

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Riding shotgun in two of Jaguar's wildest cats...](#)

### Lead

The continuation XKSS and the provision of servicing and new tyres for the XJ220 are key pillars of Jaguar Classic's exciting new strategy to preserve its heritage. Innovative and milestone cars from their respective eras, we sampled both — albeit from the passenger seats — at a German airfield...

### Like a fine wine



Twenty-five years on and the Jaguar XJ220 still causes jaws to drop and knees to weaken. Its sleek shape and sheer size has not aged anything like its rivals from the period — if there were ever a car destined to be pinned up on teenagers' bedroom walls, this really was it. The silver machine twinkling under the hangar lights is chassis eight, one of 10 pre-production prototypes. It was actually unveiled by Princess Diana at the 1991 opening of the dedicated facility in Banbury, where the cars were due to be built and used predominantly for high-speed testing.

Incidentally, it was also the car used by Pirelli to develop its new tyre for Jaguar Classic. The partnership is actually rather fitting, considering the original XJ220 concept was shod with hand-cut Pirellis (although the contract ultimately went to Bridgestone instead). The ill-fated story of the XJ220 is well documented, but no doubt, current owners will welcome official support from the manufacturer once again — who knows, perhaps values will take a shot in the arm, too?

### Into the abyss



Cocooned inside the plush mushroom-grey interior, shielded from the gruff hum of the twin-turbocharged V6 behind you, there's a conspicuous lack of theatre. That is, until our driver points the car down the taxiway and buries his foot into the carpet. The skip-full of boost arrives suddenly, thumping you in the back and surging the car forwards. As the speed climbs, you can actually hear the air rushing inches over your head, and as it continues to climb further, you can appreciate just how much grunt it's got left to give. The car is seriously fast, even by today's standards.

### Our own 'Green Rat'



Regardless of what the 'new' XKSS is, or the idea behind it, there's simply no denying that it's one of the most beautiful objects to grace this planet, full stop. It's hardly surprising Steve McQueen engaged in a long love affair with one. While not the same shade as McQueen's 'Green Rat', 'our' Sherwood Green car — chassis zero — did star in Jaguar's viral launch video on Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles, which was directly inspired by the Hollywood legend's XKSS antics.

Your astonishment at the wide-eyed, swollen machine only lasts until it fires with a rapturous roar. Tucking yourself into the very cosy passenger compartment, you're instantly enveloped in fierce heat, the heady scent of fuel and leather, and close to deafening noise from the side-exit exhaust right beside you. Blasting down the runway and into the first few makeshift bends, it's instantly clear that this is no softly sprung Sunday sports car — it's a D-type, through and through. And the way it goes, stops, and turns is mightily impressive.

### One of the all-time greats



If we were the lucky recipients of one of the nine XKSS continuations Jaguar will build, we'd do absolutely everything in our power to acquire single-type approval and get it on the road. In terms of visceral driving experiences, stretching an XKSS's legs on your favourite road ranks right up there. And for £1.2m, it might just be the bargain of the century.

*Photos: Mathieu Bonnevie for Classic Driver © 2017*

### Gallery







































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