

# XK8

The XK8 is unveiled at a time when the XK8 has become the highest selling sports car in Jaguar's history. Loved by enthusiasts around the world for its stunning, feline curves and graceful interiors; for the advanced technology which makes driving effortless pleasure; and for its calm, unruffled refinement.

The advanced, innovative design of the normally aspirated 290 bhp, 4.0 litre AJ-V8 engine delivers class-leading performance. Flexibility is a hallmark of the engine with a minimum 80 per cent of peak torque available between 1400 and 6400 rev/min. The responsive five-speed electronic automatic transmission ensures fluent gear changes. For an even more remarkable combination of velvet smooth ride and cat-like agility, the optional Computer Active Technology Suspension uses adaptive damping under microprocessor control.

Experience the pedigree of craftsmanship. Choose from Sport or Classic interior styles; sporting intensity, or assured luxury. Enjoy the intimacy of the coupe, or the freedom of the convertible.

The Jaguar XK Series. Discover the magic, drive the dream.



**JAGUAR**

**DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT**



# Celebrating 25 Years of The XK8

The XK8 was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1996.

## Design & Development

The platform for the first-generation of the XK series was derived from its predecessor, the XJ-S.

Designed by Geoff Lawson and his team, development of the X100 started in late 1991. By October 1992, a design was chosen and prototypes were being built from December 1993. Development concluded in 1996 and the model went on sale from October that year.

The car clearly aped the styling of the Jaguar E-type, but it was an effective blend of retro and modern.

At the heart of the XK8 was an all-new aluminium AJ26-V8 engine designed and developed at Whitley. The 4.0 litre, 290 bhp, 32-valve, quad cam V8 set new standards of high performance, smooth power delivery and exceptional refinement.

## XK8/XKR

The initial model available in the XK range of Grand Tourers was the XK8 two-door coupé or two-door convertible. The new CATS (Computer Active Technology Suspension) adaptive suspension, which was already an option on the coupé,

was added to the convertible models in 1997. Other changes for 1997 included the addition of light sensitive headlamps and an automatically dipping rear view mirror.

From 1998 onwards, all models of the XK line-up were fitted with the Servotronic II power steering. In May 1998, and following on from the XK8's success, Jaguar subsequently launched a similar looking but higher performance model known as the XKR, a supercharged version of the XK8 fitted with a 2 litre (112 cu in) Eaton supercharger.

Visual differences of the XKR from the XK8 included a small rear spoiler and bonnet louvres for improved engine airflow, along with a meshed front grille. From late 1999, an optional R kit became available for the XKR which included a stiffer suspension system and gold-coloured wheels.

Jaguar's Adaptive Cruise Control, introduced in late 1999, was an optional feature available on both models. Both the coupé and convertible came with an all-leather interior, burl walnut trim, and side airbags.

The interior was available in two trims, classic and sport. The sport interior trim was aimed for younger buyers

