
The Jaguar Project 7 has all the makings of a future classic

10 August 2018 | Alex Easthope

What makes a new car collectable? Looking at trends in the collector car world of late, rarity and a nod to a marque's heritage are certainly two defining factors. With that in mind, let us introduce you to this feisty feline - the limited edition Jaguar Project 7...

Back in 2013, Jaguar resurrected the Jaguar D-type - in spirit, at least - with the Project 7, a limited edition drop-top sports car that was faster, lighter, and much (much) louder than the F-type upon which it was based. Its name referenced the marque's seven Le Mans victories, while design cues such as the driver-side fin harked back to the D-type - arguably the greatest and most successful car to come out of Coventry.



The Project 7 was the first production car to emerge from the skunkworks that is Jaguar Land Rover's Special Vehicle Operations department, which has since spawned the Range Rover Sport SVR, the positively barmy XE Project 8, and the 'new-original' XKSS and D-type.

The concept was apparently conceived as an errant doodle on a junior designer's sketchpad and never intended for production. It was rather supposed to be a bold design statement showcasing Jaguar's performance-focused engineering abilities, as well as its pride in its racing heritage. Suffice to say, demand was overwhelming and a strictly limited run of 250 cars was green-lit.



Aesthetic changes from the concept to the production car were, thankfully, minimal. The bespoke helmet dock was replaced with a lightweight carbon-backed bucket seat, while the aerodynamics were extensively reworked, noticeable in the bigger ventilation tunnels either side of the open front grille. A pair of matching crash helmets is included and fits snugly in the boot.

Beneath the surface, power was upped to 575HP, 80HP more than the F-type V8 S, and weight was reduced by 80kg, predominantly thanks to the extensive use of carbon-fibre. Add a clever torque-vectoring system and advanced carbon-ceramic brakes from the C-X75 project, and the Project 7 became *the* benchmark for high-performance Jags.



If you look at the credentials that make recent special editions such as the 997 Sport Classic and Boxster Spyder from Porsche, McLaren 650S Can-Am, Land Rover Defender Heritage, and Mercedes McLaren SLR 722 so sought after by collectors, the Project 7 ticks exactly the same boxes. It's predominantly their rarity that drives their (increased) value, but also the fact they nod to the past.

As we've seen right across the watch world, heritage sells very well indeed. Tudor is a great case in point - anyone who's tried to get hold of any of the new vintage-inspired Black Bays for a remotely sensible price will understand just what we're talking about.



You can't drive a watch but you most definitely can drive a Project 7. It's amazing just how different an experience it is to a regular F-type. It starts with a feral bark before settling to a hurried idle.

Around town, it's as docile as a Golden Retriever, but squeeze that go pedal on a slip road or towards some twisty corners and it comes alive with urgency and pace not befitting a car that, admittedly, is on the heavy side. Come off the throttle and it spits and barks incessantly, sending elderly pedestrians in the sleepy Swabian villages we're passing through into a daze. It's hilarious!





There's certainly an appeal to buying a modern car that already has collectable status. Of course, mileage will no doubt influence values moving forward, but should you want to use the car, be it on a stolen Sunday drive, a track-day, or a weekend foray across Europe, you know it'll start and not break a sweat. Plus, the Project 7 is a truly exciting car that will have you grinning like a Cheshire cat each and every time you push the start button. Is it a future classic in the making? We think so...

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