

# JAGUAR XK8



A modern sporting icon



# Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (1996-2006)

The XK8 was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1996, just like the E-type, 35 years earlier.

## 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.



**XKR Silverstone™**

*Jaguar produced a number of low volume special edition XK's between 2000-2006. The "Silverstone" was launched to celebrate Jaguar's return to Formula 1 motor racing and was named after the famous British racing track. Only 558 Silverstone's were built.*

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.

*(continued page 12)*



*Josephine Orford, 2001 British Racing Green 4.0 litre supercharged XKR Convertible 5-speed automatic. (All British Day February 2020)*



## Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)

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.



### JAGUAR XKR 100 CONVERTIBLE

*In 2001 Jaguar unveiled the XKR100, a model to celebrate the centenary of Jaguar's founder Sir William Lyons (born in 1901). All cars were finished in Anthracite Metallic Finish (a dark steel grey colour with gold pearlescent flecks). 500 (coupes/convertibles) were made.*

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.

*(continued page 13)*



*Hugh & Lucyna Guthrie, 1998 Sapphire Blue 4.0 litre XK8 Convertible (All British Day Feb 2020). Hugh bought the car in Victoria and during the height of COVID-19 he wasn't game to drive it with its Victorian number plates until he was able to register it in South Australia.*



# Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)

## 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 bootlid 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 \(2000\)](#)

The 'Silverstone' model was launched to celebrate Jaguar's return to Formula One motor racing and was named after the famous British racing track.

The "Silverstone" cars were all finished in Platinum (Silver), had fixed headrests, were all right-hand drive, and were all sold in the UK. Initially 102 cars were built, but to satisfy demand from the United States and overseas, a further production run of cars, referred to as a



## JAGUAR XKR 400 CONVERTIBLE & COUPE

*The "XKR 400" was a performance version of the 4.2 litre XKR 6-speed automatic. Only 60 Coupes and 40 Convertibles were made, and only available in the UK from 2003.*

"Silverstone Phase 2", were produced. Total "Phase 2" production eventually stood at 456, giving a total of 558 "Silverstone" cars. "Phase 2" cars had separate and adjustable headrests and were available in both right and left-hand drive.

Later that year Jaguar's Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) announced their own R- version, a further enhanced XKR.

### [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.

500 'XKR 100' coupés and convertibles (combined total) were available from 2002. The XKR 100 was finished in an Anthracite metallic paint finish, and featured all the available options plus Recaro seats, 20-inch BBS alloy wheels, Brembo brakes, specific dark wood dashboard panels and GPS.

### [XKR400 \(2003\)](#)

The "XKR 400" was an upgraded performance version of the existing supercharged 4.2 litre XKR.

The XKR 400 was built in response to dealer orders, with each dealer able to order up to maximum of five cars.

*(continued page 14)*



*Ron Biddell, 1996 Sapphire Blue 4.0 litre XK8 Coupe 5-speed automatic (All British Day February 2020).*



## Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)

Available in both Coupe and Convertible form it did not look too different from its previous versions, but Jaguar did make some performance and interior changes that made this Limited-Edition model unique. The model was released only in three colours, Midnight, Slate and Platinum.

The car was tagged as one of the fastest ever production cars produced by Jaguar with its supercharged, 6-speed automatic gearbox and state-of-the-art handling package. The car, amongst its many enhancements, had revised damper settings on the standard CATS suspension, uprated springs, re-tuned steering and was lowered to give it a better stance.

The final figure for XKR 400 cars produced was 100 units, 60 Coupes and 40 Convertibles. The special edition was only available in the UK from 2003.

### *XKR Portfolio (2004)*

The "XKR Portfolio" was available from August 2003 and built specifically for the North American market. Only 200 were produced.

The convertible-only Portfolio models featured either Jupiter Red or Coronado Blue exterior with matching interior and Recaro sports seats. (*Not to be confused with the later X150 2008 XKR Portfolio*).

### *Carbon Fibre Special Edition (2004)*

In 2004, one-hundred "Carbon Fibre" XKR's, were produced. They were only available in the UK in RHD.

These XKR's came with all extras as standard, such as carbon styling, 20" split rim alloys (Sepang fitted) and performance Brembo callipers. The carbon fibre fascia with aluminium instrument bezels and J-Gate surround sets the high-tech, sporting tone. Satellite Navigation, Premium Sound and Recaro seats in Ivory or Warm Charcoal soft grain leather were all standard.

