

Jaguar XJ6/XJ12 and Daimler Sovereign Double Six (to 1986)

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Elegance personified, in classic car terms... The XJ6/Daimler Sovereign model range have always been liked for their timeless good looks. This shot shows a superb early Sovereign.

Graceful, fast, roomy and supremely comfortable, early Jaguar XJs and equivalent Daimlers can provide you with a great deal of classic car for your money. However, to win in this respect you need to take great care to purchase a genuinely good example. Kim Henson



is your guide to these iconic British sports saloons.

Arriving on the British motoring scene in 1968, the Jaguar XJ6 four door saloon featured entirely new bodywork, and was propelled by the company's proven straight six, twin overhead camshaft XK type engine, offered in 2.8 and 4.2 litre capacities. The bigger engine, in particular, was renowned for its willing performance and whisper-quiet running at high speeds.

Providing a ride quality felt by many to be unequalled at the time, plus impressive handling and roadholding for a large saloon, independent coil spring suspension was installed at both the back and front. Servo-assisted, dual circuit brakes helped to keep these big cats in check.

All 4.2 litre versions, plus De Luxe variants of the 2.8 models, came with power-assisted steering and leather upholstery. In all versions the interiors were sumptuously appointed and instrumentation was comprehensive.

An even more 'upmarket' Daimler version - designated Sovereign and with a traditional style, fluted 'Daimler' grille, joined the line-up in October 1969.

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Minor changes were made during 1969/70, but of major importance was the arrival of the XJ12 (and equivalent Daimler 'Double Six') in the summer of 1972. With Jaguar's superb 5.3 litre V12 power unit under the bonnet, these smooth-running high performers also featured automatic transmission, ventilated front disc brakes, power-assisted steering and high speed Dunlop tyres. The interiors were superbly crafted.

Long wheelbase versions of the XJ12 (XJ12L) and XJ6 (XJ6L) were introduced late in 1972,



with a wheelbase four inches longer than the standard cars, providing improved rear seat leg room.

In mid-1973 the 2.8 litre models came to the end of their production road, and Series 2 XJs (identifiable by shallower grilles, higher-mounted front bumpers and restyled facias) arrived in the autumn of the same year. Standard equipment was impressive, and included central locking, electrically operated windows, an improved heating/ventilation system, and extra soundproofing.

Especially sleek two door fixed head coupés were introduced for 1974; the 12 cylinder version (XJ12C) had standard-fit tinted glass and air conditioning.

Overdrive became part of the specification on manual 4.2 litre models in February 1974. From May 1975 this model was designated XJ4.2, and was joined by a new variant, with a 3442cc XK engine. This newcomer was designed to be cheaper to buy and to run. It incorporated cloth trim instead of leather, and lacked both electrically operated windows and central locking.

During the spring of 1975, fuel-injected versions of the XJ12C (fitted with a black vinyl roof) and XJ12L arrived.

Manual models were equipped with five speed transmissions from September 1978.

The spring of 1979 saw further range revisions, including restyled roof and rear end profiles; the updated models were designated 'Series 3'. Buyers of the 3.4 litre 'entry level' model benefited from new trim, pile carpets, a stereo system and fuel injection.

Significantly, in the summer of 1981, 'High Efficiency' ('HE') engines were installed in the V12 versions, together with a higher ratio final drive unit. The result was usefully improved fuel consumption.

A headlamp wash/wipe system, plus an electrically controlled sun roof and twin door



mirrors (also electrically operated) were standard features on the revised models. At the same time, the six cylinder versions gained a larger cooling fan and oil cooler.

The autumn of 1982 saw interior changes, and a year later, the introduction of high specification 'Sovereign' versions. On 4.2 litre models, a trip computer, air conditioning and electrically adjustable front seats were standard features. Digital fuel injection, cruise control and air conditioning were additional refinements on the 5.3HE.

New XJ6/Sovereign models (powered by AJ6 type engines) replaced the earlier versions in October 1986, although the V12 variants continued in production...



The two door coupé versions of both the Jaguar and Daimler have an even sleeker appearance than the saloons. They are comparatively rare and increasingly sought-after.





Beautifully put together, luxurious and comfortable – the interiors on all versions are full of English character and have always been highly regarded.



Rust can attack XJ bodywork 'everywhere'. Carefully examine the underbody structure, and closely scrutinise all panel extremities.



Detailed assessment is advised of the wheel arch lips (which can disintegrate), the sills, the lower edges of the doors, and the rear wing bottoms.



Good dynamic behaviour depends on the suspension bushes being in excellent condition. Take a close look at the suspension when viewing an XJ.



Maintenance at home is quite possible, although many enthusiasts prefer to entrust the work to specialists – especially for the complex V12s.

REALITY CHECK

These wonderful machines have always been revered for their excellent ride quality, their spacious and beautifully crafted interiors and roomy boots, plus of course their impressive performance.

