

Jaguar XF - The British Imposter?

 By [Luke Preston](#)

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Can the Jaguar XF unsettle the established German competition in the executive sedan market? We find out if it can cut the mustard.

There's a distinctly 'old money' association to be made with those customers out there in the market for a premium executive sedan. After all, seldom do you see a young family driving one.

Safe money dictates that you should probably lean towards a BMW 5 Series, Mercedes-Benz E-Class or Audi A6. The ubiquitous German trio. There is very little between them and if you had to choose one of those three, you can be assured of fault-free and luxurious motoring, with effortlessly smooth performance, regardless of which model you choose.



But what if you're more inclined towards something British, something with space, grace and pace? Something the prime minister of England might be seen exiting or perhaps M from James Bond? What about a Jag, or specifically, what about a Jaguar XF?

Hmm...Not the obvious choice is it?

No, and not the most popular choice either if you consider how few of them you see on the road. This is a good thing though because in-between trips to your local golf club, pub and grocery store you can at least be assured of exclusivity.

The XF doesn't shout about its arrival though. Certainly not 'old chap'. Visually it strikes a wonderful balance between being supremely good looking and athletic with a quiet air of sophistication. Sure, that beautiful leaping Jaguar emblem of yesteryear is gone, but there's no denying that you know a Jaguar when you see one.

Old money might scoff at this 'engine downsizing' malarkey and the model in question here is the new 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbo variant and while that might sound underwhelming, 177kW and 340Nm is sure to raise the spirits somewhat. And with promises of reduced fuel economy, it's sure to be kind on the wallet too.

"Fill her up son, and watch the paintwork."

Indeed! You'll spending a fair deal of time getting to know your local pump attendant because even though this XF displaces a mere 2.0-litres, it has a distinct drinking problem. Over a week of varied driving conditions, which to be honest involved very little spirited driving (in the relaxed Jaguar tradition), with a good mix of town and freeway driving, the XF averaged an indicated 13.5l/100km! That's bordering on alcoholic, and quite worrisome considering it's nowhere near the claimed 9l/100km by Jaguar.

It's hard to pinpoint why. The XF is a large saloon, yet it tips the scales at a respectable 1660kg, making it fairly lightweight even. A low-rent gearbox could be to blame, but the eight-speed automatic found in the XF is anything but and in its highest gear at cruising speed engine speed sits well below the 2 000rpm mark. So that poor fuel economy can only be blamed on the motor then which at 177kW is fairly highly stressed, but nothing unusual in the age of high-output 2.0-litre turbos.

Fuel consumption aside, the XF's trump card is its ride quality. It glides over the roughest of road surfaces and is one of the most comfortable sedans on offer. Push a little harder through a sweeping set of corners and it doesn't display any noticeable body roll, with a comfortable amount of steering feel the XF belies its size on the road is quite at home to be driven hard.

The eight-speed automatic, when left to its own devices, is smooth and responsive. Although like most modern auto's it will default to a higher gear every situation, yet will kick down a few ratios when needed. You can take shift manually via steering wheel mounted paddles, which I found myself using quite often and which perhaps is to blame for the poor fuel consumption. Select 'S' for sport mode and the gearbox will rev a little higher and hang on to a gear a little longer defaulting to a six-speed most of the time, rather than eight.

Let's talk about interiors

In 2007 when the XF was introduced, everyone including myself was wowed by the snazzy new interior. With a gear-selector dial which popped out the centre console to the rotating air vents opening and closing in unison with the ignition, the XF's interior with its Phosphor Blue Halo illumination was and still is a crowd pleaser, especially at night. Me personally? I think they're both a bit of a gimmick and will be lost on the average Jaguar buyer. And won't those little servos kick the bucket one day. Expensively so. Who knows?



Eight years down the line though and the XF's interior is starting to look a little old. The 7-inch touch-screen manages to just cut the mustard, but only just, and like many touch only screens, intuitiveness is sketchy to say the least. With no rotary knob or dial like the some of the German competition completing tasks on the touchscreen takes quite an effort and can divert your attention away from the road. The problem being with touch-screens is that you never can be sure that you've

hit the right button. A twist/push/click of an i-Drive type system found in most BMWs for example is much better, and to be honest, safer.

Spec is high though with sound by Meridian, including navigation and iPod/MP3 connectivity with Bluetooth. Superbly comfortable and infinitely adjustable electric driver and passenger seats are a real standout feature of the interior. Keyless entry and drive is standard, as are the six airbags. While anti-whiplash head restraints mitigate injury in lower speed accidents. Blind spot monitoring is particularly useful too and heated seats lovely for the cold start in the morning.

Let's wrap this up

The Jaguar XF is a quality alternative to the established German rivals but at R638 426.00 it is dearer than the equivalent 5 Series (520i Luxury R620 949.00), Audi A6 (2.0T SE R581 000.00) and Mercedes-Benz E-Class (E200 Elegance R635 778.00). For those in the market for a premium executive sedan though, price point will matter little.

In 2.0-liter four-cylinder guise, the terrible fuel consumption can't be ignored and my suggestion would be to either look at the 2.2-litre turbo-diesel - or wait for the recently introduction all-new XF - you'll save twenty grand on price and even more at the fuel pumps.

Thumbs up:

Elegant and sophisticated

Very comfortable

Plenty power and torque

Thumbs down:

Worryingly thirsty

Outdated interior, although new model is here

Pricey

Pricing:

Jaguar XF 2.2D Luxury R618 799.00

Jaguar XF 2.0i4 Luxury R638 426.00 (Driven)

Jaguar XF 2.2D Premium Luxury R692 099.00

Jaguar XF 2.0i4 Premium Luxury R710 626.00

Jaguar XF 3.0 Supercharged Premium Luxury R884 770.00

Jaguar XF 3.0D S Premium Luxury R892 127.00

Jaguar XFR R1 310 790.00

Jaguar XFR-S R1 444 690.00

Jaguar XF Supercharged R-Sport R808 270.00

ABOUT LUKE PRESTON

Luke Preston is head of Copy and Content at ROKKIT Digital Agency, and when not throwing himself headfirst into all things digital, he is usually to be found at the helm of something with four wheels. Having spent four years as a freelance motoring journalist, contributing to the likes of *topCAR* Magazine, *CARVagblog* and *Motorburn*, Luke now serves as Carshop's vehicular guru, contributing news, reviews and video content for the Carshop brand.

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