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Wheels: New Jaguar XJ Offers High Speeds for High Prices

By Tim Saunders

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Jaguar's sleek new sedan has attractive features like massaging seats, a glass roof and seatback televisions.

Editor's note: Wheels is a section featuring car reviews.

There is justice in the world. This point is emphasized by the Jaguar XJ but not in the way that you might first imagine.

Consider that drivers of this luxury sedan are more often than not going to be chauffeurs, and that passengers will typically be businessmen and politicians. The fact that the electrically adjustable and heated front seats are equipped with a 10-minute massage function, which really does get to all the necessary areas, makes the driver and front passenger's journey a thoroughly pleasurable experience. This luxury is reserved just for the front passengers, not those in the back, regardless of how rich and powerful they might be.

Jaguar XJ Sedan

New Price: 3.45 million
RUB $110,052
Facts at a glance:
Engine: 3-liter V6
diesel
0- 100 kph: 6.2
seconds
Top speed: 249 kph
Power: 271 bhp
Economy: 17 kpl

Source: Jaguar

It's not all bad in the rear though, because these seats are heated and electrically adjustable. It's even possible for the rear occupants to move the front seats forward, if legroom proves too tight. There are air conditioning controls, too. Television screens fitted in the back of the front headrests help passengers forget about their woes or even keep up to date with the latest news.

This is reliant on there being reception, and sadly in the depths of the British countryside, where the bulk of the test takes place, there is none. Nevertheless, it is an ideal vehicle to crawl around Moscow, the most congested city in the world, according to news reports. There is no better car for traveling four miles in 40 minutes — the time it took a BBC reporter to travel from his office for a meeting. Even in the blistering heat of a warm spring or summer's day, the environment inside the Jaguar remains cool, thanks to its superior air conditioning system.

Occupants sit back inside and relax, no matter how arduous the jams are outside. The aristocratic cat never complains and gets on with the job in hand regardless of whether the commute is incredibly slow or urgently quick.

Back in the front, by far the best part of the XJ, there are controls to satisfy every whim. Push a button, and the steering wheel warms up. The dial for the automatic six speed transmission rises when the engine start button is pushed.

If fast driving is required, then using dynamic mode and sports control in conjunction ensure swift progress, on occasions jolting occupants back in their seats; useful if they become irritating ... It's hard to believe that under the hood resides a three-liter diesel engine, although there is an audible rattle on start-up, quickly forgotten when on the move. Engine stop/start, which cuts in and out with great reliability, is one of the smoothest and quickest on the market. This helps the largest Jaguar in the range to travel around 800 km on its 82 liter tank. The sophisticated cruise control, ideal for motorway cruising, automatically keeps this short wheel base Jag a safe distance from the car in front, braking and accelerating when necessary. The ride is as you would expect, exceptionally comfortable. The trouble-free all-aluminium body ensures good handling.

For reversing, there's a helpful camera that appears in the center console, which is just as well

because you won't see too much out of the rear window. The media center in the middle of the dash is home to a navigation system, radio, controls for the heat and massage functions of the front seats and a television.

There's a massive glass roof stretching the length of the vehicle and its covers retract electrically. These covers match the rest of the roof, which is lined in a dark cosy and welcoming suede, which compliments the black leather and dark wood interior. There's a fair bit of chrome, too and a feeling that a great deal of thought has gone into producing a very welcoming environment. There are even footrests for the rear passengers. It is, however, disappointing that a rattle springs to attention from the driver's door as I proceed down a country lane.

Bearing in mind the size of the XJ, it is perhaps a little disappointing that there is only a reasonably sized trunk, but the trunk automatically opens and closes, ensuring there are no dirty fingers. "It's a bit like Marmite, too," says a colleague. "You either love it or loath it."

Externally, the Jaguar has a striking design, but for me, it looks too similar to the smaller XF, though nevertheless imposing and sophisticated. Since Tata took over, a Jaguar's head has been introduced, placed on the bulky key fob. This looks out of place to me, and the traditional leaping Jaguar, which is used liberally throughout, should be the only emblem used.
The original XJ was a tough act to follow in terms of style and quality, but its replacement is far more reliable with superior build.

Overall, though, this is without doubt a remarkably distinctive luxury vehicle and one for which Great Britain should be proud. This statement of class represents huge value for money, especially when the next best car is arguably the more expensive Rolls Royce, which shares many of the same features.

Read more reviews at testdrives.biz. Contact the author at bizreporter@imedia.ru

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