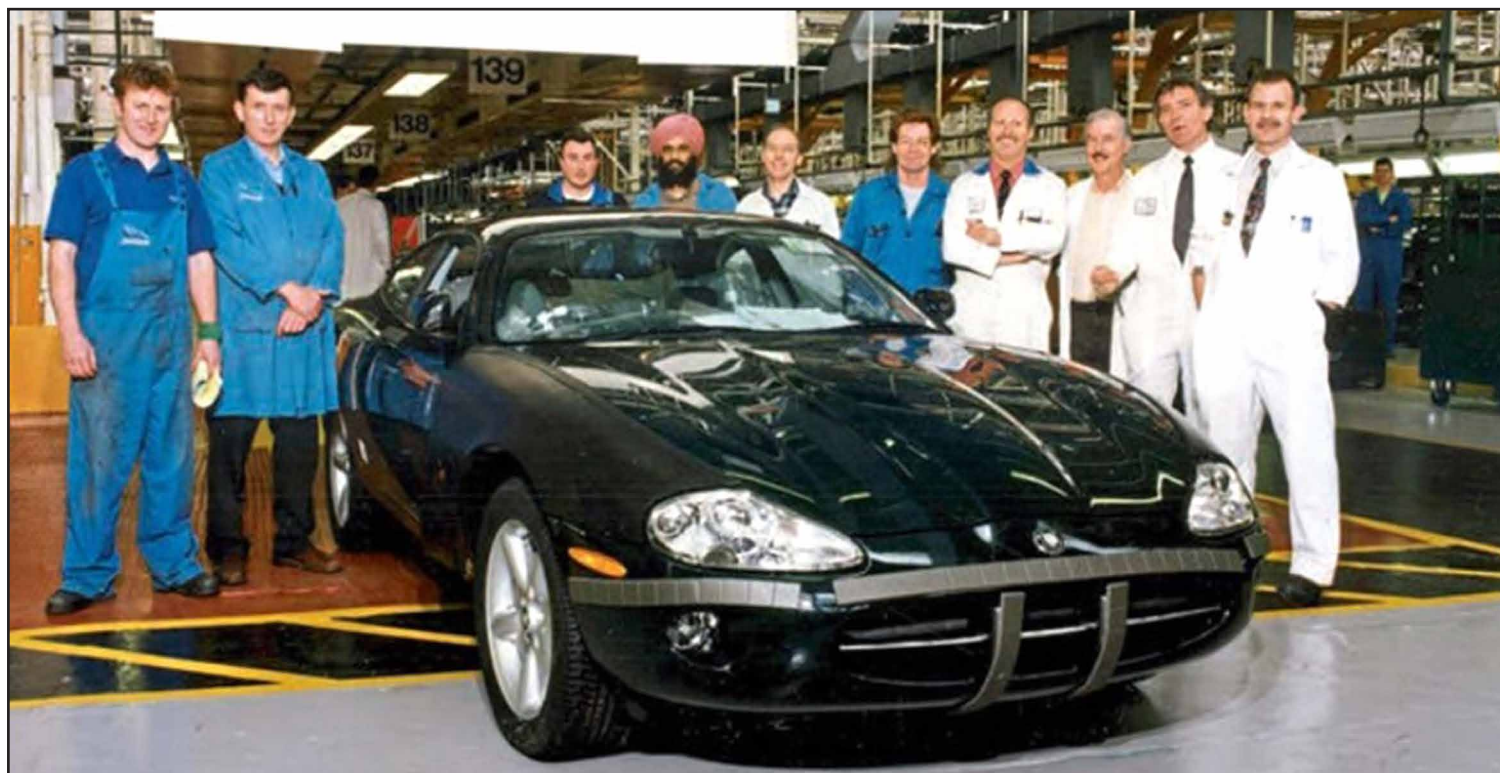
and involved leather upholstery with cloth seats. The classic trim was a more luxurious option and featured heavy use of leather. Jeremy Clarkson, during a Top Gear test-drive, likened the interior of the original XK8 to sitting inside Blenheim Palace.

Like its predecessor, the XJS, the XK models used a 2+2 seating layout for the interior. An optional "Jaguar boot" option involved the removal of the small rear seats in favour of increased luggage space.

Both the XK8 and XKR were electronically limited to a maximum speed of 250 km/h (155 mph).

## 2003 Update

From 2003, a GPS system became available as an option on all XK models which replaced the three gauges on the centre console. The XK range received a mechanical update with the engines in both the XK8 and XKR models being enlarged to 4.2 litres. The front headlamps were also updated by the addition of a clear lens. Further changes included new exterior colours and wheels along with different badging. Also, in 2003, the new ZF 6HP26 six-speed automatic transmission was fitted in both versions of the 4.2 litre model.



The first production XK8 left Browns Lane production line 4 June 1996.

