

60 Years Ago - The Golden Jaguar

The Story of The Golden Mk II

In 1960, Jaguar management decided to create a unique model - a gold Jaguar Mark II. The car was designed for presentation at the New York Auto Show (April 12-16, 1960), where the new 3.8 litre Mk II was being launched.

To introduce the new 3.8 Mk II to the American market, Jaguar wasn't about to just show a shiny new car on a turn table. Oh no, it was going to make a splash, make waves, and shine bright.

At the time, Jaguar calculated that if such a car was available for purchase, it could have cost \$25,000 (more than \$250,000 in our time).

Every bit of exposed metal, inside and out, was gold plated - the bumpers, grille, door handles, trim, switches, wheels, tyre valve caps, ash trays, mascot, even the exhaust pipe. The car was white and the upholstery was made of high-quality



To launch the new 3.8 engine Mk II to the American market, Jaguar decided to make an impact with every bit of exposed metal, inside and out, gold plated.



The model, Dorothy McDonough (with security in hand), wore an embroidered gold dress, gold shoes, gold jewellery and a tiara of 1000 diamonds presented by Napoleon to Empress Josephine in 1804. Jaguar converted it back to standard and sold it as a production model.

60 Years Ago - The Golden Jaguar (cont)

white "English glove leather." Veneers were walnut and two occasional tables were fitted for the rear occupants.

The car was accompanied by model Dorothy McDonough, who was dressed in accordance with the car: a dress of 24-carat gold thread, gold shoes, gold jewellery, precious stones and a golden tiara given to Empress Josephine in 1804 by Napoleon. It was taken on loan from Van Kleeef and Arpels and contained more than 1,000 diamonds. Dorothy was escorted at all times by a security guard.

The Jaguar caused a lot of excitement, and the press release said that there were several offers to buy. However, the car was returned to the factory, converted into a standard version, and sold as a conventional production model.

And that is where the story of the Golden Jaguar would have ended. However!

The Only Modern Replica

In 1997, a project was launched to recreate this unique model. The inspirational enthusiast was Robert W. "Bob" Alexander, a practicing lawyer and a passionate fan of the Jaguar brand, who got the support of Tony O'Keeffe, curator of Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust in the UK. Additional information was



Every piece of internal chrome work was re-plated in gold to match the 'Golden' 3.8 Mk II.

received from Richard Hassan, son of Sir Walter Hassan, one of the leading developers of the famous XK engine and someone who was directly involved in the construction of the gold Mark II. Thanks to them, it was possible to realize the previously lost car. A 3.8 litre Mk II was restored from scratch using original or new spare parts.

Upon completion, the recreated Golden Jaguar made its concours debut in March of 1999 at the prestigious Amelia Island

Concours. Although it won numerous trophies it was barely driven except from a transporter to various Concor show fields and back again. Only about 100 miles had been accumulated before it was decided to put the Jaguar up for sale.

The car was completely impractical and subsequently sold for only US\$22,000 (AU\$30,522) at the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance Auction in June 2017. ■



The 1999 gold plated replica copied the original car in every detail from the wheels to the leaping Jaguar. The car won a number of concours and was only driven from the transporter to the show field and back again. The car was eventually sold in 2017 for AU \$30,522.