

CLASSIC DRIVER

How Lister turned the XJS into a Ferrari-beater

Lead

There's no doubt that the Jaguar XJS was a fantastic grand tourer but, as the replacement for the legendary E-type, it seemed a little bit conservative. Then a tuning company using the revived Lister name transformed it into a 200mph supercar...

The relationship between Lister and Jaguar goes back almost 50 years, and is synonymous with sports car racing. Brian Lister began building his giant-killing sports-racers in 1954, but it wasn't until 1957, when Sir William Lyons offered him the engines and gearboxes from the ageing [Jaguar D-type](#), that Lister achieved international success.

Lister designed and built a lightweight chassis around the Jaguar mechanicals, and clothed it in a slippery aerodynamic body. These Lister 'Knobblies' swept all before for them for the next few years, winning countless races in the UK, Europe and America.

Legendary names such as Stirling Moss, Archie Scott-Brown and Masten Gregory all scored victories at the wheel of [Lister-Jaguars](#), often defeating the works [Aston Martins](#) in the process.

Revived in the 1980s



The Lister name eventually faded away until 1986, when it was revived by an engineer named Laurence Pearce. His new company, Lister-Cars Ltd, was based in Surrey and modified approximately 90 [Jaguar XJSs](#), which were marketed as Lister-Jaguars.

Turning the XJS into an insanely powerful 200mph+ supercar required some very extensive modifications. For starters, the 5.3-litre engine was increased in size to six litres which, at the time, made the Lister-Jaguar capable of a 0-60mph time of 4.5 seconds, bettering that of the [Ferrari Testarossa](#). A five-speed Getrag manual gearbox was installed, and the suspension and brakes were uprated to cope with the extra power.

All-British brute



The bodykit featured widened wheelarches, a front air dam and a rear spoiler, turning the docile XJS into an aggressive and muscular brute with the looks to match its performance.

The car offered here, which is going on sale at [Bonhams' Collectors' Automobilia and Motor Car Auction in Oxford on 7 December](#), is thought to be the only Mk.III cabriolet ever made.

Since its original conversion in 1987, one of its previous owners, who clearly felt that 482bhp wasn't quite enough, sent it back to Lister to be modified yet further. The engine was bored out to seven litres so that it now kicked out 600bhp, and a new sports exhaust system was added.

Photos: Bonhams

Gallery

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