

Jaguar Saloon Cars

A monthly series - Part 7

By Tony Johnson

[XJ12L Series 2](#) (1974-1979)

Series 2 XJ12 cars differed from the XJ6 Series 2 in one major respect with all 12-cylinder cars only built on the long wheelbase platform which had been introduced towards the end of the Series 1 production.

The six-cylinder cars were available on either platform until 1975 when production was standardised on the long wheelbase floor pan apart from the XJ coupe. The XJ12L shared all the enhancements of the updated Series 2 models although initially sharing the mechanicals of the Series 1 XJ12. The V12 power plant was eventually updated to electronic fuel injection making the later Series 2 XJ12s more economical.



XJ6 and Sovereign Series 3 (1979-1986)

Whilst Jaguar had been in the process of developing an all new XJ series of saloons since 1973, problems with the management structure under British Leyland resulted in unnecessary delays in the final design sign off. Jaguar saloons had always dictated style rather than followed it, so it is strange to think that outside design studios were asked to submit designs. Fortunately, these were all rejected. It is ironic to think that the original in-house Jaguar design of 1973 was the basis of the final design concept approved nearly seven years later.

It is somewhat hard to accept that a company famous for its designs, most being from the eye of Sir William Lyons, should find itself in the position of not being able to produce a suitable updated design for the new car in the process of development. As a stop gap measure the venerable XJ saloon was given a second facelift with the assistance of Pininfarina who brought the original design up to date by creating more glass area, flattening the roof, restyling the rear taillights and fitting more modern bumpers. Gone too was the egg crate grille with the return of the traditional Jaguar grille of vertical bars. The Series 3 saloons had a much cleaner look and very appropriate for the period. They also proved to be well received by the buying public with excellent sales. The name Sovereign was transferred from Daimler to become the luxury version of the Jaguar in 1983.



Daimler Double Six Series 3 (1979-1992)

As with the Series 1 and 2 cars, the V12 Daimler version of the Series 3 saloon retained the Double Six name originally adopted in 1930 by Daimler. Unlike the previous versions, however, the Series three cars from 1986 onwards were fully optioned with their own alloy wheels previously used in polished alloy form on the Series 2 cars and early XJ-S coupes but for the Series 3 cars these were powder coated.

Although the XJ40 models entered production as the new XJ6 and Daimler these cars were only powered by the then new AJ6 engines. The original engineering of the engine bay of the XJ40 had ensured no 'V' configured motor would fit in case the Leyland management in power at the time of its initial development had ideas of fitting the Rover V8 to power the new car.

As a consequence, Jaguar was forced to retain the aging Series 3 in V12 form as their top saloon model.



Daimler DS420 Limousine (1968-1974)

Jaguar retained the tradition of luxury Daimler limousines with the introduction of the DS420 in 1968 to replace the aging Daimler DR450 and the Van den Plas Princess. The earlier versions of the Daimler DS420 were made by Van den Plas although production moved to Jaguar's own plant in the early 1980s. These cars were very large seven seat limousines and very popular amongst heads of state. Based on a lengthened 420G floor pan the DS420 was powered by the 4.2 litre XK engine which remained the only power plant to be used in these cars. With the interior trimmed to the ultimate level of limousine luxury the DS420 was a worthy successor to earlier Daimlers once the province of Royalty and the wealthy alike. With its imposing large Daimler fluted grille and tall flowing lines these cars are extremely graceful and most still survive in service for a long period of time, typifying the traditional coach-building craftsman for which English limousines were so renowned.

The Daimler DS420 underwent several upgrades during its twenty-four years of production but none of these modifications were introduced as a specific series but rather as an ongoing range of changes to the original. Several significant upgrades, however, can be categorised as model changes to identify the various versions that were produced. The 1st series of these cars carried the Mark 10 frontal treatment with circular horn grilles, Mark 10 style side lamps and front bumpers. Early examples had an additional rear quarter window fitted to the rear side window and double chrome body strips.