Only 50 coupés and 50 convertibles were built for delivery from September 2004.

### *XK Victory (2005)*

Introduced at the 2005 Los Angeles International Auto Show, the Victory Edition was only available for the

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### JAGUAR XKR PORTFOLIO CONVERTIBLE

*The 2003 "XKR Portfolio" was specifically built for the US market. Only 200 were produced. The convertible-only model was finished in either Jupiter Red or Coronado Blue.*



### JAGUAR XK8/XKR VICTORY EDITION

*The 2006 "Victory Edition" was only available in the US and offered to celebrate Jaguar's four championship wins in the North American Trans-AM road racing series.*



### JAGUAR XK8/XKR 4.2-S

*Built for the European market, the "4.2-S" was the last Special Edition XK to be based on the original 1996 design. The electronic speed limiter was removed to enable the car to reach a top speed of 280 km/h (174 mph). Only 200 cars were built in four exclusive colours.*



## Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)

North American market and offered in model year 2006, to “celebrate Jaguar’s four championship wins in the North American Trans-AM road racing series.

The Victory Edition was offered on all standard XK colours, plus four unique Victory Edition colours. Victory Editions also offered carbon fibre interior trim on XKR models, and a new Elm wood veneer on the XK8 models. Victory Editions also received special badging and accents. The “growler” badge on the bonnet had a unique checkered-flag background, and door sill plates featured checkered-flag emblems. 1,050 cars were built.

### *2004 Jaguar XKR Stirling Moss Signature Edition*

The 470 horsepower XKR Stirling Moss Signature Edition was a limited-edition model of which only 5 were made. They were all finished in Platinum with Black interior and were all painted with a vintage racing scheme to match Stirlings’ XKE’s of the 60’s and 70’s. Each car was fitted with a Signature Plate in the boot, signed by the racing legend.

Modifications included a supercharger pulley kit and factory installed custom stainless Borla exhaust system along with suspension tuned beyond the standard XKR platform. Other custom features



### **JAGUAR XKR STIRLING MOSS SIGNATURE EDITION**

*Only five (5) XKR Stirling Moss Signature Edition coupes were produced by Jaguar. They were all painted with a vintage racing scheme to match Stirlings’ XKE’s of the 60’s and 70’s.*

included 20-inch Detroit wheel package, Brembo cross drilled rotors and brakes and R logo monogram headrests.

### *XK8/XKR 4.2-S (2005)*

Back in Europe, the “4.2-S” was unveiled at Geneva in March 2005. This was the last XK special-edition to be based on the original 1996 design.

Available as either coupe or convertible, with a choice of two V8 engines – one of them supercharged. Features for the “4.2-S” included new exterior and interior colours and two distinct veneer options

for the instrument panel, polished door treadplates with chequered-flag emblems and embossed, leather-edged floor mats. The revised white Jaguar badge on the bonnet also feature chequered accents. New unique 20-inch split rim BBS Perseus performance wheels plus cross-drilled Brembo brake discs, red wheel badges and red brake callipers were also fitted. The “4.2-S” gained firmer springs, dampers and anti-roll bars, steering was 10 per cent quicker and the ride height was lowered by 10mm.

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 only 200 cars in four new exclusive exterior colours – Copper Black Metallic, Frost Blue Metallic, Bay Blue Metallic and Satin Silver Metallic.

### **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. ■

*Editor- the story of the XK (X150) will be covered in the February edition of Classic Marque).*



*The last XK (X100) MY 2006 rolled off the Brown’s Lane production line in May 2005. Its successor was the “Next Generation” of XK’s (project X150) released in 2007.*



## Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)



*Austin Powers Union Jack 2001 XK8 convertible that was used in the third Austin Powers film "Goldmember".*



*The XK was featured extensively in 2002's James Bond "Die Another Day" as the lead henchman, Zao's vehicle. The vehicle was similar in almost every way to a Q Branch equipped automobile. The XKR's gadgetry included a gatling gun, thermal imaging capabilities, mortar bombs, rockets under the front grille, miniature missiles hidden in the door, and front ramming spikes. Eight cars were made for the film.*