# Celebrating 25 Years of The XK8

## 2004 Update

The models were revised again in 2004. All models got new wheel designs and a new nose with a deeper front bumper and a mesh grille on the XKR.

Deeper side sills and rear bumper treatment complement the changes to the front, while the XK8 benefited from larger twin tail pipes and a boot-lid spoiler, while the XKR featured new quad tailpipes plus an even larger spoiler. These subtle changes gave the XK a more aggressive look, while retaining much of the model's original character.

## Limited editions

A number of limited and special edition XK8/XKR's were produced by the Jaguar factory. These included: -

- ◇ **XKR Silverstone (2000):** Launched to celebrate Jaguar's return to Formula One motor racing and named after the famous British racing track.
- ◇ **XKR100 (2001):** In 2001 Jaguar unveiled the XKR100, a model to celebrate the centenary of Jaguar's founder member, Sir William Lyons, born in September 1901.

◇ **XKR400 (2003):** The "XKR 400" was an upgraded performance version of the existing supercharged 4.2 litre XKR.

◇ **XKR Portfolio (2004):** The "XKR Portfolio" was available from August 2003 and built specifically for the North American market. Only 200 were produced.

◇ **Carbon Fibre Special Edition (2004):** In 2004, one-hundred "Carbon Fibre" XKR's, were produced. They were only available in the UK in RHD.

◇ **XK Victory (2005):** The Victory Edition was only available in North American, to "celebrate Jaguar's four championship wins in the North American Trans-AM Road Racing Series.

◇ **2004 XKR Stirling Moss Signature Edition:** The 470 horsepower XKR was a limited-edition model of which only 5 were made. They were all finished in Platinum with Black interior and each car was fitted with a Signature Plate in the boot, signed by the racing legend.

◇ **XK8/XKR 4.2-S (2005):** In Europe, the "4.2-S" was unveiled at Geneva in March 2005. This was the last XK special-edition. The electronic speed limiter was removed to enable the car to reach a top speed of 280 km/h (174 mph). Production was limited to 200 cars.

## Motor Racing

The XK8 was almost unbeatable in the US Trans-Am motor racing series during the 2000's winning 5 driver's championships and 4 manufacturers titles.

## Production

On May 27th 2005, the last of the existing X100's rolled off the Brown's Lane production line. In all, 91,406 models were produced:

- 19,748 XK8 coupé
- 46,760 XK8 convertible
- 9,661 XKR coupé
- 13,895 XKR convertible

The XK (X100) was replaced by a new generation of XK's (X150), designed under the leadership of Jaguar Design Director Ian Callum. ■



*In motor sport, the XKR dominated the US Trans-Am racing series in the 2000s with Paul Gentilozzi's Rocketsports Racing winning the prestigious series in 2001 (Paul Gentilozzi), 2003 (Scott Pruett), 2004 (Paul Gentilozzi), 2005 (German Klaus Graf) and 2006 (Paul Gentilozzi) With its smooth lines and body contours, the XKR had excellent aerodynamics, making it one of the fastest straight-line speed cars in the series. Jaguar won the Manufacturers Championship 4 times and produced an 'XK Victory' edition to celebrate the achievement.*





**XK**  
SERIES

XK8 CONVERTIBLE  
XK8 COUPE  
XKR CONVERTIBLE  
XKR COUPE



|    |   |
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| 4  | New developments  |
| 6  | XK8 Convertible   |
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| 10 | 4.0 litre AJ-V8 engines,<br>Handling dynamics, Safety   |
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| 19 | Standard and optional features at a glance.<br><i>The equipment list at the rear can be folded<br/>out for easy reference whilst viewing this<br/>brochure.</i> |
| 20 | Interior trim, Colour Guide   |



# 25 Facts About The XK8/XKR

To celebrate the XK8's anniversary, for 25 days the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust listed on its website 25 facts about the XK8. (Not all facts have been included).

