

IAN CALLUM AND AN ELECTRIC XJ

By Neville Barlow

Many people have been surprised and saddened by Ian Callum stepping down as Jaguar's Design Director. It is now 20 years since he joined Jaguar, a car company saddled with traditional design and outdated brand image. Many people said Jaguar made cars for 'Grandads'. Callum's challenge was to modernise the cars, but link them to classics of the past, such as the E Type and Mark II sedans.



A problem he had was that the XJ launched in 1968 became the company's flagship and all subsequent models had up until 2010 some design references. Obviously this gave the company a reputation of being a traditional company when it was a modern and up to date company.

Callum said that during his time overseeing Jaguar's design studio he was strongly against over designing his cars so that they had a quieter presence compared with their German rivals. One of Callum's greatest triumphs at Jaguar was also his biggest regret. It was the mid-engined C-X75 hybrid supercar that Jaguar developed, but axed just before production was to begin in 2012. "That one got away, it was my greatest sadness while at Jaguar" he said. He recently described the C-X75 as aesthetically the most exciting car we could possibly make, unlike any previous model.

Callum's first commercial design with Jaguar was the first generation XF that made its debut in 2008. This car won over 100 awards and trophies world wide. Prior to this he designed two one off models, the RD6 and the R coupe, which showcased his design thoughts. His reign included Jaguar's move into SUV's with both the F Pace and E Pace. He continued with clay modelling to design the cars, which he considered very important. This is done by hand, by artists and craftsman, who create beautiful things for us all to enjoy. Important in this digital age.

Callum also created the I Pace electric Jaguar. An exercise he found to be greatly liberating. Electric cars do not have to have a long bonnet as there is no engine and therefore have a much longer passenger compartment.

The fact that he was able to create a classic Jaguar style with completely different perimeters underlines his creative genius.

Jaguar have just announced the 2020 Jaguar XJ electric saloon. For 50 years XJ has been Jaguar's luxury flagship saloon and it has now been reinvented as a purely electric car to take on the BMW 7 series, Mercedes Benz S class and Tesla Model S.

In terms of looks the XJ will be the first of a new generation of Jaguars and no doubt its design will filter down to future models. It will have a much more sleek profile but will have a 5 door layout with a wide boot lid. It will sit on a new aluminium underpinning the first for multiple Jaguar Landrover models. An electric motor on each of its axles will give it 4 wheel drive. Very little else has been released by Jaguar but a 0 – 60 mph figure of under 5 seconds is expected.



Electrification of the XE and XF in 2023 is expected when they will be replaced by a new SUV and F Pace and E Pace will be replaced by a second generation I Pace in 2025.

For better or for worse, here they come Electric Jaguars. I hope that Jaguar will stick to its promise that they will still make sports cars that look like sports and sound like sports cars!

Neville