



The cat's whiskers

Ian Lamming drives the puur-fect motor

BEAUTIFUL ; it's a word that is most often uttered around a Jaguar, any Jaguar.

It's as if the designers at Jaguar are the only ones who care, really care, about aesthetics, lines, looks, while everyone else simply plays lip-service to design.

It's always been that way so why should now be any different, and it matters little whether it's the simply stunning F-Type or Jaguar's version of an estate, the Sportbrake.

From the front it is pure XF and that will do nicely. It is sleek, sexy and utterly timeless. But instead of swooping rearward coupe-like, the Sportsbrake ends with a shooting-brake rear and one that is curvaceous and delectable.

But this is no bolt-on-to-expand-the-range little number; it looks like should always have been there and its unique appeal can't fail to impress the country set. It certainly caught the eye in my boy's school car park.

Sportbrake is a car for the driveway; a vehicle you will love parking anywhere before surreptitiously scanning the area to see who is looking. It's just plain lovely, especially in this particular metallic pale blue. Its sheer class seeps into your marrow by osmosis leaving you feeling warm and contented inside.

With this head start driving is always going to be a

dream and it is. Tug on the chrome door handle and the XF unlocks itself allowing you to share an interior of delights. Leather stretches in all directions including under your bum and as soon as you press the starter button the airvents open automatically and the chrome gear knob rises majestically from the transmission tunnel. All very trick, tasty and trendy.

The powerful diesel bursts into life and the slick eight speed gearbox soon has you propelled at speed without taxing the fuel too much. Power and economy are such a great combination nowadays and if the trip computer starts with a 5_ then I am always a happy man.

Ride is a paradox; something this comfortable should not be so controlled but it is and while in many ways it floats a long cosseting your ageing bones it remains collected and involved; another excellent arrangement.

Sportbrake gives that added practicality that can only come with an estate. It will swallow the chairs and tables, the oversized hampers, the 12 gauge and the dogs. Weekend trips are accomplished with little thought to packing as everything is swallowed readily, greedily, by the load bay. The rear door is electrically operated too, from the key fob, which makes loading the Bolly all the more pleasant.

So what more can you ask? Sportbrake is a truly exquisite car to behold, to treasure, with tremendous

dynamics, economy and a practical nature. I don't know why all cars aren't like this – perhaps it's because there is only one Jaguar.

Fact File:

Model: Jaguar XF

Sportbrake

Engine: 2.2 litre, turbo diesel

Drivetrain: eight speed auto

Power: 163 bhp

Top speed: 124mph

0-62mph: 10 secs

Miles per gallon 55.4 (combined):

CO2 (g/km): 139

Price: £35,440.00