**Fact 1: XK8 production began in June 1996.**



**Fact 2: The Project Director was the engineer Bob Dover, who went on to become JLR Chairman and CEO.**



**Fact 3: The XK8 was styled by Fergus Pollock, working alongside Design Director, the late Geoff Lawson.**



**Fact 4: When the prototype was sent to Canada for air-conditioning tests on public roads, the shape was completely camouflaged using glass-fibre and foam. The car was preserved like this.**



**Fact 5: The inspiration for the XK8's elegant design came from the style of classic Jaguar sports cars of the past but interpreted in a modern manner, notably the E-type of the 1960s.**



**Fact 6: A minimum of 80% by weight of the XK8 is recyclable.**

**while maintaining excellent stability.**

- Five, five-speed automatic transmission features a wide gear ratio spread, overdrive up gear and reflexion free steering torque converter.
- 12 bit intelligent, electronic transmission control module determines gearshift points based on driver commands and road conditions.

**Safety/Environment**

- Body exceeds all crash regulations worldwide.
- Two air-frames (partially covered full size airbag, and outboard) work both pre-tensioners.
- Stability and traction control systems provide safe, predictable handling through electronic engine and brake interventions.
- A major recycling initiative at the Castle Bromwich plant, based at 97%pin, converts fine paint residue into a harmless by-product used for the to replace major industry. This can be recycled into wood, plastics, underbody cladding and many more.
- A minimum of 80% per cent by weight of a new XK8 is recyclable, while 88 per cent of component packaging is biodegradable and reusable.

**Cost of Ownership**

- Category one, Thinkam, standard.

**JAGUAR**

**XK8 COUPE & CONVERTIBLE**

**SPORTSCAR LINEAGE**

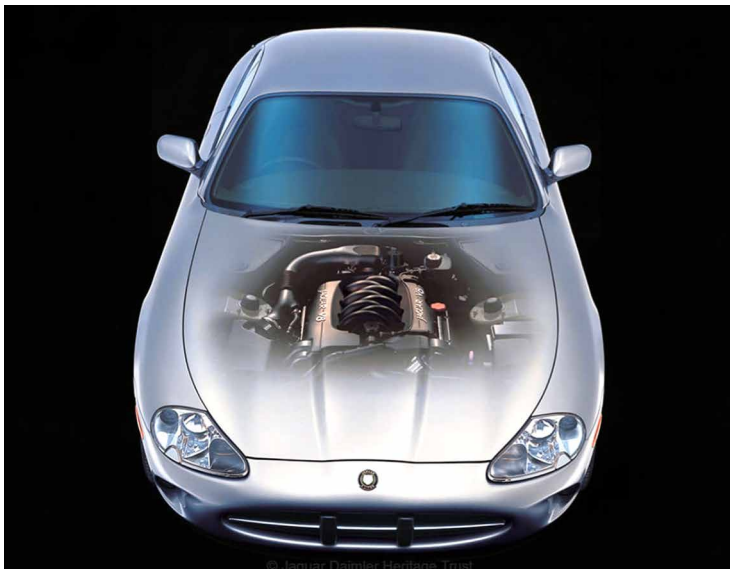


# 25 Facts About The XK8/XKR

**Fact 7:** Both the XK8 and XKR were available in coupé and convertible form.



**Fact 8:** The XK8 was the first Jaguar to be fitted with the 4.0L AJ-V8 engine, with a bore and stroke of 86 x 86mm - only the fourth production engine in Jaguar's history.



**Fact 9:** The XK8 engine was an 'in-house' design 4.0 litre unit with variable valve timing code-named AJ26.



**Fact 10:** In 2004 Jaguar donated an XK8 Convertible with two 1-carat diamonds in the dashboard for a silent auction to help raise money for the Elton John Aids Foundation.

## Jaguars, Diamonds & Movie Stars



Diamond encrusted XK8.

Gleaming XJ's represented Jaguar as a number of A-list stars pulled up to the recent Pre-Bafta party in style.

