



# TWO

## Birth of the 'S'

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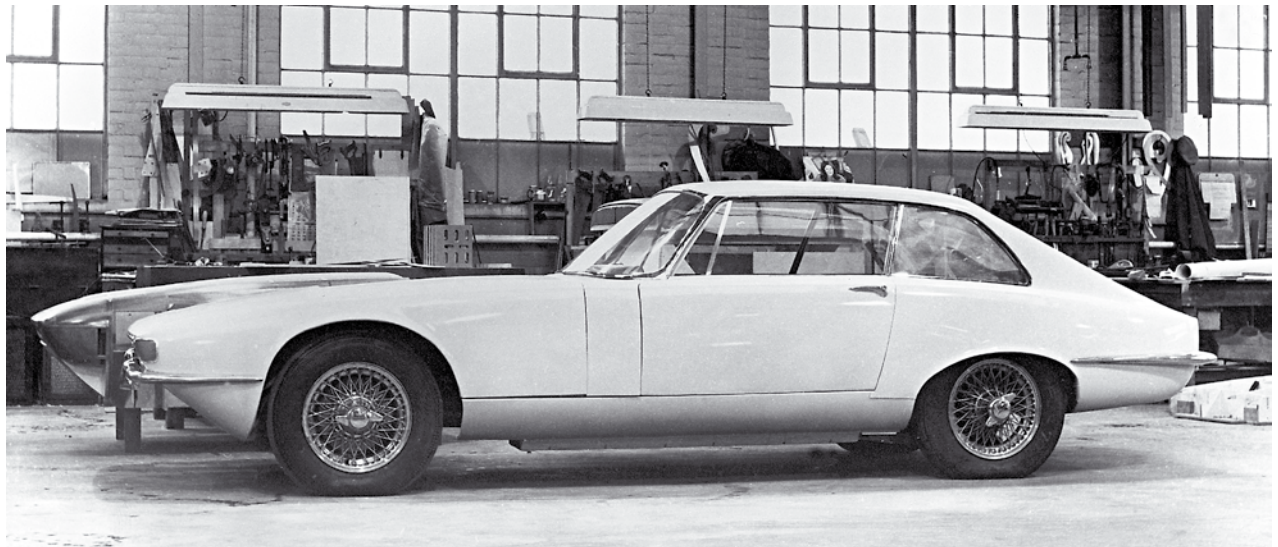
"The XJ-S takes British Leyland Cars into entirely new and extremely lucrative markets. It is aimed at the most discerning motorists in the world who want the very best. On all counts, the XJ-S meets these requirements with sheer style that is unmistakably Jaguar." – Derek Whittaker, Managing Director, British Leyland Cars.

Ever since the end of the Second World War, America has consistently provided Jaguar with its biggest market. With this in mind, it's not surprising that the replacement for the E-type had to be suited first and foremost to American needs. However, times were changing in the States: as well as being determined to reduce exhaust emission levels, especially in California, people like Ralph Nader and his group had introduced safety concerns to the big picture.

