

# JAGUAR XE 2.0 D

By Jim Mc Cauley

Jaguar's latest saloon, the XE, launched in the middle of 2015 marks a return to the smaller premium saloon market, last occupied by the X-Type. This time round, the new offering is all-Jaguar with a strong family resemblance in its all-aluminium bodywork to the larger XF, powered at the lower end of the performance range with a choice of 2.0 litre petrol or diesel engines.



Test choice was the 2.0 litre turbo diesel model, outputting 180 PS and delivering maximum torque of 430 Nm. Power is transferred through an 8-speed automatic gearbox to the rear wheels and shoots the car from rest to 60 mph in 7.4 seconds.

Body is low and sleek with cabin accommodation tighter than anticipated but nevertheless on par with one of its German competitors – the BMW 3 Series. Keyless entry and push button starting are the initial welcomes to the high-spec model where quality prevails in a highly detailed interior.

To maintain smoothness, initial throttle movement has to be gentle as sharper application can upset the occupants when chasing the momentum for a quick getaway. But once on the move, the 8-speed ZF transmission handles requirements beautifully, persuading the driver to ignore the steering wheel paddles for manual override.

However, a performance choice is available on the selection switches alongside the circular gear selection dial, and the normal default setting can be eased to 'eco' mode or sharpened to 'dynamic' with supporting colour changes on the instrument panel lighting. Overall performance on the 2.0 litre diesel is more relaxed than in the 2.0 litre petrol model and comes with the added attraction of diesel economy for high mileage users.

Cabin accommodation is better up-front than in the rear with the driver neatly encapsulated between the high central console and the wrap-around sweep of the 'Riva-curve' running pleasantly from the upper dash level into the door trims.

Power adjustment on the driver's seat and steering column allows for a precise driving position while the electronically assisted steering provides greater feel than in some comparative models. There is a strong overall comforting feel in the car, partly enhanced by the low slung driving position

but the sloping coupé roof got more complaints from rear seat passengers for being too low than admiring comments for its elegance.

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 long term driving the car delighted in terms of both pace and poise with open road refinement particularly good.

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 head-up display which increases the driver's focus on speed with supporting road sign recognition for speed limits.

Integral in the model range is a comprehensive range of technologies which in the Portfolio specification of the test car 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. Additional equipment on the test car included 19-inch wheel upgrades at £800, full width sliding panoramic glass roof at £1,000, head-up display at £1,435 and adaptive dynamics package at £800.

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. The 2.0 litre diesel model tested has an official combined fuel consumption of 67.3 mpg and with a CO2 emissions of 111 gms/km is in Band C for zero annual car tax.

While the range opens at £33,675 for the 2.0 litre 180PS diesel version, the model tested is listed at £35,425. 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.