

CLASSIC DRIVER

Jaguar XK

The car

Text: Classic Driver

Photos: Jaguar

Following on from the debut of the Advanced Lightweight Coupe at Detroit in January this year, the Coventry company has just announced the replacement for its popular XK8 model. Titled simply 'XK', it is intended to be a truly modern coupé for the 21st Century.

Behind its modern looks, the new XK Coupe is equipped with practical, intuitive, technology - focussed on enhancing the driving experience. The company is confident it will deliver significant improvements in performance, dynamics, safety, exterior and interior design and equipment, and product quality. When it is launched in early 2006, this first of the next generation of Jaguars will become the sporting flagship of the Jaguar brand.



In the words of Jaguar's Chief Engineer Mike Cross, in charge of the all-new XK's vehicle dynamics, "What the team has looked to engineer is a sports car with true all-round ability. That means it must be fast, outstandingly agile, and truly exciting to drive. It has to go quickly, stop quickly, and do everything in between in the way a Jaguar should. Yet it's also a rational choice - the all-new XK will deliver a balance of superb driving dynamics and comfort that is the epitome of sophisticated sporting luxury."

The all-new XK arguably has more in common with earlier cars like the original XKs and the C, D and E-types than it does with the most recent XK, and that is the way in which the shape wraps more tightly around the mechanical underpinnings, and it is visibly more assertive and sporting than the model it replaces.



The design

By starting with a blank canvas, Jaguar was able to make use of the latest aerospace technologies alongside

more traditional Jaguar skills to create a luxurious, powerful, highly advanced sports car. A major key to the all-new XK's character is Jaguar's industry-leading aluminium monocoque body structure, introduced with the latest XJ saloons.



With this unique high-tech construction method, the all-new XK's bodyshell is 31 percent stiffer than the previous XK's and significantly offers a 10 percent improvement in power to weight ratio. The all-new XK is up to 90 percent stiffer and 180kg lighter than key rivals, with a kerb weight of just 1595kg.



With lower weight and higher strength, Lightweight Vehicle Technology is the starting point for improved performance, safety, refinement, economy, emissions performance and driving dynamics. From launch the all-new XK will be powered by Jaguar's naturally aspirated 4.2-litre V8 engine which produces 300bhp SAE (298 PS EEC). This compact, lightweight engine is based on that fitted to the latest generation XJ saloon and has undergone significant development compared with the engine used in the previous XK, including new fuel-injection technology. The latest 4.2-litre engine satisfies Euro 4 emissions requirements as well as stringent US emissions regulations.

With the all-new XK's weight savings, the new naturally aspirated 4.2's standing quarter-mile time of 14.4 seconds is less than half a second off the pace of the previous supercharged 4.2 XKR. For the first time in a Jaguar, drivers will be able to use steering wheel-mounted paddles to change gear with the new Jaguar Sequential Shift transmission. In either Drive or Sport Manual modes, very fast gear shifts are achieved by combining the use of one-touch paddles with an automatic blip of the throttle from the drive-by-wire engine management system during downshifts.



Inside and out

The all-new XK has a completely new, high-performance braking system, tested extensively over many hundreds of laps at the gruelling Nürburgring test track in Germany, where Jaguar has a dedicated research facility. Larger, ventilated discs contribute to better pedal feel, optimum stopping distances and resist fade during extended hard use.

The all-new XK's Servotronic 2 steering is adapted for a sports car from the XJ saloon, to give easy low-speed manoeuvring with optimum high-speed feedback under all conditions. A new active front lighting system is also offered as an option on the XK, enhancing the bi-xenon intelligent lighting that is standard on the car. This feature provides enhanced visibility in the dark during higher speed cornering by swivelling the dipped beam lens depending on road speed and the angle at which the steering wheel is turned.



Inside - as outside - the all-new XK features clean, simple, modern lines. It uses traditional craftsmanship and contemporary luxury materials like finely stitched leather, contrasting with a choice of more high-tech trim surfaces including metallic finishes. Excellent ergonomics and body-hugging seats, set low against the high waistline give a strong 'cockpit' feel. With a longer wheelbase, wider track and taller roofline, the 2+2 layout has more interior space than the XK that it replaces, boasting a 20mm increase in front-seat headroom over the previous Jaguar XK coupe.

The company claims the new XK "Combines the comfort, style and craftsmanship of a luxuriously equipped grand tourer with the driving dynamics of a true sports car. It captures the unique joy of driving that Jaguar drivers expect. In the finest Jaguar tradition, it is a truly beautiful, fast car, the product of advanced engineering and fine craftsmanship. It offers style, comfort and luxury. But it also keeps true to what sports car motoring is about - and that is the undiluted thrill of driving".

Deliveries are expected to start in 2006.



The Facts

Engine:	4,2-Liter-V8
Max. Power:	300 BHP
Max. Torque:	310 lb ft (420 Nm) @ 4.100/min
Gearbox:	6-speed automatic. Jaguar Sequential Shift with steering wheel-mounted shift paddles
Length:	4791 mm
Width:	2070 mm
Height:	1322 mm
Wheelbase:	2752 mm
Dry weight:	1595 kg
Acceleration:	0 - 62 mph (100 km/h) in 6,2 seconds
Top speed:	155 mph (250 km/h) - electronically limited



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