On 15 February, Jaguar was given unprecedented access to Bafta nominees and film industry guests on a night filled with invaluable media exposure for the brand. Stars included best actress winner Scarlett Johansson who arrived in the 'polished' XJ Aluminium car. Also present were best supporting actor Bill Nighy, Val Kilmer, Jon

Voight, Sophie Anderton, Julianne David, Nick Rhodes from Duran Duran and LL Cool J. Jaguar teamed up with Steinmetz, creators of the world's finest diamonds, to donate a unique XK8 Convertible, with the interior incorporating 2 sunexis-cut 1-carat diamonds in the dash. A silent auction for the XK8, a Perrier Joust donation and overall ticket sales have helped to raise £100,000 for the Elton John Aids Foundation.



Bafta Best Actress winner Scarlett Johansson.



Interior of XK8 with the 1-carat diamonds in the dash.

**Fact 11:** Jaguar were the official sponsor of the Merseyside Balloon Festival in June 2001. An XK8 shaped balloon led the flotilla.

## RACING CHAMPION AT JAGUAR

Niki Lauda, three times world Formula One champion, visited Jaguar Halewood on Tuesday 12th June.

Lauda was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the newly formed Premier Automotive division of the Premier Automotive Group in February which was established to oversee, coordinate and support the motor sport activities of Jaguar Racing, Cosworth Racing and the Pi electronics group.

Lauda toured the Jaguar X-TYPE Assembly plant before accepting the keys to a British Racing Green, 3.0 Sport model from Jonathan Browning.



SPORTY. Niki Lauda takes Jonathan Browning for a spin in his new X-TYPE.

## Merseyside Balloon Festival

The Merseyside Balloon Festival took place from 15th - 17th June. A continuous display of inflated balloons could be seen in the arena throughout the weekend. Jaguar Cars, official sponsor of the event, headed the flotilla with a stunning XK8 shaped balloon.



© Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust

**Fact 12:** The XK8 sports car, sometimes referred to by its product code of X100, was the replacement for the XJS which had been in production for twenty-one years.





# 25 Facts About The XK8/XKR

**Fact 13:** In 1998 a supercharger was fitted on the XKR version which was even more powerful at 370 bhp, although the top speed of both XK8 and XKR models were identical - limited to 155 mph (250 km/h).



**Fact 14:** To celebrate Jaguar's entry into Formula One, the limited edition XKR Silverstone was introduced.



**Fact 15:** SVO produced an XK8 police car which was loaned to the Metropolitan Police for a European Police Conference.



**Fact 16:** The XK8 was voted 'Most beautiful car in the world' at the Milan International Competition, November 1996.

## JAGUAR XK8 VOTED THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CAR

The new XK8 sports car has been voted the most beautiful two seat luxury car in the world. The award was presented to styling director Geoff Lawson on 5 November 1996 at the prestigious Milan International Competition in the Palazzo dell'Arte for 'L'Automobile piu Bella del Mondo' (the world's most beautiful car). This follows the award received by the XJ Series in 1994 which was voted the world's most beautiful luxury saloon.

to thank them all for their talents and their commitment."

The distinguished panel of Italian judges, experts in the world of visual arts, found the XK8s 'supremely artistic, the latest descendants of the XK family and the unforgettable E-Type; XK8 reaffirms a desire for continuity of character and style.'

The style of XK8 embodies the unique Jaguar signature, making it instantly recognisable to discerning car enthusiasts worldwide. The elegant and powerful flowing lines evoke the great Jaguar sports car legends of the past - the XK120, the C, D and E-types and more recently the XJ220.

© Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust

Geoff Lawson states: "The photograph shows the entire styling and design team at Whitley, all of whom worked on the XK8 programme at some stage - either initial concept studies, or development and refinement of the approved concept through to Job 1. I collected the award on the team's behalf, all of whom should feel justifiably proud of their own contribution to the success of XK8. The complexities of a sophisticated car like XK8 requires the focused, collective energy of everyone involved and I wish



**Fact 17:** As part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the XK, Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) produced the XK180 on a shortened XKR platform.



