

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Driven: Jaguar XK Convertible 5.0



**Jaguar now makes some of the finest cars for travelling from A to B. I extended the 'B' bit to about 'J' when I had the very latest, 2010-spec car for a week.**

Within an hour or so of the Lunar Grey, 'Portfolio' model being delivered, it was a simple matter of programming the touch-screen sat-nav in order to visit [two cars in storage for RM Auctions' forthcoming London Sale](#). The journey involved the usual heavy traffic of the M25, and then some swift A-roads out to the eastern coast of England.

The British company carried out extensive revisions to the XK range earlier this year, the most significant being increasing the engine capacity to five litres (up from 4.2), as well as various styling amendments. These include a new interior, featuring the JaguarDrive Selector (the control column that raises itself from the transmission tunnel on start-up) [first seen on the XF](#).



The all-new, 5.0-litre AJ-V8 Gen III engines are, Jaguar claims, "the most advanced and efficient Jaguar has ever produced". At 385bhp, horsepower is up by an impressive 26 per cent, while peak torque is now 380lb ft (or 515Nm – that's an increase of 23 per cent). And if you're thinking, "Well, maybe I should go for the supercharged XKR..." I say: "A fine car with its 510bhp – but have a go in the unblown one first". This may look a long-distance tourer, or an alternative to a big saloon (both roles it fills with ease), but it's also a seriously fast car. The 0-62mph sprint is now 5.5 seconds – that's 0.7 seconds quicker than before – while top speed is still electronically limited to 155mph. CO2 emissions (264g/km, Euro Stage V compliant) are impressively low, while fuel economy is the same as the previous, less-powerful 4.2.

I achieved 22.0mpg over a 500-mile period. Jaguar quotes 25.2mpg for the combined cycle. We're not a distance away, although I did feel the 70.6-litre tank emptied quickly. Maybe it was me being unnecessarily cautious when it came to refuelling.







The new engine has a distinct, typically V8 rumble. It's not as strident as, although nonetheless similar to, a Gaydon Aston Martin V8. There is a hint of hesitation on take-off that surprised me – given the overall smoothness of the revised six-speed ZF automatic transmission – but on the move the gearbox matches the gutsy motor to perfection.

The triple-layer fabric roof allows some of the engine note into the cockpit. It also lets in a degree of the hurly-burly of city life. I'm not complaining, just commenting, and at speed it does its job well with little wind or road noise.

You can save yourself £6000 by ordering an **XK Portfolio Coupé**, rather than a Convertible. But as the sun comes out, and [the Cobra and ATS story](#) is already in the bag, it's time for a little open-air motoring. To me, the car is attractive roof up or down but lowering the top probably offers the best side-profile. With the complete hood mechanism safely tucked away under a flat cover, it's a neat arrangement – but don't rely on too much luggage space in the boot when topless. And the 2+2 seating in the back falls midway between DB9 (miniscule) and California (remarkably, okay for children).





With this revised XK range, Jaguar has replaced its **Computer Active Technology Suspension** (CATS) with **Adaptive Dynamics**. Cutting through swathes of technical description, what matters is that instead of the dampers simply switching between 'soft' and 'hard', the settings are now continuously variable. Previously, a slight 'corkscrewing' could be felt on severe cornering as the system oscillated between two settings.

This is all gone and the result is a positive ride – with a degree of the company's trademark 'float' – that rewards fast driving without punishing the occupants on broken roads. Our car was running on optional (£2446.81) 20in Kalimnos wheels that probably upset the ride a touch over the standard 18s. I'd pass on them.







Inside, there's all the luxury, Portfolio-level Jaguar touches such as heated/ventilated seats, keyless entry, a high-end Bowers & Wilkins sound system and adaptive cruise control (this essential option costs £973.83 and really should be standard, as should the superb DAB radio). For 2010MY the company has updated the interior to give it a fresh look, and I liked it.

So, the delivery driver drops off a comfortable cruiser yet picks up a surprisingly hard-edged sports car, such is my change of attitude to the big XK Convertible over a week's motoring.

And yes, the sat-nav does show the nearest golf course. But don't be put off by that; the latest XK Convertible matches the high levels of driving satisfaction achieved by the superb XF and is a viable, practical alternative to models from Porsche and Maserati, let alone Mercedes-Benz.



Finally, it pains me to say it but, should Jaguar install its most powerful turbo-diesel in the XK, that would be

a mightily impressive car with enough performance for most – coupled with outrageously low emissions (the [240PS XF](#), with 600NM of torque at just 2000rpm, is rated at just 179g/km).

This would still be a Jaguar – but perhaps not as we know it.

*The car tested was a **Jaguar XK Convertible Portfolio** in Lunar Grey/Black hood with Warm Charcoal/Piano Black/Knurled Aluminium interior trim. It carries a basic ‘on the road’ recommended retail price in the UK of £64,900. Extras fitted were:*

*DAB radio £342.55; Tyre Pressure Monitoring System £391.49; 20in Kalimnos wheels £2446.81; Active Front Lighting £420.85; Adaptive Cruise Control £973.83*

**Text:** Steve Wakefield

**Photos:** Classic Driver

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