

JAGUAR XE 2.0

By Jim Mc Cauley



Jaguar launched its long awaited XE model in mid 2015 to contest the potentially lucrative gap dominated by the German premium trio of 3-Series, A4 and C-Class. The company has been there before, but a marketing disaster of launching the X-Type in the wake of the Ford Mondeo on which it was based, did little for those who valued the heritage and individuality of the Jaguar brand.

While the XF is able to stand its ground against the larger German offerings, it comes from a different design and engineering tradition and while it in no way lessens the appeal of the car, it distances it somewhat from the Teutonic commonality of the German competition.

And it is in this respect that the XE looks a winner before even considering the detail. There is a solidity about the car that runs in the same vein as that running through the premium German trio and it puts the prospective customer in the position of comparing like for like rather than debating contrasting qualities.

Styling-wise, the XE has immediate impact; it looks like a car that can meet expectations and deliver satisfaction. In the case of the test choice, it didn't take long to discover that that is exactly what it does.

The new addition to the Jaguar range is available with a range of 4-and 6- cylinder petrol and diesel engines and the test vehicle featured the 2.0 litre turbocharged petrol unit. This engine is the smallest in the petrol line-up and the test car had the smaller output version, producing 200PS with 320Nm of torque. The higher output option is rated at 240PS with 340Nm on tap.

Complementing the all-aluminium bodywork, this lightweight engine weighs just 138Kg, and



with its 8-speed automatic transmission takes the car from rest to 60 mph in 7.3 seconds with the potential to top 147 mph. Featuring progressive turbo assistance and twin balancer shafts, power delivery is smooth across the rev band while the transmission maintains pace up the ratios and excellent control on the downchanges.

Jaguar makes much of its suspension design for the XE and starting from a clean sheet provided the opportunity to do so. The approach has clearly delivered and on challenging Scottish roads the car delighted in terms of both pace and poise, justifying its R-Sport specification with upgraded sports suspension and larger wheels.

While the fleet market is clearly in its sights for Jaguar with a preference for diesel engines, there is a satisfaction in relating to Jaguar heritage in a rear wheel-drive petrol car producing attractive performance, despite being powered by the range opening engine.

The interior reflects the layout of other range models with a nod to Italian design in the Riva speedboat arc across the entire width of the car under which the main dash seems to slip out into the cabin from below. Main instruments display speed and revs while the central digital information panel deals with a range of vehicle and infotainment read-outs. Display graphics are excellent, as is the optional, although expensive, head-up display which adds to both the quality and design excellence of the car.

The coupé-style roofline and carefully balanced proportions with improved grille design and narrow light units give the car a strong assertive image, which even in this 200PS model is reinforced in its performance.

Added to this is a comprehensive range of technologies which in the R-Sport specification includes Jaguar Drive Control for various road and weather conditions, automatic start / stop, Hill Start Assist, Bluetooth telephone and streaming, Lane Departure Warning, Emergency Brake Assist, rear parking aid and Autonomous Emergency Braking. Also available is a smart phone app to remotely start the car and another to give walking directions to return to it when parked.

Overall, the XE has positioned itself as a clear contender to compete against the premium German trio with a wide range of engine and trim choices to satisfy as diverse a customer group as possible. This 2.0 litre model tested has an official combined fuel consumption of 37.7 mpg and with a CO2 emissions of 179 gms/km is in Band I for annual car tax.

While the range opens at £26,990 for the 2.0 litre 200PS petrol version, the model tested is listed at £29,740. Among the extras on offer are Head-up Display at £1,435, electrically adjusted front seats at £765, special paint at £620, and heated R-Sport steering wheel at £185. The car is covered by Jaguar's comprehensive 3-year warranty, and a 5-year, 50,000 mile service plan is on offer for £475.