**Fact 18:** At RAF Coltishall an XKR raced a Jaguar GR3 aircraft. The XKR was leading at the ¼ mile but it was about a dead heat at the ½ mile finish line.



© Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust





# 25 Facts About The XK8/XKR

**Fact 19:** In 2001 Jaguar announced the XKR100 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Sir William Lyons.



**Fact 20:** Celebrity XK8 owners included actor Patrick Stewart, footballers David Beckham & Michael Owen; tennis players Tim Henman & Greg Rusedski; golfer Nick Faldo and English Supermodel Yasmin Le Bon.



**Fact 22:** An XKR had an important role in the James Bond film, 'Die Another Day' as the villain's car – the car of Zao, played by Rick Yune. The eight (8) XKR's used in the film were built at Browns Lane and then worked on at Pinewood Studios by the film's special effects team.



**Fact 23:** For the third Austin Powers film, 'Goldmember', an XK8 convertible replaced the E-type which was previously used in the first two films.



**Fact 24:** SVO produced a unique development prototype called the XKR-R. It had a 440+ bhp engine and manual transmission. It was demonstrated at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.



**Fact 25:** The last X100 came off the track on 27 May 2005. It was the last production sports car built at Browns Lane ■





## Review - Classic & Sports Car - Feature XK8/XKR

*The following review from JDHT website was reproduced with the permission of Classic & Sports Car magazine. The following is a summary of key points of the review. The entire article is available from their August 2021 edition. Classic & Sports Car is the world's best-selling classic car magazine.*

**Now 25 years old, Jaguar's XK8 and XKR (X100) have finally realised its classic potential.**

Somehow, somewhere – probably deep in a dark attic at Jaguar's Gaydon headquarters, or maybe Geoff Lawson's loft – there must be hanging a slowly deteriorating portrait of the XK8. It's the only possible way to make sense of how Jaguar's seemingly timeless grand tourer has remained such an object of desire for more than a quarter of a century.

The decade's defying shape is even more remarkable when you consider that the styling took inspiration from the E-Type. Amazingly the X100 barely changed in the 10 years it remained on sale.

The X100 has endured as one of Jaguar's most attractive, capable and commercially successful models of the past 30 years, but following privatisation the company was in a parlous financial state.

As 1991 drew to a close the company was facing losses of £221m – more than three times the previous year's results. But for Ford adding Browns Lane to its portfolio in November that year, Jaguar would likely have been found upside down, bobbing at the top of the tank.

### **Jaguar X100**

The unlikely saviour was none other than the X100, better known as the XK8. Despite its obvious promise, the X100's gestation wasn't easy, coming amid a global recession and a time of economic strife for Jaguar.

Ford invested £100m in the Bridgend plant. This in turn ensured that the grand tourer would be powered, not by an engine parachuted in from North America, but by the all-new 4-litre AJ-V8 unit of Jaguar's own design.

That was, it must be said, a rather good decision. Instead of soldiering on with old technology, the coupé got a gem of an engine with four camshafts and four valves per cylinder. Good for 290 bhp in normally aspirated guise and with 290 lb ft of torque, the XK8 is quick enough to trouble 60 mph inside 6.5 seconds and has to be electronically reined in as it reaches 155 mph. But, despite the impressive power figures, there's something stately about the early car that makes driving it more about the experience than the performance.

Give it a prod and the XK will kickdown as smartly as a contemporary Mercedes-Benz, lifting its skirts enough to raise an eyebrow, but you find you rarely have the urge, such is the smooth delivery, supple suspension and a softer-than-silk ride. A cynic may say the gargantuan kerb weight has something to do with that, and if the XK8 went on a diet it would deliver more of the sports-car experience promised by its rakish styling.



