

## JAGUAR XF 2.0 163PS

By Jim Mc Cauley

Jaguar has waited until the arrival of the latest XF to rekindle excitement into the lines of its saloon cars. The company's stand-alone contender in the executive saloon market offers opposition to the



dominant German trio where the Audi A6, BMW 5-Series and Mercedes-Benz E-Class all have a firm foothold.

The car asserts itself from its neatly sculpted nose to the coupé-style roof slipping down onto a short rear section. A low stance and lack of distracting detail present the car as a holistic unit with immediate appeal. Technically, the all-new model is available in a wide range of options including petrol and diesel power units, manual and automatic transmissions, and all-wheel drive.

Test choice was the lower output version of the 2.0 litre diesel, finished in R-Sport specification.

While this engine is available with a 6-speed manual gearbox, the test vehicle was fitted with the 8-speed automatic with drive to the rear wheels.

As is established practice in Jaguar saloons, there is a certain amount of theatre on start-up with the pulsating back light on the starter button and the rising gear shift disc on the central console. Fire up, and the 2.0 litre unit immediately impresses on two counts – refinement and performance. Benchmark figures confirm the engine's response with a 0-60 mph time of 8.2 seconds and a potential top speed of 132mph. But it is the overall progression that impresses most with the 8-speed automatic stepping almost seamlessly through the ratios. The car's agility is aided by the fact of its lightweight construction using aluminium, magnesium and high-strength steels, but it maintains a solid feel on the road thanks to its upgraded sports suspension and pin-sharp steering. The cabin is also extremely quiet adding to the overall premium feel of the car.



Inside, and while the sloping roofline at the rear slightly restricts headroom on entry, cabin space is generous with the rear in particular providing excellent room for two adults and adequate accommodation for three. Up front, and the stepped dash is neatly layered, sweeping into the door cappings to give a unified feel to the interior architecture. Main instrumentation is presented in a clear digitised screen while the central touch screen, despite its size, is too low to safely navigate while on the move as are the fiddly heater control buttons below the screen.



In terms of infotainment, the central console carries the modern rarity of a CD player in addition to the syncing options which include Bluetooth connectivity. Cabin space is well provided for, with a lockable glovebox, central storage bin and usefully sized pockets on all doors. Unusually for a saloon, the test car came with split folding rear seats, but these are a £430 option – nevertheless a useful addition.

Standard equipment on the R-Sport version majors on safety with autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian detection and supporting electronic handling packages. While the car has a tyre pressure monitoring system as standard, the test car came with an optional

emergency spare, costing £185.

In terms of economy and running costs, the 2.0 litre, 163PS model on 17-inch Pirelli P7s has an official combined fuel consumption of 68.9 mpg, and with a CO2 emissions of 109gms/km is in Band B for annual car tax of £20.

Overall, the new XF saloon in R-Sport specification displays Jaguar's sporting heritage at its very best in a car that combines performance with luxury in a well finished and neatly detailed car. The model tested, with automatic transmission, is listed at £35,950 and is in Group 32 for insurance purposes. All models are covered by Jaguar's comprehensive 3-year / 100,000 mile warranty.

(Driven December 2016)