## The Jaguar XK Series

# XKR

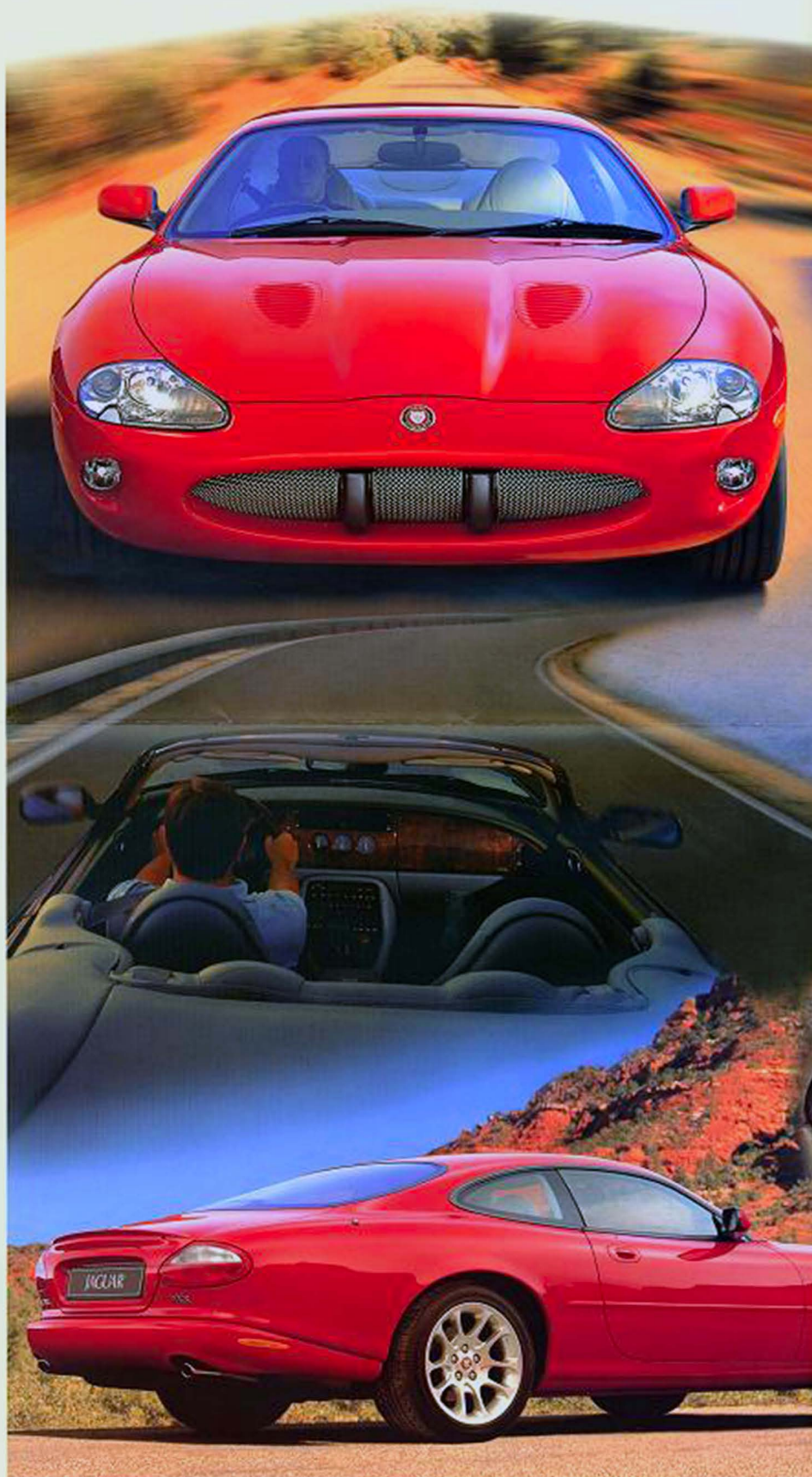
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# XK8 - 5 Times Winner of American Trans-AM Series

## North American Trans-AM Series

The Trans-AM Series was created in 1966 by Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and has evolved over time from its original format as a Manufacturers' Championship series for modified passenger sedans and coupés to its current form as a Drivers'/Manufacturers' Championship Series that is open to GT style race cars.

## Previous Jaguar Trans-AM Wins

The Group 44 Jaguar XJS driven by Bob Tullius won the Drivers' Championship in 1977 (TA1).

In 1978 he dominated the series winning 7 of the 10 races including the Watkins Glen 6 Hours, to win both the Category 1 Drivers championship and Manufacturers championship for Jaguar.

From 1979, British Leyland opted to run Triumph TR8's, but Bob Tullius returned in 1981 with his XJ-S finishing second overall and almost winning the series.

With Jaguar concentrating on the European Touring Car Championship, it was 19 more years before Jaguar returned to the Trans-AM Series.

