

CLASSIC DRIVER

Jaguar XJ - LWB and 'Concept Eight'



The New XJ Long Wheelbase

The New XJ Long Wheelbase (LWB), which will be available from autumn, not only provides greater room for rear-seat passengers but also offers a choice of seating configurations, new trim and specification options and a variety of communications and multi-media equipment packages.



The New XJ Long Wheelbase is constructed using an extended version of the innovative aluminium monocoque introduced last year when the standard wheelbase model (SWB) was launched. The additional body length is incorporated behind the B-pillars, the longer rear doors giving the long wheelbase car an integrated and graceful appearance as well as aiding passenger entry and exit.

Depending on specification and customer preference, there is a choice of four optional rear-seat configurations, including fixed or power-adjustable bench layouts and individual powered and heated rear seats separated by a centre console with additional storage space.

Burr walnut-finished Business Trays that fold down from the front seat-backs – and are big enough to hold a notebook computer – maximise comfort and convenience for passengers who need to work in the car. There is also the facility to incorporate 6.5-inch display screens in the head restraints of the front seats, with rear-seat multi-media options including iPod, MP3 player and DVD connectivity. Communication possibilities

include a telephone conference call facility for front and rear passengers, while rear-seat passengers can specify voice-activation for the four-zone climate-control system, with individual seat-to-seat settings.

Dependent on market, the New XJ Long Wheelbase offers the same choice of powerful, refined and efficient V8 petrol engines as the standard wheelbase car. The naturally aspirated 3.5 and 4.2 litre V8s and the range-topping 400bhp (298kW) DIN supercharged 4.2 litre V8 are all matched to Jaguar's advanced ZF six-speed automatic transmission.

The XJ saloon's elegant lines are enhanced by the increased length – the subtle increase in roof height ensures that the visual profile remains pure XJ. A range of new front grilles (depending on model, and shared by the SWB) plus the adoption of bigger, 18-inch diameter alloy wheels as standard (with 19- and 20-inch options) confirm the luxurious, dynamic, distinctively Jaguar character of the long wheelbase version.



Despite the increase in length, the XJ Long Wheelbase remains compact enough to fit into a normal-size garage, and can easily cope with the tight spaces of multi-storey car parks – its turning circle is just 34cm (13 inches) wider than that of the standard wheelbase XJ saloon.

Dynamically, too, the New XJ Long Wheelbase is virtually indistinguishable from the standard wheelbase car. The aluminium monocoque shell retains its exceptional stiffness and light weight, while spring and damper settings and suspension mounts and bushings have been revised to give the XJ LWB the same highly acclaimed level of ride, handling balance and steering feel as the standard wheelbase model. The revised suspension mountings also reduce transmitted noise levels and improve overall refinement.

The XJ LWB includes a full list of active and passive safety features. Jaguar's Adaptive Restraint Technology System (A.R.T.S.) combines dual-stage driver and passenger airbags with seat-occupation sensing, side-

impact chest airbags in the front seat bolsters, front and rear side air curtains, anti-whiplash seat design and ISOFIX rear child seat attachments. The XJ LWB has four-channel anti-lock brakes (ABS) with Emergency Brake Assist (EBA), traction control and Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) as standard. High levels of security are also incorporated, with transponder-operated remote double deadlocking and automatic drive-away locking.

Jaguar Concept Eight



The launch of the New XJ Long Wheelbase marks not just the return of the seminal luxury British saloon but also an opportunity for Jaguar Cars' Advanced Design Studio to use the most spacious vehicle the company has ever built as the base for an intriguing design programme – the Jaguar Concept Eight. This sumptuous luxury saloon blends the best in contemporary British creativity with the ultimate in automotive engineering to offer a compelling glimpse of future Jaguars.

The Concept Eight has been designed to reflect the unique position that Jaguar holds in the luxury car market. Developed from the New XJ Long Wheelbase saloon, it has been extensively reworked beneath its broad, single-piece, glass roof to produce a luxury concept car that is understated and tasteful, yet powerful, exciting and undeniably glamorous. Making the most of Jaguar's New XJ Long Wheelbase structure – with the longest wheelbase in its class – the Concept Eight introduces new luxury elements, new in-car entertainment technology, and new performance styling cues.

