

# JAGUAR RACING CARS

## A MONTHLY SERIES - Part 13

*By Neville Barlow*

1991 saw the introduction of the FIAs new and controversial formula which replaced the successful Group C category. To comply with the new regulations Jaguar produced a new car, the XJR-14. It was designed by Ross Brawn and John Piper and built by Tom Walkinshaw Racing. The abandonment of the Group C fuel consumption regulations meant a change in aerodynamic design. The emphasis was now on a small, light, normally aspirated engine. The new design had a lower kerb weight (750kgs) and a higher down force. This gave the XJR-14 a faster speed through the corners than the previous Group C cars.

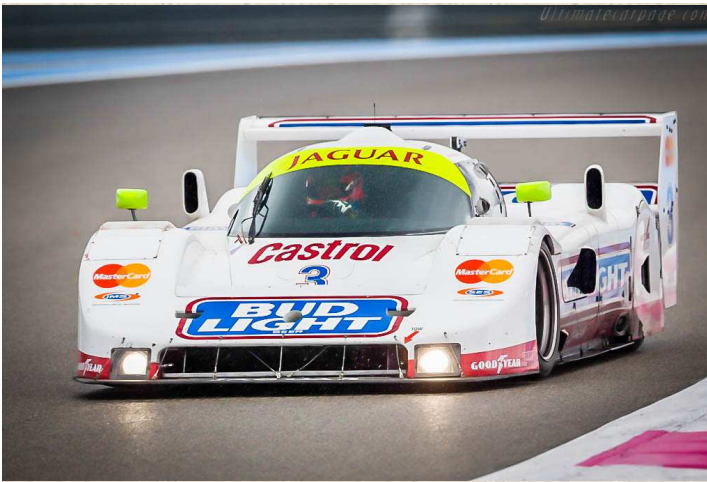


Because of the Ford connection it was decided to use the 3.5 litre Ford HB V8 Formula One power plant. The engine was detuned to 11,000 rpm as opposed to the normal 13,000 rpm with an eye to increasing the reliability. So the power was reduced to 650Bhp rather than 700Bhp.

Three cars were built and used in 1991. In the early part of the Worlds Sports Car Championship the XJR-14 demolished the opposition. However mid-season there was a stout challenge from Peugeot's 965Bs which made life difficult for the Jaguars but they had enough points to secure the Manufacturers title.

In 1992 Jaguar decided not to continue in Group C and sent the XJR-14 to the United States to compete in the IMSA Camel GTP races. After winning the first race it found it was unable to compete against the Nissans. The very bumpy and rough surface of the American tracks did not suit it at all. Its three victories were only good enough for third place in the Championship even though it scored 11 poles, 11 fastest laps from a total of 16 races.

The next car off the block was the XJR-16. While largely similar to its predecessor, it had a revised suspension and a lengthened wheelbase. It was sent to America to race in the 1993 IMSA GTP. The designers did not have to worry about fuel consumption, so they could stop as often as they required.



Additional wings and other additions were also allowed which lead to an increase in down force. In the hands of Davy Jones, the Bud Light-livered XJR-16 won the first race at Road Atlanta. It won the next race and was second at Topeka and seventh at Lime Rock. Jones won two more races that

year but Jaguar ended the year in second place in the Constructors Championship with four wins from ten attempts. This was Jaguars best record in the IMSA championship.

However, at the end of the season Jaguar decided to end the project altogether which marked the end of XJR Sports cars. Jaguar and TWR attempted to continue racing with a cheaper and smaller scale project but it was short lived.

## **JAGUAR XJR-15 ROAD GOING SUPER CAR**

Tom Walkinshaw was not the sort of man to let the grass grow under his feet! Having ticked off wins with his XJ-S in the World saloon Car Championship, as well as winning at Bathurst he also ventured into Group C and won that championship three times. His major triumphs were of course winning the most important 24 hour races, Dayton and Le Mans twice each.

Looking for more challenges he conceived the idea of a road going version of the XJR-9. A number of wealthy motoring enthusiasts were keen to own such a car so they pressed Walkinshaw into manufacturing a road going Supercar. He enlisted Peter Stevens to develop this car to be designated R9-9

In order to make the XJR-9 for road use, Stevens modifications were to increase and improve access. The cockpit was widened by 75mm and the roof raised 40mm. The first prototype was ready in July 1990. TWR explicitly developed the now called XJR-15 as a road going race car much like the Jaguar C Type and D Type (XK SS). The car could be registered for the road. It was to be built by JAGUARSPORT which was a joint venture between Jaguar and TWR.