## Enter Rocketsports Racing

Rocketsports Racing was created by racing driver Paul Gentilozzi to compete in the Trans-AM series. Gentilozzi scored his first Series title in a Chevrolet

Corvette (1998), and captured the 1999 crown in a Ford Mustang.

The year 2000 saw the Trans Am Series usher in new manufacturer eligibility, multi-valve engines, fuel injection and spec rear wings. It marked the return of Jaguar, brought to the party by Gentilozzi's Rocketsports team.

Gentilozzi was aiming at winning his third consecutive championships and if successful, he would have become the first driver to win three titles in three different marques. It was an ambitious goal given that the Jaguar XK8 had no racing history or development.

## 2000

The team built three cars with Jeff Altenburg competing in the second Jaguar XK8, and the third built as a back-up car.

Although the team had done a lot of analysis and were making both structural and geometry changes, the chassis was an on-going development process and their biggest challenge was time. No testing was carried prior to the first race and the team had no time to develop the XK8 engine and used their parent company engine, namely a Ford V8 unit.

With its smooth lines and body contours, the XK8 had excellent aerodynamics, making it one of the fastest straight-

line speed cars in the series. However, ongoing development wasn't achieved until roughly halfway through the series. Irrespective, they still managed three outright wins in the 12-race series. The title was captured by Brian Simo in his Qvale Mangusta who also won three wins but took the title on the strength of seven top-five finishes. Gentilozzi finishing a credible second overall.

## 2001

In 2001, Gentilozzi won his third Trans Am Series championship in four years and led Jaguar to its first manufacturers' title since 1978. Rocketsports won five of the eleven races that year with Gentilozzi winning four of them to finish ahead of Brian Simo in his Qvale Mangusta.

## 2002

Although Gentilozzi won the first race of the season, Boris Said powered his Panoz Esperante to eight wins in 2002 to earn his first Trans-AM Series championship, as Jaguar used the season to develop a multi-valve engine program that would prove to be nearly unbeatable.

## DOHC AJV8 Engine

*"The last time a Jaguar engine competed in Trans-AM was back in 1981. Its return is long overdue," said Rocketsports Racing team owner, Paul Gentilozzi. "It's only right that we work to develop a Jaguar engine for our racing XK8."*



*With its smooth lines and body contours, the XK8 had excellent aerodynamics, making it one of the fastest straight-line speed cars in the series. Scott Pruett (2003) on his way to winning his third Trans-AM title. That year Jaguar won 10 out of the 11 races and completely dominated the competitive field of 53 cars. Jaguar won the Manufacturers Championship ahead of Chevrolet and Ford.*



# XK8 - 5 Times Winner of American Trans-AM Series



*Jaguars victorious Trans-AM racing team of Rocketsports Racing who won the prestigious series in 2001 (Paul Gentilozzi), 2003 (Scott Pruett), 2004 (Paul Gentilozzi), 2005 (German Klaus Graf) and 2006 (Paul Gentilozzi) giving Jaguar a total of four manufacturers' Trans-AM titles.*

Development of the race version of the 4.0 litre engine used a production AJ-V8 alloy cylinder block and heads with a new heavy-duty crankshaft fitted with lightweight racing pistons and connecting rods. Modifications also included custom-made headers and a race fuel injection system. The engine was enlarged and fortified to 4.5 litres and revved to over 9000 rpm. The engines were able to develop more than double the horsepower from the standard 294 bhp (SAE) to over 650 bhp.

## 2003

The Rocketsport Jaguars returned with a vengeance in 2003 with drivers Scott Pruett, Johnny Miller and Wally Castro collectively winning 10 of the 11 races to all but make a clean sweep of the season.

Scott Pruett won eight en route to his third Trans-AM title. Johnny Miller finished second overall to claim a Jaguar one-two.

The last race of the series went to Puerto Rico for the first time in history, with hometown hero Wally Castro finishing first, driving one of the Jaguar XJ8's. Jaguar won its third manufacturers' title.

## 2004

For 2004, Rocketsports entered XK8's for lead driver Tom Kendall, Getilozzi and Tommy Drissi.

The stage was set for a Rocketsports showdown featuring four-time champ Kendall and three-time titlist Gentilozzi. Both drivers entered the season in hot pursuit of Mark Donohue's record for most wins (29) with Kendall leading the charge with 26 wins, but followed closely by Gentilozzi at 24 wins.

