

Low Volume Jaguar Prototypes & Concepts (In Monthly Episodes). Part 1

By Tony Johnson

SS100 Coupe (1938)



The first 'concept' car produced by the company was the SS100 coupe in 1938.

Intended for mass production the closed version of the SS100 was disadvantaged by the cramped style of the open car which limited the amount of access room and interior space within when a permanent roof was fitted. William Lyons styled the roof section with curves that reflected the right balance complementing the new wing design, but in so doing created the Achilles heel of the coupe; its small cabin. Whereas the open car was typical of those of the time providing limited access space with the hood in the raised position, the coupe emphasised this in a way that the owner would have to live with difficult entry and limited internal space all the time whereas the open car driver could put up with the inconvenience when the hood was raised as more time would be spent driving the car with the hood down anyway. To give more cabin space with better entry would require a new design altogether so the only coupe produced would remain nothing more than a concept. The roof line of the XK120 fixed head coupe that would follow 14 years later appears to take the styling cues from the SS100 coupe. This unique one off Jaguar survives to this day albeit in private hands. The car has been fully restored.

Tony