

CLASSIC DRIVER

Playing truant with the 550HP Jaguar F-type R Coupé

Lead

Working in front of a screen during these hot summer months can be a drag. Hence we asked the doctor for a sick note – a severe case of 'summer flu', in case you were wondering – and headed off into the Bavarian mountains with the new Jaguar F-type R Coupé...

With which sports car would [Ferris Bueller](#) enjoy a day off school in the summer of 2014?

With which sports car would [Ferris Bueller](#) enjoy a thoroughly undeserved day off school today, in the summer of 2014? The new [Ferrari California T](#) would, of course, be the ideal and fitting choice, but unfortunately it doesn't arrive until much later in the summer. How about the [Jaguar F-type R Coupé](#)? A curveball, we know, but hear us out. With ample luggage space, a five-litre supercharged V8 delivering a socking great 550HP and a roof, not only good for protection from the harsh summer sun, but also from the prying eyes of over-zealous colleagues, the R Coupé is the perfect getaway for a long weekend, without the need for a trench coat, hat and sunglasses.

Hellish crackle



The R Coupé's 550HP surpasses both the entry-level car's 340 and the S version's 380 by some margin and, combined with the punchy 680Nm of torque, the sprint from 0-62mph takes a mere 4.2 seconds with max speed arriving at an impressive 186mph. Tempting numbers but, as you know, a rash radar photo can bring an abrupt halt to proceedings; particularly worrying if you're supposed to be at work. A steady 70mph it is then, as we cruise in the direction of the Bavarian Alps. But with its deep, burnt orange paintwork and an eight-cylinder engine that crackles and pops incessantly, as though uncooked popcorn is being dropped into Hell, the R Coupé is anything but understated.

Throttle, brake, downshift, steer





At the weekend, mobile homes typically clog up the serpentine roads around Walchensee but today, a weekday, I'm largely alone, settling into a comfortable rhythm around the seemingly endless bends. Balance often flicks noticeably rearward mid-corner, and the car slides easily, but the closed F-type is impressively agile and direct. It's also comfortable – the R's adaptive suspension constantly monitors and changes the springs and dampers and an electronically controlled differential helps translate all that torque efficiently onto the road.

But the real surprise is just how stiff the car is in the sharper bends. It's a long way from the big Jag barges of old, and even compared with the [F-type Roadster](#), the Coupé has gained 80% more rigidity despite tipping the scales at a very similar 1665kg. As a compact sports car priced at slightly over €100,000, the R Coupé is a revelation; and a hard-edged, noisy one at that.

The all-important question



As the car cools down beside the lake, paintwork shimmering in the sunlight, several stones are skimmed across the water while we ponder the all-important question. Is the tin-top F-type a better choice than its roadster counterpart for a cheeky workday excursion? If you'd rather not have to explain to your boss that a golden tan is in fact a primary symptom of 'summer flu', we think the question has answered itself.

Photos: Jan Baedeker

Gallery

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