All versions are competent in terms of their dynamic behaviour, and all are enjoyable to



own, although pre-HE V12 models consume fuel at quite a rate. As classic cars they can be an excellent choice and represent good value for money – but rust can be a HUGE issue on neglected examples....

When viewing any version, carefully inspect the body shell 'everywhere', but especially in the vicinity of the sill assemblies, jacking points, floor pans, pillars and bulkheads. In addition, assess the state of the front and rear inner wings, the front valance cross-member, the front wing extremities, the lower forward edge of the bonnet, plus the bottoms of the doors, rear wings and boot lid. Don't ignore the rear door 'shut' panels, wheel arch lips, rear valance and boot floor, also the 'wells' behind the rear wheels.

The sumptuous interiors contribute much to the character of these cars, and careful inspection is advised as trim in poor condition (especially leather!) can cost a great deal to restore.

Check carefully too for mechanical ailments...

On six cylinder models, assess the engine for cooling system problems (including overheating, corrosion, also radiator core disintegration), timing chain wear/rattle, low oil pressure (it should be above 45 p.s.i. at normal driving speeds), and excessive oil smoke from the exhaust (note that 2.8 litre engines are prone to piston burning).

On 12 cylinder cars, look for engine oil leaks, lack of regular maintenance (examine the service record), timing chain wear and cooling system deterioration.

On all models, check manual transmissions for evidence of weak synchromesh and noisy gearbox bearings. On automatics, check for smooth ratio changes and ensure that the transmission fluid is clean and up to the correct level.

Well-used cars may have worn/time-expired suspension bushes, which will result in poor handling and ride characteristics, not to mention MoT test failure!



SUMMARY

Great classics which can be a real pleasure to own. They can be as enjoyable for passengers to ride in as they are for the driver to make the most of. Still highly effective executive expresses.

Organisations catering for the cars include:

Jaguar Drivers' Club; www.jaguardriver.co.uk

Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club; www.jec.org.uk

"WE CAN HELP"

Hollygrove Jaguar Specialists can assist owners with all aspects of XJ series maintenance, repairs and restorations (also similar work on all Jaguar models). Contact them direct (Peter or Will Everett) for full details of all their services.

Address: Hollygrove Jaguar Specialists, Verwood Road, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 2DB

Tel. (01425) 477000

Website: www.hollygrovejaguar.com

E-mail: info@hollygrovejaguar.com

PRICES

Important Notes:

1. Jaguar versions shown as examples; equivalent Daimler models attract a small premium.
2. Asking prices vary widely; these figures are only a guide.
3. The professional restoration of rough XJ models can amount to FAR more than the figures suggested here for top notch examples.



XJ6 Series 1: Rough, £750. Good, £3,000. Top notch, £5,000+.
XJ12 Series 1: Rough, £800. Good, £3,500. Top notch, £6,000.
XJ6 Series 2: Rough, £750. Good, £2,500. Top notch, £4,500+.
XJ12 Series 2: Rough, £800. Good, £3,000. Top notch, £5,500+.
XJ6 Series 3: Rough, £750. Good, £2,000+. Top notch, £4,000+.
XJ12 Series 3: Rough, £750. Good, £2,500+. Top notch, £4,500.
XJ6 4.2C: Rough, £2,000+. Good, £4,000+. Top notch, £8,000+.
XJ5.3C: Rough, £2,500+. Good, £5,000+. Top notch, £10,000+.

FACTS AND FIGURES

(Note: Jaguar versions shown as examples).

Built:

XJ6 2.8: 1968-73
XJ6 3.4: 1975-86
XJ6 4.2: 1968-86
XJ12: 1972-86

Bodywork:

Four door saloon, two door fixed head coupé.

Engines:

XJ6 2.8: 2792cc, twin overhead camshaft, straight six cylinder, 140 bhp.
XJ6 3.4: 3442cc, twin overhead camshaft, straight six cylinder, 161 bhp.
XJ6 4.2: 4235cc, twin overhead camshaft, straight six cylinder, 173 bhp (later cars, 205 bhp).
XJ12: 5343cc, overhead camshaft V12 cylinder, 265 bhp (later cars, 299 bhp).

0-60 mph:

XJ6 2.8: 11 sec
XJ6 3.4: 10.5+ sec



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XJ6 4.2: 8.5+ sec

XJ12: 7.5 sec

Top speed:

XJ6 2.8: 117 mph

XJ6 3.4: 118 mph

XJ6 4.2: 120+ mph

XJ12: 145+ mph

Typical fuel consumption:

XJ6 2.8: 17-24 mpg

XJ6 3.4: 16-24 mpg

XJ6 4.2: 15-23 mpg

XJ12: Pre HE models: 10-18 mpg; HE models, 12-20+ mpg