

First Drive – the new Jaguar F-TYPE

FOR many the wait is over, at last a sports car from Jaguar, the F-TYPE which marks the return of a true sports car to the Jaguar family, a car which will be welcomed by many enthusiasts of the brand, but one which will also conquer.

In recent years while the company has produced a range of premium saloon cars and estates, there has been something missing and now the missing link is repaired with the arrival of this newcomer.

Just like with Ferrari Jaguar fans are loyal and I can recall being with them when they last won the famous 24 Hour Race of Le Mans, the celebrations went on for days. Once again with the new F-TYPE they have something to truly celebrate with.

Next year we shall see a hard top version of the F-TYPE but in time for summer we have the soft top and I recently spent some time behind the wheel of V6 powered version.

Of course there is a more muscular V8 version easily distinguished by a row of massive exhaust pipes.

Apart from its looks the F-TYPE does make a glorious sound and if you need a

little more, you simply press on a switch and the sound is amplified.

Thanks to a Scotsman Ian Callum Jaguar's Director of Design we have such a sports car.

When he joined the company his one ambition was to produce the F-TYPE, a thoroughly modern sports car with echoes of the past.

I know there are people who were critical of the change in design from the more traditional Jaguar saloon to the XFs and XJs that we have today. But with the F-TYPE it is different with its blend of performance and style it is the choice I suspect of all Jaguar followers.

First of all let me tell you this is a two seater with limited boot space; however you can fit in a set of golf clubs.

The drive configuration is classic, rear wheel drive with a front mounted power unit with three models to choose from, F-TYPE, F-TYPE S and F-TYPE V8 S, my test car was the S powered by a three litre V6 supercharged engine with 380PS.

The remaining power outputs are 340PS and 495PS and the V8 can sprint from rest to 60mph in a mere 4.2 seconds.



Of course there is a price to pay the new Jaguar is thirsty, even the V6 powered version.

Allied to the engines an eight sped auto transmission which delivers seamless



changes. A limited slip differential adds to the driving pleasure.

As you would expect with such a car the interior is very much a focus for the driver with very engaging controls and I observed such items as deployable door handles. While of the subject of things deployable, so too is the spoiler.

However amidst all the excitement of the arrival of the new F-TYPE it enters a very competitive market; one sure thing the US market will adore it, but in Europe will the likes of Ferrari, Porsche and Maserati remain at the top of the wish list.

Ian Lynas