
Sleeping Beauty N°8: Jensen Interceptor

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Known throughout the world for its one-piece, 'goldfish bowl' tailgate, Jensen's Interceptor model was a familiar sight on British roads in the 60s and 70s.

More often than not, the owner was a successful businessman or showbiz personality, the interior of the luxurious car wreathed in cigar smoke. It was that sort of car, an alternative to a **Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow** rather than a straight-off-the-track **Ferrari**. Not that its big-capacity American V8s didn't provide strong performance. In fact, the 4wd '**FF**' model was described in period as having 'drag strip' performance.

That would get the golf clubs rattling.

The car was the **West Bromwich** company's first all-metal mode, its previous big GTs (pitched to the same market) being made in glassfibre. The styling was by **Carrozzeria Touring** and was another timeless design from the Italian masters. The connection with Italy continues as the first bodies were made by **Vignale** before series production shifted to the West Midlands. **Chrysler** supplied its big-block (firstly 6276cc, going up to 7212cc in late 1971) and this was usually mated to a **Torqueflite**

transmission, although a few, early manuals were built.

The car went through various marks and series in its main years of production (the **Mk III J-series** being the most luxurious built) – that is up to 1976. Only 232 **SP** ('Six Pack') versions were built between 1971 and 1973. With a triple-carb set-up, the **SP** was **Jensen's** most potent **Interceptor** yet, producing 390bhp. The all-wheel-drive '**FF**' ('FF' for 4wd specialists **Ferguson Research** and its '**Ferguson Formula**' system) also featured an early version of anti-lock braking and traction control. It was an ambitious project for the small company that never fulfilled its on-paper promise, although over 300 examples were built. The model can be recognised by its greater length (100mm) and an extra vent behind the front wheels.

And the ease with which it climbs snowy slopes at ski resorts.

Interceptor production has stopped and started after its first 10-year period but it's the original cars that will be collectable. Another luxury GT in the mould of contemporary **Bristol** and **Rolls-Royce** luxury models, it represents an opportunity to live the 1960s dream for an outlay as little as 15,000 – 20,000 euros.

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Text: Classic Driver

Photo: Nicholas Mee

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