

Mastery.

BY JOE SAGE

A favorite Jaguar in our office is the F-TYPE R (\$103,600 coupe, \$106,450 convertible), a rarified sports car with a 550-hp supercharged V8. Another favorite has long been the Jaguar XF mid-size sedan, with 340-hp supercharged V6, starting at just \$51,900. At half the price of an F-TYPE R, the XF delivers twice the interior and cargo utility and gets 30 MPG highway, a decent set of trade-offs, all within an unmistakable Jaguar wrapper.

The Jaguar XF 35t R-Sport is the top of three trim levels with this powertrain. An XF S tweaks horsepower to 380 hp and starts at \$65,700. All are available with either rear- or all-wheel-drive.

We had a full report on the launch of this all-new (yet fully familiar) XF in our January/February issue. Expanded use of aluminum architecture—which Jaguar has been perfecting for well over a decade—saves fuel and boosts power, while also enabling a longer wheelbase, more interior space, a long hood and more vertical grille, all a hair

shorter overall, with a shorter front overhang.

Despite 40 fewer horses than the XF S, the full XF model range delivers the same zero-to-60 time, the same top speed and the same torque. The price range is the same as it has been for years, other than there being no \$80,000 XFR now.

Also the same is the refreshingly nice implementation of features. Jaguar's rotary shift knob is not only elegant, accurate and well-positioned; it also delivers a satisfying brand presence each time it retracts when you power down. Auto start-stop, unlike most, is smooth and immediate.

Instruments are well allocated among binnacle readouts and instruments; stalk controls; a screen interface for media, climate, phone and nav, with one click into deeper functions; and an eco-normal-sport control bar behind the shifter that also appropriately incorporates a setting for slick conditions. Functions quickly become intuitive, eyes-off. A heads-up display (at \$990 a little pricey) also helps driver focus, though it's near-invisible through polarized glasses.

Everything we loved about the prior XF has been fleshed out just as well, and then some, in

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	3.0L supercharged V6
HP/TORQUE	340 hp / 332 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	ZF 8HP45 8-spd auto w/paddles
DRIVETRAIN	RWD
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	5.2 sec / 121 mph
WEIGHT	3770 lb
MPG	20/30/24 (city/hwy/combined)
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BASE PRICE (XF 35t R-Sport RWD)	\$60,650
DARK SAPPHIRE METALLIC	550
GLOSS BURL WALNUT VENEER	300
COMFORT/CONVENIENCE PACK: Cooled front & heated rear seats, soft door close, pwr trunk close ..	2000
LUXURY INTERIOR UPGRADE PACK: Electric rear sunblind, manual rear side blinds, 4-zone climate, suedecloth headliner, 10-color ambient lighting, illuminated door sill finishers	2700
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	990
ADAPTIVE DYNAMICS	1000
DESTINATION CHARGE:	995
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TOTAL	\$69,815

this second-generation machine. Driving is firm, responsive, smooth and strong. Interestingly, our drive notes were relatively minimal in this one—the quality of our experience was so self-evident, it seems there was little more to say. ■

The Jaguar XF in Europe has been crowned BBC Top Gear's Saloon (Sedan) Car of the Year; Best Executive Car at the Fleet News Awards; and SME Company Car Awards' Best Director's Car—in one recent month alone. The XF starts at \$52,000 but drives like a \$75,000 German performance sedan, with style and quality to back it up. Its 340-hp 3-liter V6 delivers 30 MPG highway with power on tap from the moment you tap it.

