

CLASSIC DRIVER

Jaguar XF - the full story



Jaguar will launch its latest mid-size executive saloon challenger in a couple of weeks' time at Frankfurt. The all-new car abandons the company's recent tradition of utilising 'classic' styling cues from Jaguars past - it's a thoroughly modern design with a particularly attractive cabin.

Described as 'the beginning of a new era for Jaguar', the XF must perform in volume for the Coventry company to finally achieve the sales success its undoubtedly excellent product range deserves. Set against the relatively new Audi A6, and a BMW 5 Series and Mercedes-Benz E Class that will be replaced within the next two or three years, the British car has to be perceived as the truly 'modern' option and the initial press photographs would show this has been achieved.

From a sizing perspective the XF is 45mm longer and 25mm wider than its nearest class competitor; the Audi A6. It is 4961mm long and 1877mm wide, the curvy all-steel body set on a relatively long 2909mm wheelbase. Boot space is up to 540 litres (without the spare wheel, using Jaguar's Tyre Repair System) and owners can also fold the rear seats to add a further 420 litres.



The new Jaguar is likely to maintain the company's recent record of high quality ride and performance, and will be available with a choice of four engines: 2.7-litre V6 turbodiesel, 3.0-litre V6 petrol, 4.2-litre naturally aspirated V8 petrol, and 4.2-litre supercharged V8 petrol (depending on market - the US will only have the V8s to start).



All cars will have a six-speed automatic transmission – there is no manual gearbox option. This is an adaptive gearbox that can respond to road conditions and the way the car is being driven, giving the smoothest shifts and optimum performance, all achieved by ‘fly-by-wire’ technology. It’s all controlled by a new JaguarDrive Selector with the option of manual selection through Jaguar Sequential Shift. The party piece of this is its ability to pop out of the lower dashboard when the engine is started for selection, while rotating air vents also turn from a flush, ‘parked’ position to open at the same time.



A neat trick that's sure to be popular and emphasises the smooth and sleek interior that has to be the car's biggest attraction. Inside the five-seater you can see that Jaguar has gone to great trouble to use quality materials coupled with sophisticated design, and by employing super-strong steel rather than aluminium has kept the pillars to a more modest thickness than is currently fashionable (with safety constraints to consider of course).

The XF's soft-trimmed dashboard top and aluminium finisher runs continuously through the front and rear doors, thus making the interior feel more spacious. It also uses more real wood than in any Jaguar since the MkII saloon of the 1960s. Veneers available include a modern, straight-grained Rich Oak, as well as Satin American Walnut and Burr Walnut.



Three trim levels are available: Luxury, Premium Luxury and a special sporting set-up for the supercharged car called ‘SV8’. The XF is available with 17, 18, 19 or 20-inch wheels, with the SV8 being the only car in its class to have 20-inch wheels as standard and differs from other XF variants in using Jaguar’s Computer Adaptive Technology Suspension (CATSTM), an active-suspension that can adjust within milliseconds in response to road conditions and driving inputs.

The new saloon is likely to perform as well as its German and Japanese rivals, while having the characteristic ‘Jaguar ride’ and an attractive interior. The engines tick all the boxes (the 2.7-litre V6 diesel with a 0-60mph of just 7.7 seconds and top speed of 143mph likely to be the big seller) and the looks, although appearing more Japanese than European, are attractive - light years away from the unhappy S-Type.



It should be a success for whoever invests in the famous British manufacturer in the future.

Full UK pricing and performance figures:

Trim	Engine	Performance	UK Price
Luxury	2.7-litre V6 diesel	0-60mph 7.7 seconds (0-100kph in 8.2 seconds) top speed 143mph (229kph)	£33,900
Luxury	3.0-litre V6 petrol	0-60mph 7.9 seconds (0-100kph in 8.3 seconds) top speed 148mph (237kph)	£33,900
Premium Luxury	2.7-litre V6 diesel	0-60mph 7.7 seconds (0-100kph in 8.2 seconds) top speed 143mph (229kph)	£37,500
Premium Luxury	3.0-litre V6 petrol	0-60mph 7.9 seconds (0-100kph in 8.3 seconds) top speed 148mph (237kph)	£37,500
Premium Luxury	4.2-litre V8 petrol	0-60mph 6.2 seconds (0-100kph in 6.5 seconds) limited top speed 155mph (250kph)	£45,500
SV8	4.2-litre V8 petrol S/C	0-60mph 5.1 seconds (0-100kph in 5.4 seconds) limited top speed 155mph (250kph)	£54,900

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