The XJR-15 was powered by the 6.0 litre 450BHP naturally aspirated 24 valve Jaguar V12 engine. It had electronically controlled fuel injection, a fly by wire throttle system and a standard 6 speed transmission.





The body work was composed of carbon fibre and Kevlar. It was the first road going car built entirely of these composites, beating the McLaren formula one car by some six months. Total all up weight was 1,050kgs.

It had a 0 to 60mph of 3 seconds and a top speed of 307mph. This was 30 years ago!

Production figures were set at only 50 cars but it is unsure that this figure was reached.

The XJR-15 offered little in the way of comfort and practicality. To enter you had to step over a wide sill and on to the seat. The gear lever is on the right (all the cars are right hand drive) and the driver and passenger are really close together. Minimal insulation means in-car head phones were installed.



There is no storage in this car!

A limited number of XJR-15 were built specifically to compete in the 1991 Jaguar sport Intercontinental challenge series, a three race competition to support the 1991 Formula One Grand Prix at Monaco, Silverstone and Spa Fracorchamps.

The winner was Armin Hahne and his prize was US \$1 million. At the end of the production of the XJR-15, five more powerful variants were made for a Japanese collector. These cars had a 7.0 litre (some records show 7.4 litres) producing 700bhp. One of these cars returned to the UK in 2013.

Mike Roddy the foremost authority of the Jaguar marque in Australia, told in an article in the 'JAGUAR MAGAZINE' how he made several trips to Japan before he became the proud owner of not only one but two XJR-15 special variants.

## THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

The Jaguar XJ220 is a two seater sports car produced by the British luxury car manufacturer Jaguar from 1992 to 1994 in collaboration with Tom Walkinshaw Racing. The XJ220 recorded a top speed of 212mph (341.7kph) in testing, making it the fastest production car of its era.



Still hankering after another Le Mans victory, Walkinshaw prepared four examples of a competition model designated XJ220C. They were prepared to FIA and ISMA specifications to race at the 1993 Le Mans and perhaps other long distance races. The first

prototype XJ220C lightweight competition version of the new 'Supercar' made its public debut at Autosport Racing Car Show in Birmingham. The car had a fully detachable nose and tail body panels, moulded in carbon composite materials. It had a Spartan cockpit with a Kevlar seat, an uprated 4 cam turbo charged V6 cylinder race tuned engine. Race suspension and upgraded brakes were also found in this package.

This car was entered in the inaugural International GT Series at Silverstone driven by Win Percy. He qualified the car on pole and comfortably won the cars first race. Three XJ220Cs were prepared for the prestigious Le Mans 24 Hour race in the GT class. The team drivers were John Nielsen / David Brabham / and David Coulthard in car no 50. Win Percy / Armin Hahne / and David Leslie shared car no 51 and Paul Belmondo / Jay Cochran / Andreas Fuch were in car no 52.

These cars were prepared to comply with American IMSA governing International GT class Rules which were also accepted by the Worlds Sports Car regulations. No other Le Mans entries were running catalytic converters, in their race tuned cars, so Tom Walkinshaw expected to be able to do the same. The official scrutineer Alan Bertaut insisted the converters must be retained which Walkinshaw hotly debated.



The IMSA technical head Amos Johnson sided with Tom in this debate so Alan Bertaut reluctantly agreed that the new XJ220C could compete in the race. Previous animosity between Alan and Tom did little to help the situation.

In qualifying the two Jaguars were second and third in their GT class. Meanwhile Andreas Fuch crashed his car the evening before the race, but it was ready the next day.

In the race car 51 driven by Win Percy lasted only 6 laps and retired. The surviving pair then ran first and second. However during the night



David Brabham smelt fuel fumes in the cabin of the leading Jaguar and brought the car in at 2.55am. A split fuel tank required repairing. The delay cost the car the lead in the class but it was inherited by the other Jaguar. However Andreas Fuchs had a tyre explode causing a 360 degree spin. He limped back to the pits with only minor damage but the car was overheating and after 176 laps it too, retired. The remaining Porsche was struggling 2 laps behind, so the Jaguar car No 50 driven by an Australian, a Dane and a Scot cruised to victory.

However, post- race and well after the celebrations were over, in fact several weeks later, the French dominated ALO, no doubt prompted by Alan Bertaut, had bad news. They said that TWRs pending appeal that was submitted to the Federation Francais du sport (FFSA) was filed too late.

It was therefore dismissed and the Jaguars XJ220C cars and drivers were disqualified. I have read that the French consider the Le Mans race is theirs to officiate as they see fit and change the rules often just before the race and sometimes even when the race has started.

So the Porsche inherited another class GT Le Mans win.

Jaguar has won Le Mams 24 hours, seven times, this should have been eight.

*Neville*