Latest Jaguar and Land Rover models – News and First Impressions

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Two new SUVs drive Jaguar and Land Rover to [illegible] in 2016...

A Festive Round-up by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Jaguar news

At the annual Christmas Ride and Drive media event held at Eastnor Castle Herefordshire by Jaguar Land Rover, it was announced that the new Jaguar F-Pace SUV launched in April this year is not only Jaguar's first ever SUV but it has become the fastest-selling Jaguar ever.

Over 40,000 F-Pace SUVs have been sold globally with 7,200 going to UK customers since its April on-sale date. So far the vehicle has attracted 1.6 million on-line searches for information by potential customers with 370,000 expressions of interest recorded. In the UK the F-Pace mid-sized five seater SUV now outsells Jaguar's previous highest selling XE

compact executive saloon range to take the brand's number one sales position.

The USA is the largest single sales market for F-Pace with the UK in second position. For the first eleven months of 2016 Jaguar's global sales of all their models were 132,381 units – a 75% increase over the same period in 2015, mainly due to the arrival of the F-pace. In the UK for the same period Jaguar's sales were 32,302 units – a 47% increase over the same period in 2015. Jaguar looks set for record global and UK sales in 2016.

Land Rover news

Meanwhile news from Land Rover that the new mid-sized five or five+two seater Discovery Sport has become the brand's best-selling model, overtaking the Evoque. Over 100,000 global sales have been recorded this year, 22,140 of them in the UK.

Due to be launched in March 2017, the all-new fifth generation seven seater Discovery was put on static display at Eastnor Castle for the media to see. Already Land Rover has received 10,000 global orders plus 2,000 UK orders from the UK in just two months since the first information was released about the new range. UK prices start from £43,495. Since the original Discovery was launched in 1989 over 1.2 million vehicles have been sold.

For the 2016 January to November period Land Rover global sales were 395,556 units – a 9% increase over the same period last year. For the same period in the UK sales were 74,567 units, a 21% increase over the same period in 2015. Like Jaguar – Land Rover also looks set for record global and UK sales in 2016.

Additional notes:

- Jaguar Land Rover is Britain's largest automotive manufacturer, with the company's three UK manufacturing plants breaking the 500,000 production milestone in 2015.
- Jaguar Land Rover is the UK's largest automotive sector employer, employing 40,000 people in the UK, including 2,500 apprentices and graduates, as well as supporting around 275,000 additional UK jobs through its dealerships, suppliers and local businesses.

- Jaguar Land Rover is one of the UK's largest exporters and generates over 80% of its revenue from exports.
- Over the past five years, Jaguar Land Rover has doubled sales and employment, more than tripled turnover, and invested £12 billion in new product creation and capital expenditure.

The Jaguar F-Pace SUV



The F-Pace five door, five seater SUV, or performance crossover as Jaguar describes it, consists of Pure, Prestige, Portfolio, R-Sport and S variants whilst the engine line-up is 180 hp 2.0 litre diesel manual RWD/ AWD and automatic AWD; 240 hp 2.0 litre petrol automatic RWD; 300 hp 3.0 litre diesel automatic AWD; 340 hp and 380 hp 3.0 litre petrol automatic

AWD.

Now Jaguar's best selling model range – the F-Pace is manufactured at Jaguar Land Rover's Solihull Plant alongside the Jaguar XE sports saloon.

With over 40,000 global sales since its launch in April 2016, of which 7,200 units have gone to UK customers, the 2.0 litre 180 hp Ingenium turbodiesel with R-Sport specification is the best-selling version.

However, having tried that unit this time I stepped into the 3.0 litre, V6 300 hp turbodiesel with its eight-speed automatic transmission and AWD for a brief blast around the slippery rain soaked roads of rural Herefordshire. What better engine than this unit which gives the F-Pace real 'pace' to try the handling dynamics of Jaguar's first-ever SUV. The price of this version is £51,450 but there are less expensive versions starting from a shade over £35,000.



Although Eastnor Castle, the venue for JLR's latest media event, is their historic home for Land Rover off-roading, the F-Pace is not really on off-roader – it's more an athletic 4×4 for fast road work in keeping with its BMW X5 and Audi Q5 competitors.

With its lightweight but strong aluminium architecture the F-Pace offers a spacious five seater cabin plus a large 650 litre (22.95 cu.ft) luggage compartment. Its refinement is superb and the list of specification impressive. After all it is a Jaguar, but with a higher stance on the road and fully equipped with the brand's latest infotainment and connectivity system operated via an intuitive 10.2-inch tablet style touchscreen.

But it is the chassis technology that makes the F-Pace probably the best handling crossover or SUV available today. It has torque vectoring and adaptive and configurable dynamics to

provide a tuneable driving experience. The double wishbone and integral link suspension provides the core highlights of sharp handling whilst retaining a comfortable ride.

Whilst JLR's own new generation of Ingenium 2.0 litre four cylinder turbodiesel engines are the mainstay of F-Pace sales, the stronger 3.0-litre V6 300 hp turbodiesel unit I tried gives the vehicle the real muscle power – ideal for those long high speed journeys – but it's no less impressive and refined for in-town travel.

