

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Jaguar XKSS is the original racecar for the road

Lead

Undoubtably the most famed and rare model of Jaguar's entire history, this XKSS from 1957 is pure European greatness initially destined for the American market. After travelling the world passing between previous owners, it now stars as one of the headliners of RM Sotheby's Monterey Sale.



Picture this: it's the mid-1950s, and you're sitting in a room surrounded by Jaguar's then-executives and bosses. The booming 1950s have brought more money, more opportunities, and a greater passion for speed than ever before. The conversation inside this make-believe office turns to Jaguar's recent withdrawal from racing after 1956, which left several D-types sitting unsold in the factory.

Then someone blurts out from across the room: "Why don't we just convert them into road cars?" After a moment of stunned silence, the idea settles in the execs' minds, and confusion turns to elation. It is decided these remaining cars will be converted for the American market, removing the large headrest fairing and tailfin, as well as the centre cockpit divider. In their place, creature comforts including a passenger door, full windshield, side screens, chromed bumperettes and a rudimentary folding top are to be installed. Job done.



That is exactly what happened, and that is how the XKSS was born. Initially 25 examples were planned, until nine of the 25 cars were destroyed beyond repair by a fire in the Browns Lane factory. One of the surviving 16 was XKSS 707, the example you see before you. Originally finished in cream over red leather, the car was US-bound, heading to talented racer Lou Brero Sr., who was sadly killed in a crash before taking delivery, meaning the car would move to Sacramento, California for its first years.



A key owner in this XKSS's life was Mr. Colberg, who would often be seen driving it at race tracks up and down the West Coast during the mid-1960s. After almost a decade of care in his ownership, the car would then travel back to Britain, where it found multiple custodians over the years and was refinished from its previous black repaint to the spectacular metallic blue, familiar to any fan of the Ecurie Ecosse C- and D-Type racers. It would become one of the most used examples of the XKSS ever, regularly competing in historic events and racking up a total of 25,535 miles as it sits today.



As pieces of British automotive history go, the Jaguar XKSS might just be one of the most important. Its rarity and fame set it apart from the likes of golden-era Ferraris and Mercedes-Benzes, introducing a true race car for the road to the American market, arguably for the first time. This impossibly rare example is set to stun the motoring world as it heads under the hammer at [RM Sotheby's upcoming Monterey sale on August 18th](#), with an estimate between 12,000,000 to 14,000,000 dollars. We urge you to watch this sale live to witness a truly special moment!

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