British design is acknowledged to be world-leading in creative areas as diverse as fashion and architecture, interiors and furniture making. The Concept Eight reflects Britain's standing in design by using the most contemporary materials and trim to create an environment that is unlike any other luxury saloon. You won't find lap-top computers, satellite uplinks and plasma screens inside the Concept Eight, instead you will enter a world of inch-deep handmade carpets, chilled champagne, Waterford Crystal and even essential oils to allow you to sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.



The Concept Eight's exterior appearance has also been given considerable thought – and nowhere is that more apparent than its roof. The lightweight aluminium skin that stretches across the car's upper surface has been replaced with a single, full-length piece of darkened glass to provide an even greater feeling of spaciousness within. Around the edges of the glass panel a strip of LED lighting provides an ambient red glow that equates with the mood lighting that you might find in a fashionable bar.

"That warm red glow will be visible from the roof as well as from the centre console and under the front seats," explains Ian Callum (Director of Design, Jaguar Cars). "This sort of effect is something I would love to use on production cars in the future. The way people have employed these lighting techniques in other modern venues – uplighting, diffused lighting and so on – that is something I would like to have in our cars. And why red? Because it is a bit cheeky..."

Other exterior developments on the Concept Eight include brand new 21-inch five-spoke alloy wheels created especially for the project. Behind the front wheels sit chrome gills which aid engine cooling and also improve aerodynamic flow to the rear of the car. New chrome exhaust pipe finishers give the Concept Eight a purposeful appearance from the rear while a one-off metallic paint colour, Purple Haze – a blend of lush cherry and deep black – will show hints of both colours under changing light conditions.

Seen from any angle, the Concept Eight's interior is as tasteful and welcoming as it is possible to be. Under the creative vision of Principal Designer Mark Phillips and Colour and Materials Designer Siobhán Hughes, the cabin of this long wheelbase concept limousine has become a place of contemporary luxury and warmth.

Between the rear seats runs a centre console that extends all the way to the front of the cabin – an evolution of a similar design first seen in the Jaguar R Coupe concept car. This clean, sweeping section is covered with a well-recognised wood veneer – American walnut. But unlike existing Jaguar interiors, the concept car's walnut trim has a matt finish. Warm and smooth to the touch, it is a 21st century spin that Ian Callum says indicates how future Jaguars could both look and feel.

"People expect wood and leather to be part of the Jaguar culture," says Callum, "and that is what we are using – but not in the way that people might expect. The wood capping that runs right throughout the Concept Eight has a very contemporary matt finish. It's very pure and almost blatant in its use, but not overly stylised."

The power-adjustable, reclining rear lounge seats are wrapped in aniline leather – as is the upper instrument panel – demonstrating all the natural markings inherent in a raw material. The lower instrument panel, console, and lower door casings are all trimmed in nubuck, a soft leather that has been gently buffed on the grain side to give a velvety surface. Conker, the dominant rich, brown colour, takes its name from the seed of the Horse Chestnut tree that is indigenous to the British Isles. Jonathan Connolly is the sole provider of the Conker leather, providing a rich textural mix with accents provided by chrome gloss and aluminium. The combined effect is one of warmth, comfort and sophistication. To further create a feeling of space and light, an ivory-coloured leather covers the roof pillars and head-lining.

The ambience of the Concept Eight would not be complete without a peerless sound system. This has been provided in the shape of a dramatic new system created exclusively for the car. The spectacular 860W Alpine concept system employs 14 speakers to recreate sound precisely as the artist intended. The latest speaker and amplifier technologies have also been incorporated to create this no-expense-spared installation that takes sound reproduction to new heights.

The Concept Eight shares the same 3159mm wheelbase as the New XJ Long Wheelbase – 125mm longer than the standard wheelbase XJ version. But despite that extra length, the driver and passengers will sacrifice nothing in terms of the class-leading dynamics and technologies found across the XJ range. Its ground-breaking aluminium chassis and bodyshell technology mean that straightline performance and handling are uncompromised, while the Concept Eight's use of the 400bhp 4.2-litre supercharged AJ-V8 engine guarantees a blend of crushing acceleration and effortless cruising.

Text/Photos: Jaguar

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