With 700 Nm (516 lb.ft) of torque it offers a huge punch of acceleration power, taking just 5.8 seconds to go from zero to 60 mph and with an outright top speed of 150 mph. The fuel economy is also not prohibitive either, with a Combined Cycle figure of 47.1mpg. On my short test around the winding Herefordshire country roads the real-life figure was 34.9 mpg and driving was effortless, thanks to the smooth and seamless eight-speed auto gearbox with the AWD system shuffling grip to the wheels with most adhesion. With CO2 emissions of 159 g/km VED road tax is currently just £185 a year and company car drivers will pay 31% Benefit-in-Kind tax. Insurance is a high-ish Group 42E.



VERDICT

Overall it is easy to see with the increasing public demand for SUVs why the F-Pace has been such a huge sales success for the Jaguar.

For: Jaguar's first ever SUV/Crossover, fastest-selling Jaguar ever, great to drive, high kerb appeal, strong engine.

Against: Expensive for company car tax and insurance brand – whatever engine is chosen.

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

Jaguar F-Pace Crossover S, 3.0d 300 hp, auto, AWD. Price: £51,450.

Engine/transmission: 3.0 litre, V6 turbodiesel, 300 hp, 700 Nm (516 lb.ft) of torque, eight speed auto, AWD.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 5.8 seconds.

Top speed: 150 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 47.1 mpg, (34.9 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 159 g/km, VED road tax £185, BIK company car tax 31%. Insurance Group: 42E.

The 2017 Land Rover Discovery Sport



The fact that the Discovery Sport is now Land Rover's best selling SUV range – having taken over from the Range Rover Evoque – is a notable move, and the Discovery line-up will gain an important boost when the full-size seven seater all-new Discovery heavyweight off-roader arrives in March 2017.

But for now the 2017 model year mid-sized Discovery Sport gains the world's first automotive integration of TILE Bluetooth tracking with Land Rover InControl apps. The latest Discovery Sport prices start from £31,095.

With the TILE function the Discovery Sport is the car that never forgets, thanks to the tracking system. Important items such as wallets, bags, briefcases and even keys and phones using TILE tags, tiny Bluetooth trackers that can be attached to important items and used to track their whereabouts using smartphone technology. Once the app is initiated

using the central touchscreen, customers are alerted if specified items are not inside the vehicle and are even able to get on-screen directions to their last known destination. Clever stuff – but can harassed mums attach them to the children prior to the school run?

Also for 2017 Land Rover has added a new set of personalisation body colours to the Discovery Sport models. There is also the latest version of InControl Touch Pro infotainment with a larger 10.2-inch touchscreen. Also added is a Driver Condition Monitor, essentially a driver alert system which sets of an audible warning if the driver appears to be suffering from drowsiness. Another addition is an Intelligent Speed Limiter function, which works in conjunction with the traffic sign recognition feature to detect changes to the prevailing speed limit.

All other aspects of the Discovery Sport are retained, including 2.0 litre 150 or 180 hp turbodiesel Ingenium engines, six-speed manual or nine-speed automatic transmissions and the clever computer-controlled Terrain Response multi-mode all-wheel-drive system.



My latest Discovery Sport driving experience was in the 2.0 litre 180 hp turbodiesel model, complete with its nine-speed automatic gearbox, and with the HSE Luxury trim and equipment level, and priced at a hefty £43,400.

This constant move by Land Rover to push their model range more and more upmarket hasn't always gone down well with UK owners who suddenly find themselves without a cost-effective replacement for their Freelander (as an example) so they have moved on to other less costly brands. But even so with the Discovery Sport now Land Rover's best selling range how can we say they are wrong in their model line-up and sales strategy? Technology and higher levels of equipment cost more.

Back to the test drive model… This is a vehicle equally at home on or off-road and it carries

out its dual role without compromise. Off-roading in deep mud, wading through deep water, scaling seemingly impossible steep climbs, whatever… it gets on with its task without taxing the brain of the driver. Just select the mode required, apply a little throttle and watch the magic happen as the various computer-controlled functions shuffle power from wheels with no grip to wheels with more grip – whether it's a steep uphill gradient or a steep downhill track.

On road the lofty body does incur some body roll during cornering, but again the AWD system provides the grip to the right wheels at the right time and the ride is generally compliant.

The 180 hp turbodiesel unit provides ample torque of 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) from 1,750 rpm, providing a top speed of 117 mph and with zero to 60 mph taking 8.4 seconds. The official Combined Cycle figure is 53.3 mpg and on my test driving around the Herefordshire country roads the vehicle returned a disappointing real-life figure of 34.1 mpg. The CO2 emissions are 139 g/km so VED road tax is currently £130 every year and company car BIK tax is 27%. Insurance is Group 30E.

VERDICT

It is not the quietest or smoothest modern 2.0 litre turbodiesel engine on the market today, nor the most fuel-efficient, but this doesn't seem to have reduced its sales potential. Potentially this best selling Discovery Sport, priced from a little over £31,000, will provide some strong sales competition to the all-new and larger but even more expensive to buy and run, full-fat Discovery which arrives in March 2017, priced from £43,495 to £68,295.

For: Land Rover's top selling model, five or seven seat versions, brilliant off-road performance, good to drive on-road.

Against: Not the quietest or smoothest modern four cylinder diesel engine available now.

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

2017 model year Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE Luxury 2.0 litre, TD4, 180 hp turbodiesel auto, 4WD.

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder, Ingenium turbodiesel 180 hp, 430 Nm (317 lb.ft) of torque, nine speed auto, 4WD.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 8.4 seconds.

Top speed: 117 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 53.3 mpg (34.1 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 139 g/km, BIK company car tax 27E.

Insurance Group: 30E.


MERRY CHRISTMAS
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