The year belonged to Gentilozzi, who gained his fourth title on the strength of five wins in eight starts. His final victory of the season came in Denver to tie Donohue at 29 career wins.

Overall, Jaguar finished 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th to win another manufacturers title.

## 2005

For 2005, Rocketsports entered XK8's for lead driver Klaus Graf, Getilozzi and Tommy Drissi.

Other teams also entered XK8's including motor racing champion Greg Pickett for Team Cytosport.

The 2005 season was one of the most competitive in years. A scant 19 points separated the top four drivers with just two races to go, as Corvette ace Randy Ruhlman led the points chase by a single point. German Klaus Graf, driving a Rocketsports Jaguar, finished out of the top 10 in three of the first four races but turned things around in a big way with the season headed for the home stretch.

He won the final three races to secure his first drivers' title.

Gentilozzi, ran a limited schedule in 2005, but remained a factor when he entered. He won in the streets of Toronto to become the all-time Trans-AM leader in career wins with 30.

The other feat of note was Greg Pickett winning in Edmonton in his XK8, to become the first driver to win in four different decades. Picket finished third overall with Jaguar XK8's claiming four of the top six places thrusting Jaguar to a third-straight and overall, fifth Manufacturers' Trans-AM title.

## 2006

Significant news was made off track, as a new promotor assumed series' ownership and management. Just two races were held in 2006. Gentilozzi earned his 31st career win and added a second in the final race propelling him to his fifth title. No manufacturers title was awarded in 2006.

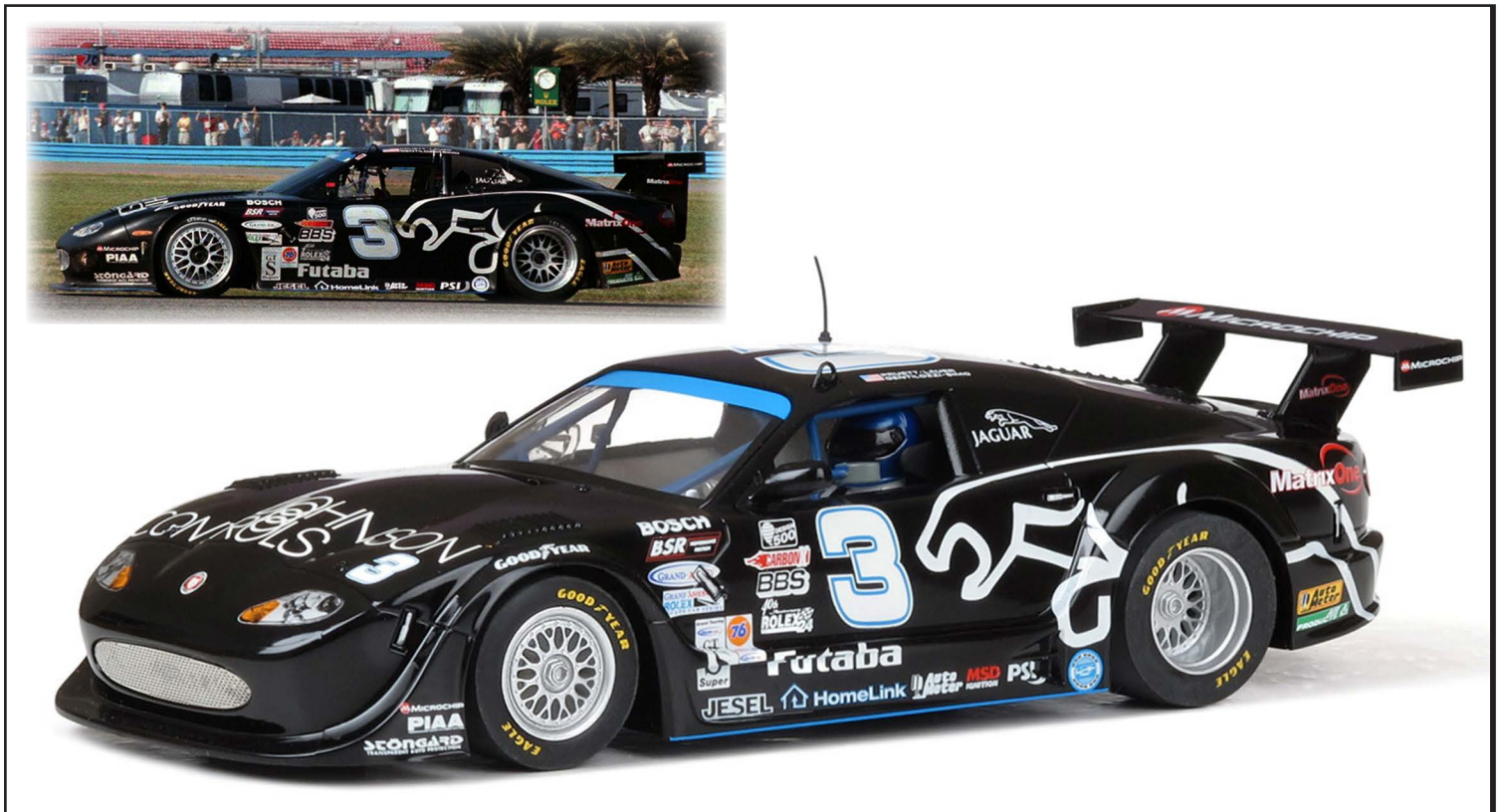
There was no Trans-AM Series in 2007/8 and Rocketsport moved to IMSA's American Le Mans Series. This was significant in that it brought Jaguar back to IMSA racing with Gentilozzi using an XK-RS that saw a Jaguar returning to the Le-Mans 24 hour race in 2010. ■



