

Distinctively different

By
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We really enjoyed the Jaguar XF a few years ago (\$47k base). The flagship XJ lineup starts at \$74k base, \$85.5k for our long-wheelbase XJL as outfitted.

- Its 340-hp supercharged V6 was a solid basis. But the car proved to be a mixed bag. Most logbook entries were frustrations, e.g.:
- We like the retracting knob shifter, but it's shiny and red hot to touch on a sunny day.
 - The car was hot and stuffy, on just a 90° day.
 - Tales of the touchscreen interface could fill a book. It took many steps to do even simple things like change the fan or adjust the seats.
 - Massaging seats came on while driving, not by our request. Startling. Complex to defeat.
 - The headlight stalk is dark and hidden at night, and if on auto setting, auto high-beams have a dangerous mind of their own.
 - The rear mirror is small and highly distorted.
 - The manual could require a semester of study. The table of contents is 36 pages long. There are five pages on how to enter the car.
 - The gauge cluster is grey against darker grey and very difficult to read. It does brighten and upsize the speeds and RPMs you are hitting, though, which is kind of neat.
 - The touchscreen is unshielded and difficult to see in daylight, including the backup cam.

- Audio controls delivered fairly flat sound.
 - The auto stop-start is one of the worst, rough, sometimes premature, most times lagging.
 - The car wandered and darted at times. It does not wallow, but still feels like a boat. Suspension bottomed out in simple dips.
 - Its turning circle is over 40 feet.
 - Locking/unlocking the doors was buggy.
 - The engine failed to turn off half the time.
 - Ceiling lights would flip open on their own.
 - The power seat would move on its own.
 - Console lid would flip open and whack us.
- It does retain some British personality, less of a cookie-cutter than many competitors.

Wood wrapping from the doors to the instrument panel is very classy and different.

We found the overall shape bulky from the B-pillar back, but did catch a flattering angle in its rear 3/4 view at times.

Normally, we'd like the AWD model. Or the Supercharged or XJR. Sadly, none of those would eliminate some overdone features that drove us nuts with the XJL. Jaguar's flagship has always aimed to be understated yet luxuriously high-end and a strong performer. But by the end of a week, we had had our fill. It's a beautiful car, but we could not live with it.

We had liked the XF a lot. We'd buy that. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....3.0L supercharged V6
TRANSMISSIONZF 8-speed auto w paddles
DRIVETRAINrear-wheel drive
POWER.....340 hp / 332 lb-ft torque
MPG.....17/27/20 (city/hwy/comb)
WHEELS.....19-inch standard w spare
INCLUDED: Long WB, xenon front / LED rear lights, panoramic opening roof, keyless entry-start, intelligent stop-start, TFT LCD virtual instruments, heated-cooled seats f/r, nav, 8" touchscreen, soft door close.

BASE PRICE.....**\$81,200**
VISIBILITY PACKAGE: Adaptive front lighting, intelligent highs, cornering lamps850
ILLUMINATION PACKAGE: Lighted door & trunk sills, illuminated air vents.....1700
FRONT SEAT MASSAGE800
DESTINATION CHARGE:.....895
TOTAL.....**\$85,445**



Laden with some neat features and some frustrations.