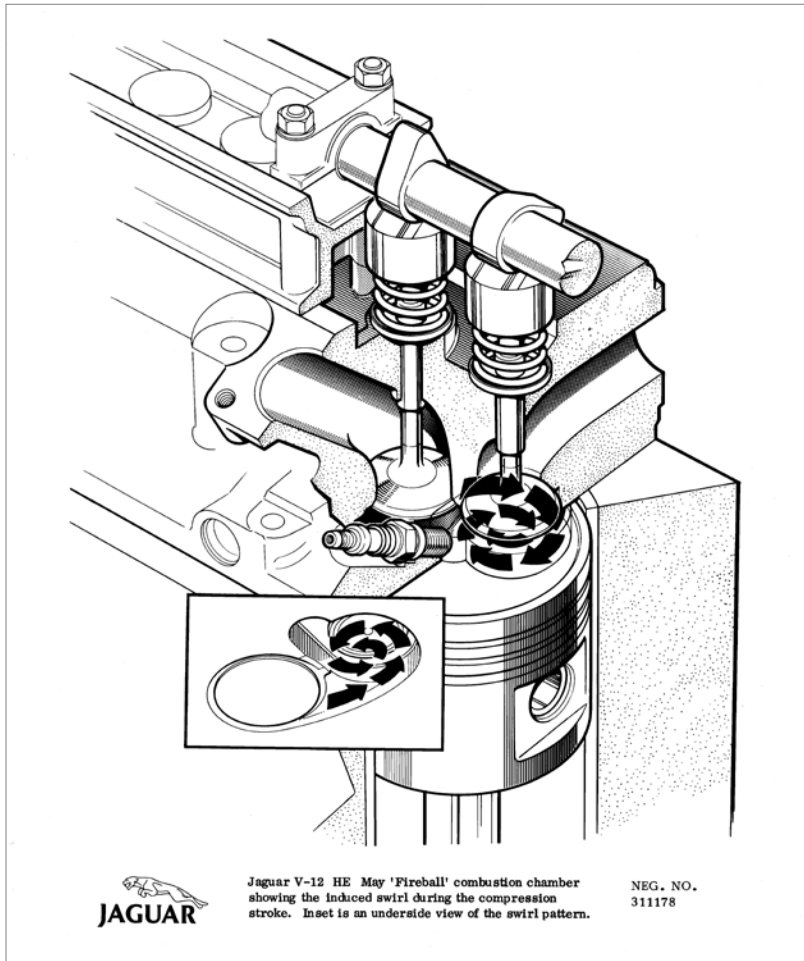
In retrospect, some rules issued during the late 1960s and early 1970s were plain stupid, but at least safety awareness was increased, which can never be a bad thing. Apart from side-impact and some fairly ludicrous bumper regulations, which some manufacturers interpreted better than others (fortunately for Jaguar, the Series 2 XJ saloon was one of the more successful designs to come out in a period blighted by ugly pieces of add-on rubber bumper extensions), perhaps the biggest concern was over the future of the open car. Federal crash regulations were

now extremely strict, leading manufacturers to believe that the soft-top's days were numbered. These fears influenced car design to such an extent that it was well over a decade before a totally new, high-volume convertible was launched.

With E-type production falling from around 170 to nearer 90 units a week, it seemed pointless trying to modify the existing vehicle to meet the changing regulations – with falling sales, the chances of getting a good return on the investment needed to develop a Series 4 model were slim to say the least. Besides, most people associated the E-type name with convertibles, and as the soft-top's future was uncertain in



A mock-up of what would have been the Series 4 E-type. Fortunately, perhaps, for a number of reasons, the idea was not developed.



The key to the HE engine was the Fireball cylinder head. Due to the combustion chamber design, the V12 unit now gave a much more efficient and cleaner burn.

powerful than the old unit, and allowed a taller rear axle ratio to be used (2.88:1 instead of 3.07).

With such a transformation under the bonnet, Jaguar took the opportunity to refurbish the rest of the XJ-S as well. The V12 coupé was still only available with the three-speed GM400 gearbox, but now, thanks to some revalving, first gear could be selected manually or obtained via kickdown whilst the car was moving. Contrary to what it says in the workshop manual, the early GM box wouldn't engage first gear at speed.

The HE was distinguished from the outside by the new 6.5J 'Starfish' alloy wheels (slightly wider five-spoke items fitted with 215/70 VR15 Dunlop tyres), chrome trim to the upper surface of the restyled bumpers, a double coachline running along the waistline of the vehicle, and new badging that included a round Jaguar 'Growler' on the bonnet.

Testing the legendary V12 engine prior to fitment. Many thought the V12 would have to be abandoned, but the new HE combustion system transformed fuel consumption figures, thus giving the engine a longer life at a time when fuel economy was crucial.

The interior was also upgraded to a higher standard, more in keeping with the Jaguar marque. At the request of American dealers, more leather was added to the console, rear side and door trims, whilst lighter-coloured burr elm veneer (rather than the traditional walnut) was used on the restyled fascia panel and door fillets. Along with a Philips radio/cassette, air-conditioning was still a standard item. Amazingly, the price was £18,950 on introduction, some £800 cheaper than the outgoing model.

*Autocar* reported on the HE in April 1982, by which time the price had increased somewhat. Although Jaguar had claimed a top speed of 155mph, the testers couldn't better 151. However, a later test from the same journal gave a best of 157mph, so the factory was fully justified



The 1988 model year S in suitable surroundings (just outside of Le Mans), given Jaguar's success in the World Sports car Prototype Championship.



