to offer **all-electric** Defender builds. This is a cutting-edge project: using BEDEO's **in-wheel motor (IWM)** drive system, Monarch will produce **electric Defender restomods** that preserve the vintage look but have zero-emission electric performance ¹² ³² .

This collaboration (under BEDEO's "Reborn Electric: Icons" initiative) is said to make Monarch Defender the **first restoration outfit to integrate in-wheel motors into a classic Defender** ²² . The in-wheel motors allow retaining the Defender's 4x4 capability without bulky electric drivetrains, keeping the chassis unaltered and weight balanced. The initial electric model, nicknamed **"Nomad EV,"** is a Defender 110 crew-cab featuring a 75 kWh battery and approximately 153-mile range ³² . Despite the new powertrain, it still delivers 4WD performance and even weighs about the same as the original, thanks to the compact motor design ³³ ³⁴ . Monarch's leadership has stated that *"electrification was always going to be part of [the Defender's] future, but it had to be done in a way that respects the original"* ²³ . This move into EVs demonstrates how **Monarch stays ahead of the curve** and appeals to clients who want classic style with modern sustainability. It also shows the company's engineering prowess – adapting new tech to old vehicles is no small feat, and Monarch is now at the forefront of electric classic 4x4 conversions ²² .

Aside from electrification, Monarch continuously develops unique build projects that garner attention. They often showcase completed vehicles on social media and at events to demonstrate their capabilities. Some notable Defenders built by Monarch (each given a project name) include:

- **“Project 24”** – A Defender 110 Soft-Top in sophisticated gray, featuring a 430hp LS3 engine and extensive off-road upgrades ¹³. This build highlights Monarch’s performance-oriented approach, turning a vintage truck into a modern high-powered SUV while keeping its classic open-top character.
- **“The Admiral”** – A Defender given a naval-inspired theme (by name inference), likely with a luxurious navy blue color scheme and maritime design details. Listed at around \$289,000, it exemplifies the upper-end craftsmanship and bespoke design catering to a client’s vision ³⁵.
- **“Gulf Runner”** – A soft-top Defender featuring the famous Gulf Oil light-blue-and-orange livery ³⁶. This nostalgic motorsport-themed build would resonate with racing heritage – something that ties in the classic racing aesthetic with a rugged off-roader.
- **“Rugido”** – A D110 priced over \$300k, named after the Spanish word for “roar”. It presumably boasts a roaring V8 and bold design. Monarch’s YouTube channel features a video of Project Rugido, indicating it’s one of their showcase builds ³⁷.
- **Various Others** – e.g. *“Midas III,” “Vitamin C,” “Old Money,” “El Jefe,”* etc., each with custom paint, interiors and themes. The creative names reflect the bespoke nature – every vehicle has a story and identity crafted by Monarch and the owner.

These projects not only serve as marketing, but also as **R&D for the team** – with each build, the technicians gain experience and refine techniques (whether it’s integrating a new brake system or custom fabricating an accessory). Staying on the cutting edge (like the EV project or using new materials) suggests that as an employee, one would be continually learning and tackling unique challenges rather than doing the same repetitive tasks.

The Opportunity – Alignment with Your Experience

Considering the **Shop Manager – Luxury Classic Car Restoration** position, it’s clear Monarch Defender is looking for a **seasoned professional** who can blend technical knowledge with leadership in a custom-shop setting. Your background in racing and collector car management appears to be an excellent match for several key requirements:

- **Team Leadership & Development:** Monarch needs someone to **“lead and motivate a team of skilled craftsmen and technicians”** and supervise all workshop operations ²⁴ ²⁹. Your experience as Davidson Racing Team Manager and Car Chief at Rearden Racing directly translates – in those roles you coordinated crews of mechanics, fabricators, and engineers under high-pressure conditions. You’ve led teams through race car builds, trackside fixes, and maintenance, which is analogous to leading a restoration team through complex custom build projects. The ability to foster teamwork and keep technicians focused on quality and deadlines is something you’ve already demonstrated.
- **Project & Operations Management:** The job involves managing **project timelines, schedules, and production priorities** for multiple bespoke builds at once ³⁸. In racing, you juggled multiple projects (car builds, race prep, logistics for events) simultaneously. You mentioned coordinating logistics and timelines at Davidson Racing – that skill set is directly applicable to ensuring Monarch’s

shop stays on schedule for each client build. Your project management experience (possibly using tools to track tasks, just as shop management software is noted as a plus ³⁹) will help in handling the custom builds pipeline, from initial tear-down to final assembly.

