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Jaguar XE Sports saloon – with new Ingenium engine – Road Test

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Jaguar XE 2018 range receives Ingenium petrol engines.

Latest model test-driven by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency)...

The 2018 model year Jaguar XE sports saloon sees the debut of Jaguar Land Rover's new Ingenium petrol engines, in particular the first application of their 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbocharged 200, 250 and 300 hp petrol engines. A 240hp Ingenium turbodiesel engine is also added to the range and the sporty XE S gets a 40 hp increase to 380 hp for the 3.0 litre V6 petrol engine which continues to be manufactured for JLR by Ford.



The Ingenium petrol 200 hp unit is available with rear wheel drive, the 250 hp unit with rear and all-wheel drive options and the 300 hp unit is all-wheel drive only. Depending on the engine chosen there are SE, Prestige, Portfolio, R-Sport and XE S core specification choices.

Other 2018 spec changes and options include Jaguar's Configurable Dynamics technology that allows drivers to fine-tune the gear shift, engine management and steering for a more rewarding drive. Intelligent safety features – including Blind Spot Assist, Forward Vehicle Guidance and Forward Traffic Detection technologies – join extensive Advanced Driver Assistance Systems and for added convenience a Gesture Boot Lid is available for the first time.

Other improvements include an upgraded interior with higher quality carpeting, additional chrome accents and enhanced leather quality. Available is a 12.3-inch TFT instrument cluster with four visual themes, and full-screen navigation plus dual view screen InControl technology is introduced on the Touch Pro infotainment system, which allows passenger and driver to simultaneously view different content on the central control screen.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Jaguar XE core model prices for the 2018 model year start at £28,295 and rise to £48,045. The XE's competition in the heartland of the D-segment business and retail car market sectors are the Audi A4, BMW 3 Series and Mercedes C-Class.

It's now two years since the Jaguar XE four door range joined the compact executive saloon car sector. With UK XE sales predominately featuring diesel engines over the Ford supplied petrol units from their previous Ford ownership, now Jaguar have introduced their own 2.0 litre petrol engines to join their Ingenium range of turbodiesel units, and all are built at their new Wolverhampton engine plant.

To sample the new JLR 2.0 litre turbo petrol engine I slipped into the Jaguar XE Portfolio 200 hp model which has an eight-speed automatic gearbox as standard, with rear wheel drive. The price is £31,695 but my vehicle was fitted with a huge range of extra cost options