Jaguar has always believed that the quality of the performance an engine delivers is no less important than the quantity of power it produces. That's why Jaguar long ago set its sights on perfecting the V-12.

The product of over two decades of refinement, Jaguar's overhead cam, fuel injected V-12 is one of the world's most thoroughly proven high performance engines. Modified for racing, it powered the awesome XJR-8 to the prestigious team title in the 1987 World Sports Car Prototype Championship. In production form, it moves the 1988 Jaguar XJ-S with an uncanny silence, smoothness and swiftness befitting a true grand touring automobile.

Inside the sleek XJ-S, barely a whisper intrudes upon the refined elegance of the supple leather, rich burr walnut, and many thoughtful amenities which grace its luxurious 2 + 2 cabin. With the vivid response

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The 1987 Championship-winning XJR-8. The Silk Cut Jaguar team ended the season with almost double the points of its nearest competitor.

### More changes

Four months after the launch of the XJ40, it was announced that the 3.6-litre XJ-S could at last be bought with an automatic gearbox. Priced at £740, this was the same four-speed unit as employed in the saloons, and would enable the coupé model to break through the standing-quarter in 16 seconds without any effort on the part of the driver; 0-60 could be covered in 7.8 seconds. Strangely, the highly-praised 'J-gate' found on the saloons was not adopted on the Grand Tourer, despite its more suitable application for added driving enjoyment. All cars in the XJ-S range gained redesigned switchgear, heated door mirrors and stainless steel treadplates.

In summer 1987, Jaguar disclosed it had just produced its

As well as recording an enviable season in competition, 1987 was also an excellent year for American sales, with almost 5500 XJ-Ss being sold across the Atlantic. This piece of US advertising is for the 1988 model year.

For 1993, Jaguar dropped the V12 coupé and Convertible in the States, replacing them with the 4-litre models, priced at \$49,750 and \$56,750 respectively. This was the first time a six-cylinder S had been offered in America, but it was thought the \$10,000 reduction in price would tempt people back into Jaguar showrooms. The plan worked and no less than 12,267 six-cylinder cars were sold in the US over the following four years – over seven times the number of V12s sold there in the same period.

