



Road to success: The Jaguar XF Diesel S impresses with its raw power, luxurious interior and cutting-edge gadgets

Peak performance

Jaguar combine sheer power with fuel economy and low emissions in excellent XF

Review: Richard Long

THROUGHOUT my somewhat sheltered history behind the wheel I have always known that Jaguar has been hailed as the bastion of motoring luxury.

But the honour and prestige of owning such a car has never been a realistic possibility given the severe restrictions on the salary of a journalist.

So the chance to take temporary charge of the new Jaguar XF Diesel S was an opportunity not to be sniffed at.

The supremely-sporty car is a big unit and, thinking performance would be compromised, I felt an air of disappointment on being told that I would not be testing a petrol model. On reflection, such thoughts were utterly ridiculous.

Jaguar's new AJ-V6D Gen III S 3.0-litre engine is a rampaging beast.

Crawling through the confines of Aldershot town centre at a measly 30mph it felt as though this big cat was taking a leisurely stroll after a long sleep in the shade.

But as I put my foot down on the open road, the car became a different animal and we were

suddenly in hot pursuit of an unfortunate antelope on a grassy plain.

The high-performance twin-turbo engine is stunning and can propel the XF from 0-60mph in just 5.9 seconds, with the transition from 50 to 70mph a staggering 3.2 seconds.

Sadly, its maximum speed is electronically limited to a paltry 155mph.

Moving away from Hampshire and onto the M25 as my journey towards the flatlands of Norfolk continued, thoughts of fuel economy soon came to mind.

Admittedly, I was prepared to take a hit on the wallet but an average consumption rate of 42 miles-per-gallon meant the sacrifice was less painful than expected.

With the car now well and truly on the move, other features started to impress.

Modern machines can often get bogged down in confusing gadgets and displays. But the XF maintains a degree of simplicity and elegance while embracing 21st century technology.

The leather interior offers supreme comfort and luxury and a central control system gives access to audio, navigational and climate settings at the simple touch of a finger.

The quality continues with the dashboard,

where a high-definition digital display caters for a speedometer, rev counter and fuel gauge.

With the XF's power credentials established, and the interior clearly ticking all the boxes, it was time to consider other aspects of performance.

Diesel engines immediately raise concerns about shuddering noise levels, but hearing this cat purr was almost pure heaven.

The ride is one of complete peace and quiet and with no vibrations you could easily be forgiven for thinking you were running a petrol.

An automatic gearbox could be another bone of contention but the brains behind the XF have got the changes near perfect.

If you are unhappy you can revert to sport mode and bring the flappy paddles into play but, in all honesty, you really shouldn't need to.

The handling is also extremely responsive and the more environmentally conscious among you will be pleased to hear this car delivers a ten per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions.

With my return to *Soldier* HQ complete, I have to admit I was completely bowled over by the XF, which proved to be a privilege to drive.

It's just a shame my meagre earnings as a reporter mean a week-long test drive cannot become a full-time reality. ■

We take a closer look at the host of features included in the Jaguar XF Diesel S...

Driving made easy

WHILE the thought of taking control of an automatic car may deter those seeking the ultimate driving experience, the XF's gearbox packs an almighty punch with the changes and responsiveness almost perfectly set for quick acceleration when needed. If you're still not convinced, simply shift the setting to sport mode to bring the flappy paddles on the steering column firmly into play. There's no messing around with ignition keys, the ferocious AJ-V6D Gen III S engine triumphantly roars into life at the touch of a button. Harnessing this beast also comes easy courtesy of the simple switch that forms the handbrake.



Mark out of ten: Ten

Home interiors

THE supreme comfort offered inside the XF makes taking to the road a true pleasure for the lucky driver. The interior is decked in luxurious leather and there is more than enough legroom to ensure long journeys are not a chore. The climate can be controlled at the touch of a button and heated seats offer welcome relief from the chilling winter weather. When the sun finally shines, the air conditioning takes over to make you even cooler as you cruise the highways. Despite this being a sport saloon, the boot is deep, spacious and offers ample storage room. There are also cup holders aplenty, just watch out for those annoying spillages on your upholstery.



Mark out of ten: Nine

The magic of the small screen

NO car is complete without its raft of in-house entertainment. The XF's options are operated by a central touchscreen digital control system that takes you through a multi-frequency radio and CD player. If you still can't find the tunes you want, don't worry, as this model includes an iPhone/iPod adapter that allows you to instantly upload your favourite tracks straight to the stereo. The console also features a highly-detailed satellite navigation system and climate control mode. The all-encompassing computer will even help you reverse into the tightest of spots with a parking aid that ensures you avoid any hazards to the rear.



Mark out of ten: Nine



Life in the fast lane: The new Jaguar XF Diesel S can hit a maximum speed of 155mph while also delivering an impressive fuel economy of 42 miles-per-gallon

Hot under the hood

THE mighty AJ-V6D Gen III S three-litre engine makes the XF the most advanced, powerful and efficient Jaguar diesel ever.



This big cat roars from 0-60mph in just 5.9 seconds and boasts an equally-impressive maximum speed of 155mph. But this car is not all about brute power and stunning performance. With prices at the pump continuing to spiral, the sport saloon is far from being a gas guzzler and has a fuel economy of 42 miles-per-gallon – which is 12 per cent better than the 2.7-litre V6 diesel engine. The vehicle's CO₂ emissions have also been reduced by ten per cent in a salute to the environment, meaning this is one caring and thoughtful feline.

Mark out of ten: Ten

Digital dreams

THE XF is awash with cutting-edge technology and the dashboard department is no different. After firing up the engine the digital display immediately flashes into life with a speedometer to the left and rev counter to the right. The fuel gauge, gear details and clock are nestled neatly in the middle of the two dials, giving you all the information you could possibly need while at the wheel. But it is at night-time when you really notice the difference. While cutting through the darkness the interior illuminates with a series of glowing blue lights that give the impression you are in control of a fast-air jet, rather than a road car.



Mark out of ten: Nine

Service-specific sales

IN the current financial climate, there is no doubt that splashing your hard-earned cash on a state-of-the-art XF represents a significant investment. With prices starting at around £30,000 you have to be sure this is the car for you. But luckily for serving personnel, Jaguar Military Sales offer hefty discounts on the amount civvies have to pay for their motors. All members of the Armed Forces are eligible to receive 13 per cent off the price of any vehicle in the British car-maker's range. For more information call Peterborough-based Marshall Military Sales on 01733 213231 or visit the company's dedicated website.



www.jaguar-militarysales.com