## Feature - Jaguar XK8/XKR (cont)



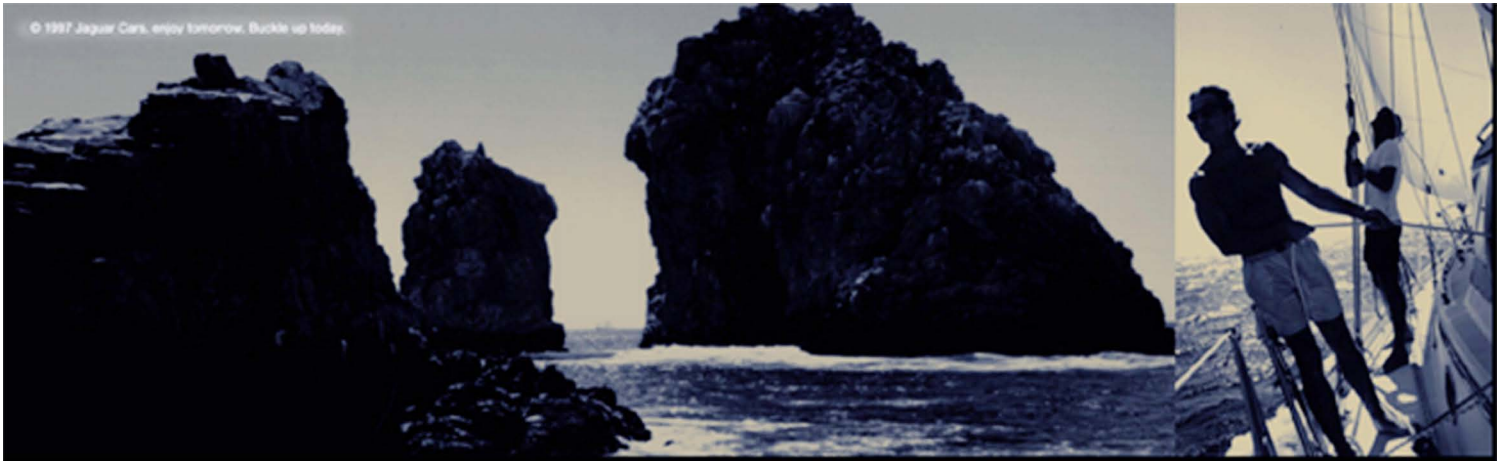
*Rocketsports racing developed this modified version of the outgoing 2004 XK model. Known as an XK-RS, the car made a world debut at the Chicago Auto Exhibition. Tested in a wind tunnel this concept car features deeper front and rear spoilers, wider wheel arches and the engine enlarged to 5.0 litres. This one-off XK-RS Concept 550 horsepower convertible had a claimed top speed of 200mph.*



*2002 DAYTONA 24 hour race. Out of a field of 74 cars, including Le-Mans race cars, Rocketsports Racing team of Paul Gentilozzi, Scott Pruett, Michael Lauer and Brian Simo drove to not only a Class Win but a significant 5th place overall. The XK8 was immortalised by Scalextric with a 1/43rd scale resin handbuilt model (not diecast) of the Jaguar. The models are a splitting image of the original winning XK8.*



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**JAGUAR XK8**  
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