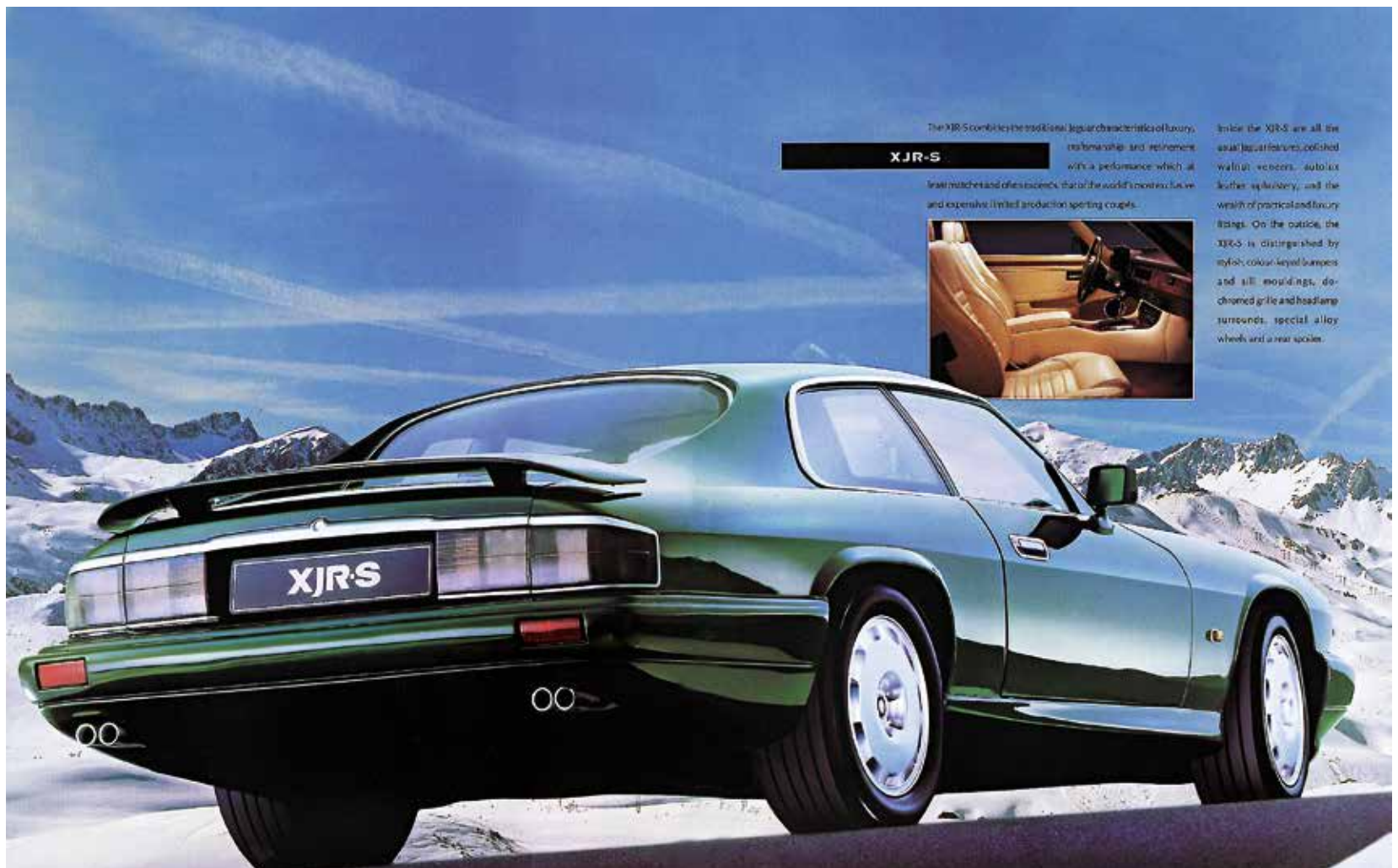
Producing 219bhp at 4750rpm in US trim, the AJ6 unit could be mated to the ZF four-speed automatic or, at extra cost, Getrag's five-speed manual gearbox. With a compression ratio of 9.5:1, maximum torque was listed at 273lb-ft at 3650rpm.

On the manual car, with a 3.54:1 final drive and gearbox ratios of

3.55, 2.04, 1.40, 1.00 and 0.70:1, maximum speeds through the gears were 34, 58, 84, 118 and 138mph. 0-60 came up in just 7.4 seconds, while the standing-quarter was covered in 15.5 seconds at a speed of 91mph. The new 4-litre model was therefore actually quicker than the old V12. However, for those who still wanted this legendary power unit, it was available in the XJR-S.

### The XJR-S

The XJR-S continued alongside the face-lifted range during 1991. To coincide with the launch of the new models, the XJR-S received the same tail-end treatment and new rear quarter-lights (this time, the styling work shifted away from TWR and was carried out in-house by Geoff Lawson's department at the Whitley Technical Centre), as well



The face-lifted XJR-S. For 1993, standard XJR-S colours included Brooklands Green, Flamenco, Morocco Red, Silver Frost and Solent Blue in the UK.



## The XK8

Jaguar's new AJ-V8 engine was announced in June 1996, a few months ahead of the XK8. The 4-litre unit produced 290bhp and 290lb-ft of torque, and was actually built at the Ford plant in Bridgend. Linked to a five-speed automatic, it would soon replace Jaguar's existing six-cylinder and V12 power units.

The first model to receive the new V8 was the XK8 sports car which, having made its debut at the 1996 Geneva Show, went on sale in the UK at the beginning of October, filtering onto export markets a few weeks later.

The XK8 project was born in the opening months of 1990, once it had become clear that XJ41/42 was dead. With two-thirds of the investment needed to develop a brand new car required to bring the XJS up-to-date (to meet forthcoming regulations, and so on), a completely new vehicle was the obvious answer. Serious development began in mid-1992 when the X100 codename was adopted, although it would be another two years before Ford gave it the official stamp of approval.

In complete contrast to the XJ41, the X100 project, overseen by Bob Dover (later the boss at Aston Martin), went exceptionally smoothly,

The car that replaced the XJS – the XK8, seen here with a Series 2 E-type; the two cars are separated by a quarter of a century.

Rear end of an early XK8.

