

Jaguar XK

The Jaguar XK series (XK8 and XKR) is a grand tourer produced by British carmaker Jaguar since the 1997 model year. It is the replacement of the XJS, and is available as a coupé and convertible. Currently in its second generation, the XK8 was the first 8 cylinder vehicle produced by Jaguar, when the Jaguar AJ-V8 engine was introduced.

1997

The 1997 XK8 was available in coupé or convertible body styles and with either a supercharged 370 hp (276 kW) or naturally aspirated 290 hp (216 kW) engine. The supercharged variant is known as the XKR. The first-generation XK series shares its platform with the Aston Martin DB7. Both cars are derived from the Jaguar XJS, though the platform has been extensively changed.

Power and performance

Both the XK8 and XKR are electronically limited to a maximum of 155mph (250km/h), lower than the top speed of its predecessor. The XK8 heralded a change in direction for the company, resulting in the S-Type and X-Type.

Both the XK8 and XKR come standard with 18-inch alloy wheels, and 19 and 20-inch wheels are available for additional cost. A navigation system and self-leveling xenon headlamps come standard with the XKR and as options for the XK8. Jaguar's Adaptive Cruise Control is an optional feature available on both models. Both come with all-leather interior, burl walnut trim, and side airbags. In 2005 the grille design of the XKR was refreshed. The XK series is priced from £60k.Limited Editions

XKR Silverstone

Only 600 Silverstones were made,[2] in celebration of Jaguar's return to F1 racing in 2001. It featured a Platinum paint finish, high-performance package (with the same engine as the standard XKR, but improved transmission, suspension and brakes), 20" Silver BBS "Detroit" wheels and a custom interior.

XKR 100

Built to celebrate the centenary of Jaguar's founder, 500 'XKR 100' coupés and 500 convertibles were made in 2002.[3] The XKR 100 featured an Anthracite paint finish, Recaro seats, 20-inch BBS alloys, Brembo brakes, and custom interior.

XKR Portfolio

The convertible-only Portfolios were produced in 2004 exclusively for the US market. Of the Portfolio models, 100 featured unique Red paint with matching Recaro sports seats and interior, whilst the remaining 100 had Blue paintwork and interiors.

There is also a 2008 Portfolio model planned which will be available worldwide, featuring the most powerful brakes featured on any production-line Jaguar.

XKR 4.2-S

In Europe the 4.2-S was unveiled at Geneva on 1st March 2005. This was the last XK to be rolled out that was based upon the original 1996 design. Features for the 4.2-S Four included new exterior and interior colours and two distinct veneer options for the instrument panel, polished door treadplates with chequered-flag emblems and embossed, leather-edged floor mats. The revised white Jaguar badge on the bonnet also feature chequered accents. New 19" Atlas wheels plus cross-drilled Brembo brake discs, red wheel badges and red brake calipers were also fitted.

XKR-R

Jaguar also produced a concept car called the XKR-R which was very similar to the production XKR, but with a more powerful engine and improved handling. The naming convention is similar to that of the S-Type R special edition. Unlike the S-Type R, it has not yet been approved for manufacturing, and is now unlikely to ever be produced.

2006

Jaguar unveiled an all-new 2006 car, called simply the "XK", at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September 2005. It uses the new XJ's aluminium chassis and is offered as both a coupé or convertible (incidentally, in a quite different manner to the way sports cars are usually designed, the coupé is based on the convertible). This meant that the engineers could design the convertible without the drawbacks of the car looking like, and actually being, a coupé with the top chopped off. This, coupled to the ultra-rigid aluminium spaceframe makes the XK convertible exceptionally rigid for a car of its type, offering an extremely impressive driving experience.

The XK convertible was introduced at the 2006 North American International Auto Show. It features a conventional cloth top that will open or close in 18 seconds.

It was awarded Top Gear's 'Car of the Year' Award 2007.

Engines

Initially, the XK was only powered by a 300 hp (225 kW) version of the 4.2 L AJ-V8 petrol engine. In October 2006, a supercharged version of that engine was added with a maximum output of 420 hp (300 kW).

There have been rumours that an XKR-R with a 5.0-litre 550 hp engine and an even more involving drive is on the way. This is an open secret among Jaguar dealerships in the UK who will confirm that it's on its way as early as the autumn of 2007.

Design

The new XK closely resembles the ALC Coupe concept which was first seen at the 2005 North American International Auto Show. The designer, Ian Callum, was also responsible for Aston Martin's DB7 and Vanquish coupés, which explains the similarities in design among the three cars.

The new XK's grille is inspired by that of the 1961 Jaguar E-Type.

Technology

The new XK has introduced a world first in pedestrian safety, PDBS (Pedestrian Deployable Bonnet System). In numerous pedestrian collisions with vehicles, head injuries occur when a pedestrian's head impacts with the bonnet of the vehicle. However, the injuries are not usually sustained from the bonnet itself, rather the bonnet deforming and the pedestrian's head colliding with the engine block underneath. European Pedestrian Safety Regulations are also responsible for some of the similarity between the XK and some of Callum's other designs.

Jaguar's innovation is to have sensors in the front bumper that determine if a pedestrian has indeed been struck and this then triggers two pyrotechnical charges that instantaneously lift the bonnet, providing extra distance between engine and head. In effect, the bonnet becomes the exterior equivalent of an airbag: The hood's sheet metal may not be soft, but it is much more accommodating than a solid engine block.

This device has awarded the all-new Jaguar XK the Engineering and Technology Award at the prestigious Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards in London.