

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Jaguar F-Type V8S: Let's rock](#)

Lead

Often we test sports cars in the mountains of the Swiss Alps. But for the 488bhp Jaguar F-type V8S, we took to the rocky heights of the picturesque Dolomites to put the feisty feline through its paces...

As you might remember, we've already sampled the F-type in both Pamplona and the surroundings of Lake Geneva - but a true alpine tour, with sharp bends and steep inclines, was still absent from the test portfolio. Consequently, we opted for the craggy peaks of the Sexten Dolomites in South Tyrol, with the route taking us from Zürich via Davos, the wondrous Fluela pass and Lower Engadine, over the Val Müntair, through Merano and Bolzano, and culminating at the Three Peaks Nature Park at the base of the mountains. Our silver V8S roadster is well-equipped for the hike - as well as the 488bhp, 460lb ft of eager torque is available from 2,500rpm. The 0-62mph sprint is promptly dispatched in 4.3 seconds.

Learning to be frugal



The F-type was sired as Jaguar's first 'proper' sports car since its legendary spiritual forebear, and those intentions are embedded in its design DNA. Storage space is what can be politely described as 'modest'; the boot will grudgingly accept two small weekend bags and a pair of hiking boots, but any other kit will be relegated to the passenger footwell. As a result, the £80,000 car's tight packaging encourages frugality while packing for the trip - and anyway, you'll see baggage as little more than unnecessary ballast once the roof is dropped and the exhaust bellows, almost as if voicing its appreciation for the open roads ahead. Once on the move, the chassis is geared towards more 'extreme' driving behaviour: the 'comfort' mode isn't the buttery-soft experience you might hope for. But accordingly, 'dynamic' makes you feel as if the engineers predicted your every move while negotiating this nature-made slalom - its poise and balance are no less than phenomenal.

An espresso in Cortina d'Ampezzo



As we push on, conducting a mountain-amplified concerto with the 8-speed gearbox, Paterno nears and the 'Three Peaks' gradually rise higher in the late summer sky. A few bursts through the forests of Cortina d'Ampezzo leave us with the need to rest both our ears and our spines, and a break for an espresso gives us the perfect opportunity to pitch the newcomer against the Porsche 911, as many prospective buyers will do themselves. But while they might appeal to a similar audience, the two are in fact polar opposites: during its 50 years in existence, the Porsche has morphed into a quasi-GT car which conducts its business with millimetric precision, while the Jag is a rip-snorting muscle car with a British passport.

A walk to clear the head



The F-type's engineers, designers and soundsmiths have gone to great efforts in avoiding the 'lifestyle' corner occupied by the likes of the Mercedes SL and BMW Z4. With its long hood and burbling, could-be-Italian V8, it's well-matched to a Ferrari and Maserati character-wise - and if a much-rumoured 'R' version takes shape, it might even eat into sales of the Ferrari California's replacement. But that's enough musings for now; it's time to let the engine tick itself cool while we explore the Dolomites on foot. Especially considering the relative volume of luggage space those hiking boots demanded.

Photos: Jan Baedeker

Gallery

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