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[Sleeping Beauty №2: Jaguar XJS Convertible](#)



1975 marked the end of an era: Sir William Lyons' E-type was replaced by a design as 1970s as flares and platform boots. The latter have seen occasional returns to fashion, but the XJ-S has been generally unloved ever since. Which is a pity, as a late-model V12, in a nice colour, isn't a bad motor car and offers leather-lined V12 motoring for a modest outlay.

It's also quite a rare sight now, as so many cars – that were, let's face it, built by a Jaguar motor company to standards light years away from today's high levels – have bitten the dust. The car was launched in '75 but started to see dealers' forecourts the year after. The 'H.E.' model, with its (slightly) more fuel-efficient motor, appeared in 1981. At this point a **Targa** version was announced, the **XJ-SC**, as well as a more frugal, six-cylinder alternative to the classic V12 in the form of the AJ6.

The **XJ-SC** provided open-air motoring for Jaguar-lovers but still exhibited slightly gawky lines. In 1988, the British company produced a 'proper' convertible and then, in 1991, 16 years after launch, the GT from Coventry was reborn in a far more acceptable form: the '**XJS**'.

The change was more than the small matter of a missing hyphen. The heavily revised car, with its 'big', streamlined bumpers and apparently 'larger' rear side-windows (a masterful *trompe l'oeil*) was the car Jaguar should have produced at launch.

Despite an energetic racing campaign by **Tom Walkinshaw Racing** (TWR) that regularly saw the big green/white coupés laying waste to the best semi-works BMWs, the **XJS** has never been about pure performance. And nor were **Series III V12 E-types** or the awkward **2+2 Series IIs**.

No, with its now-6.0-litre V12, British leather and automatic gearbox, a post-1991 XJS Convertible (available as a 2+2 or strict two-seater) in green, black or blue is a stylish car for the summer for the collector seeking exclusivity.

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