- **Mechanical and Technical Expertise:** Monarch emphasizes a **“strong mechanical background”** and understanding of complete vehicle builds ⁴⁰. Your hands-on engineering experience (building and maintaining race cars, working on wiring harnesses, ECU programming, etc.) aligns perfectly. In a restoration context, this means you can speak the language of the technicians – whether they are troubleshooting an engine swap or customizing an electrical system. Land Rover Defenders have their quirks, but your broad automotive knowledge and electronics background will enable you to guide problem-solving and uphold technical standards. In short, you have the credibility to supervise master mechanics because you’ve been one yourself in the racing world.
- **Quality Control & Attention to Detail:** In high-end restorations, **strict quality control** is non-negotiable – the Shop Manager must ensure **“all vehicles meet Monarch’s brand expectations”** and quality benchmarks ²⁵. Racing taught you to value prep and detail (a small mechanical issue or setup mistake can cost a win or cause a failure on track). You’ve worked with multi-million-dollar collector cars, where maintaining perfection is vital. This instills a mindset of thoroughness that is essential for overseeing luxury build quality. Your eye for detail in wiring or fabrication and your experience enforcing checklists and standards in racing will help maintain Monarch’s reputation for excellence.
- **Supplier/Vendor Management:** The job description includes overseeing **parts procurement, vendor communication, and inventory** ⁴¹. In your past roles, you implicitly handled sourcing high-performance parts, dealing with suppliers (for race car components, spares, etc.), and managing inventory for the team’s equipment. That experience will translate well when sourcing rare Land Rover parts or coordinating with upholstery shops, machine shops, and other vendors that Monarch relies on. You understand the importance of building good relationships with suppliers and keeping an inventory that balances availability of parts with cost – skills that will ensure the shop runs efficiently and projects aren’t delayed waiting for components.
- **Passion for Classic/Collector Cars:** Monarch explicitly notes that a **“passion for classic and collector vehicles – Land Rover experience is a major plus”** is required ³¹. Your personal and professional history with collector cars (managing a fleet of them, being around exotic race cars) demonstrates that passion. You’re not coming from an unrelated industry – you have genuine enthusiasm for the kind of vehicles Monarch works on. Even if you haven’t done a Land Rover Defender build yet, your Land Rover knowledge can be ramped up, and your passion for learning about these trucks will be apparent. Enthusiasm is contagious, and as a leader, showing you love these machines will inspire your team and assure the company’s leadership that you’re the right cultural fit.

In essence, **your racing and collector-car background hits all the key points Monarch Defender is seeking**. You have managed elite automotive projects, led skilled teams, maintained the highest quality standards, and dealt with the complexities of custom vehicle builds. This aligns with Monarch’s need for a Shop Manager who can run a **“high-end, detail-driven”** workshop floor and deliver **world-class restoration results** ²⁷. Importantly, you also bring **unique insights from motorsports** – such as performance tuning, advanced engineering, and perhaps quicker problem-solving – which could be very

valuable as Monarch pushes into more technically advanced builds (like the EV Defender program or other performance-oriented projects). Highlighting these connections (as you did in your match-point list) will strengthen your candidacy.

Conclusion

Monarch Defender LLC represents a fusion of **automotive heritage and modern luxury**, carving a niche in restoring Land Rover Defenders to bespoke glory. As a company, it offers the excitement of working on exclusive, one-of-a-kind vehicles in an environment that values craftsmanship and innovation. The company is growing and breaking new ground (from expanding locations to pioneering electric conversions), which suggests a forward-thinking mindset despite working with classic vehicles. For someone like you with motorsport team management and high-end car experience, Monarch Defender provides a stage to apply your skills in leadership, project management, and mechanical expertise, all while indulging a passion for legendary vehicles. It's a place where you can **"lead a passionate, world-class team in an inspiring environment"** of automotive artistry ³⁰. The research indicates that your background aligns strongly with Monarch's mission and needs – making you well-positioned to contribute to their continued success and perhaps drive it to even greater heights.

Sources:

1. Monarch Defender – *Job Posting for Shop Manager (Luxury Classic Car Restoration)* ⁴² ⁴⁰
2. Monarch Defender – *Official Website (About Us and Projects)* ² ³ ⁴
3. *The EV Report* – "Luxury Electric Classic Defenders Arrive" (BEDEO & Monarch Defender partnership press release, June 2025) ¹² ³²
4. *CARmag (South Africa)* – "Classic Land Rover Defender Electrified by UK Company" (News article, June 28, 2025) ²² ²³
5. Monarch Defender – *Project Showcase ("The Goat" build description)* ¹⁶ ¹⁴
6. Monarch Defender – *Project Specifications (Project 24 details)* ¹³

¹ ⁵ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁷ ²⁸ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³⁸ ³⁹ ⁴⁰ ⁴¹ ⁴² Monarch Defender LLC hiring Automotive Shop Manager Job in Grayslake, IL | Glassdoor

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<https://monarchweb.vehbi.me/about/>

⁷ ⁸ Monarch Defender Projects
<https://monarchdefender.com/projects/>

¹² ³² Luxury Electric Classic Defenders Arrive - The EV Report
<https://theevreport.com/luxury-electric-classic-defenders-arrive>

¹³ ³⁵ PROJECT 24 - Monarch Defender
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36 GULF RUNNER - Monarch Defender

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37 Project Rugido #landroverdefender #custombuild #classicdesign ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYzjRVI2Flw>