*In 1998, two years after the XK8, came the XKR which featured an Eaton supercharger, mesh grille, larger wheels and bonnet louvres.*



## Review - Classic & Sports Car - Feature XK8/XKR

Look at it through the lens of a traditional grand tourer and it makes a lot more sense, that prodigious weight steamrolling flat humps in the road and ironing out cracks and potholes as if they weren't even there. While its more glamorous Aston relative made do with a variant of the XJ-S rear end, the Jag benefited from the more modern set-up designed for the upcoming X300 XJ saloon.

The XK8 draws admiring glances in a world of bland and homogenous Japanese imports, plastic-bumpered shopping cars and even its slab-sided BMW 8 Series rival. The sleek XK cuts a particular dash, an organic and aerodynamic sloop that screams sexy – or at least a middle-aged golfer's idea of it.

Geoff Lawson's sublime design undoubtedly forged its own identity, but the ancestry is clear to see from the fish-mouthed front grille to the rounded flanks, with wheels set back behind generous overhangs.

### Jaguar XKR

A full decade separates the first XK8s to leave Browns Lane and the last-of-the-line XKR convertible, and it's hard not to be struck by quite how similar the two cars are. The overall shape barely changed, the only major facelift arriving in 2002. That brought with it a lightly restyled front bumper, jazzy jewelled rear lights with chrome finishing and forward-facing Xenons, not to mention the revised 'growler' badging and an array of huge alloy wheels.

Bigger changes went on beneath the bodywork, and though a raft of electronic safety equipment ranging from Electronic Stability Control to Emergency Brake Assist was added, along with much more comfortable front seats, it's the engine that puts clean air between the two iterations.

Across the board the old 3,996 cc V8 was updated with an increase in capacity of 200 cc. That might not sound like a lot- combined with continually variable camshaft phasing, power was only increased by 3.5% in the XK8 and up to 8.1%, to 400 bhp, in the hotter XKR – but boy does it feel like more. In real terms the update added a hefty dose of usable



*The XK8 was updated again in 2004 when it received a new nose, rear bumper and sills.*

torque to both models, adding lead to the glove and resulting in a heavier punch as you plant the throttle.

With the roof off you not only feel the thump of acceleration but hear it too, with a shrill Eaton supercharger whine almost totally drowning out the V8 and its quad-pipe roar.

Inside, the bijou cabin of the earlier car is still intact and just as cossetting, but some of the classiness is undoubtedly lost with the addition of carbon fibre where once there was walnut.

The updated and supportive seats are great, and fortunately the optional infotainment system hasn't been added.

It always looked somewhat anachronistic dropped into the middle of the dash in place of the classic round analogue dials. Look down at the centre console and the familiar Jaguar J-gate remains, albeit now controlling a six-speed ZF gearbox – the first auto with half a dozen cogs outside of stepped CVTs. Not only does it give the big cat longer legs, but it also irons out an irritating driveline thump when taking up drive from a near stop.

### Summary

Experiencing the full range of X100, from early to late fills me with nostalgia.

Tastes change, but I loved the XK8 when it broke cover at Geneva in '96 and despite a gradual estrangement as fewer seem to remain on the roads. I love it just as much today.

The 2006 XKR convertible impresses more than expected, doing its best to roll back the years beneath that supercharged howl, but visually I can't help but feel that something of the launch car's class got lost along the way. The original coupé is a car in its prime, while the soft-top tries to hide its years behind mesh grilles, and chrome light-surrounds.

The XK8's sensibly sized alloy wheels with fat tyres and the sea of burr walnut and soft hide, give an old-world sense of comfort; a British Heart Foundation charity-shop vibe that suits the cars so much better than carbon fibre. The longer spent behind the wheel of the 1996 model, the more you feel at home.

Maybe, Jaguar might just have got it right the first time around. ■

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**Photography:** Olgun Kordal

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