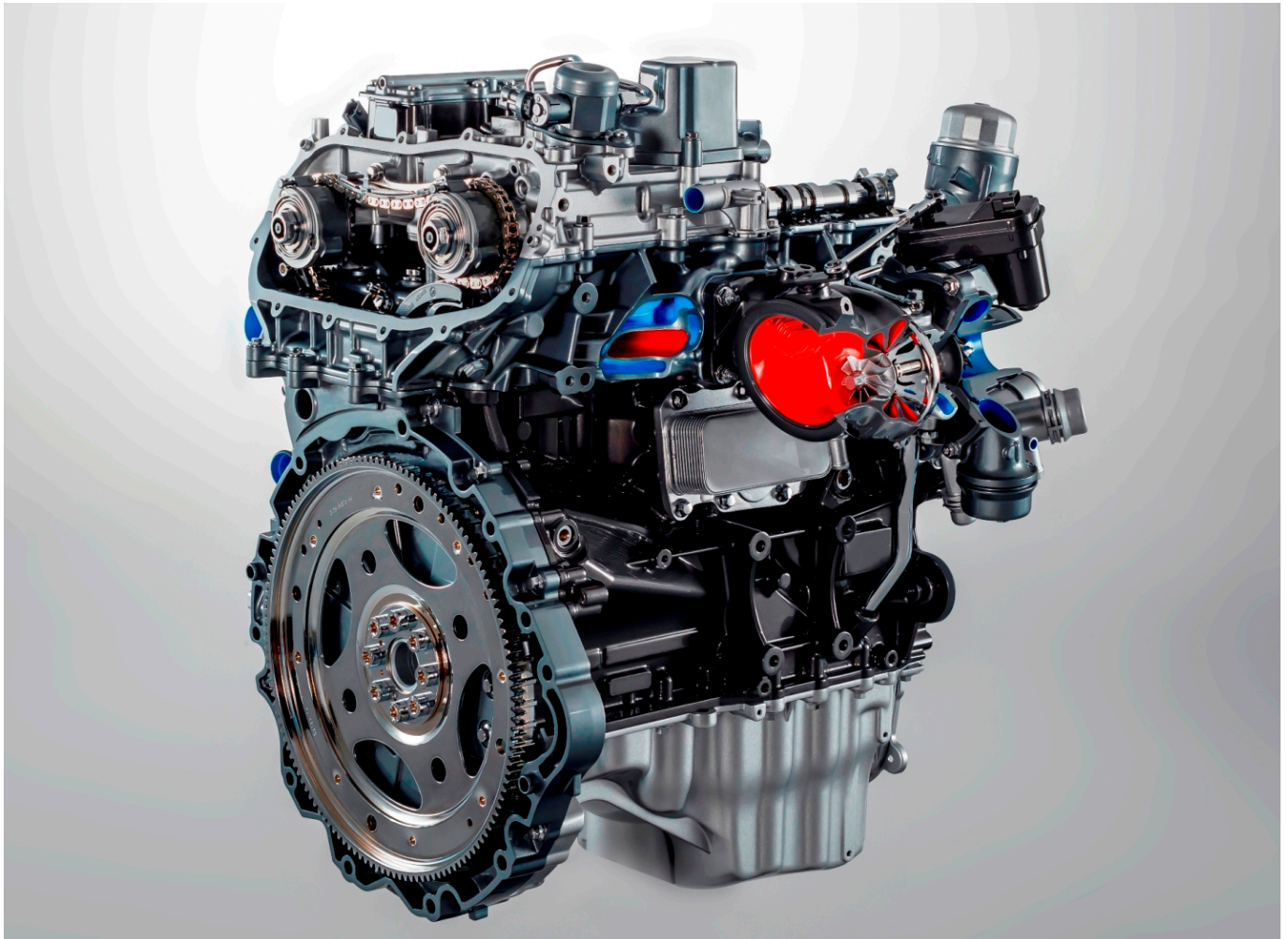


to showcase what is available and so the test car's price was £42,865. Some of the major extra cost options were a sliding panoramic sunroof at £1,045, upgraded Navigation Pro Pack with Meridian sound system costing £1,090, 10-inch dual view touchscreen at £625, Advanced Parking Assist Pack with Surround Camera at £1,610, the excellent Heads-Up display at £1,350 and larger 19-inch alloy wheels.

That isn't to say the plush Portfolio specced XE is short on standard equipment. It includes cruise control, all surface progress control, Jaguar Drive Control selectable modes, torque vectoring, twin tailpipes, two-zone climate control, Bluetooth streaming, DAB digital radio, dynamic stability control with traction control, traffic sign recognition, rear parking aid, lane departure warning, autonomous emergency braking, InControl apps and text to speech function.

The XE for 2018 remains the comfortable riding, elegantly styled four door sports saloon which visually offers something different from the more commonplace higher volume selling Audi A4, BMW 3 Series and Merc C-Class fleet favourites. It has its drawbacks chiefly cramped rear seat leg and headroom, and an awkward boot design.

The main changes are of course the move from Ford supplied 2.0 litre petrol engines to JLR's own Ingenium units. In the case of the new 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbo petrol unit fitted to my test car, the capacity is the same as the blue oval unit with the same 200 hp (197 bhp) power output. However there is 40 Nm (30 lb.ft) more torque at 320 Nm (236 lb.ft), which makes it more responsive mid-range, with a zero to 60 mph acceleration time of 6.7 seconds and a top speed of 148 mph.



It is more economical as well, officially returning 45.1 mpg in the Combined Cycle versus 37.7 mpg for the Ford unit. My week-long road test driving, using long and short runs, returned 38 mpg but much of that was done in its ECO mode which didn't detract at all from the engine's ability via its torque to respond when swift acceleration was required. The Ingenium engine is also much cleaner for CO2 emissions at 144 g/km rather than 179 g/km. This means VED road tax is £200 First Year rate and then £140 Standard rate for year two onwards. The Ford unit was £800 First Year rate and then £140 thereafter. Company car drivers now pay 27% Benefit-in-Kind tax rather than 34% with the previous unit.

The performance of power output and torque are well matched to the eight-speed automatic gearbox as it revs willingly with a smooth delivery of power. Just occasionally the changes



between first and second gear ratios felt a bit 'snatched' during initial acceleration but generally changes up and down the gearbox were smooth, especially in higher gears where they were seamless. Unless revved really hard the engine was quiet but it was oddly harsh in tone when the stop/start system was used. It sounded very 'metallic' when the starter motor operated under stop/start conditions, but strangely not during normal push button starting.



VERDICT

Overall handling lived up to the XE's sports saloon billing. The handling response was sharp, the steering precise for a saloon and the ride compliant. Whether it was being 'hurried' along on open winding roads, cruising on motorways or dawdling along in traffic it was a nice car to travel in. The interior with its upgrades looked and felt plush and the build quality looks to have improved a lot over its initial arrival on our roads. It's not the roomiest of saloons in its sector but it's a bit more 'exclusive'.

With the UK motoring public getting more jittery about buying or running diesel fuelled cars now and in the future, the arrival of JLR's Ingenium petrol engines for use in Jaguar and Land Rover models is very timely for their 2018 model ranges.



For: Much cleaner petrol engine with better performance, lower taxes and running costs, nice specification improvements throughout, really good interior build quality, exclusivity ownership value in its sector.

Against: Harsh sounding stop/start function, cramped legroom for rear seat passengers, awkwardly shaped boot, gets too expensive if loaded with options.





Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

2018 Jaguar XE Portfolio 2.0 Ingenium 200 hp turbocharged petrol, automatic.

Price: £31,695 (£41,865 as tested).

Engine/transmission: JLR new Ingenium 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbocharged petrol, 200 hp, 320 Nm (236 lb.ft) of torque, eight speed automatic, rear wheel drive.

Performance: 148 mph, 0-60 mph 6.7 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 45.1 mpg (38 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 144 g/km, VED road tax £200 First Year rate then £140 Standard rate unless you spec the car to exceed £40K and then add £310 for Year Two onwards for five years, BiK company car tax rate 27%.

Insurance Group: 27E.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,672 mm (15.33 ft), W 1,850 mm (6.07 ft), H 1,415 mm (4.64 ft), boot 455 litres (16.07 cu.ft), four doors/five seats.