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# Under The Bonnet

Newsletter of the  
**Wasatch Mountain  
Jaguar Register**  
January 2020



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## New Year's Resolution: Pay Your 2020 WMJR Dues

Many of you remitted your \$50 local and national dues at the Christmas Party last December.

If you have not paid yet it's High Time to do so via a check payable WMJR to Treasurer Ken Borg, 3581 Hermes Dr., SLC, UT 84124-3257.

Thank you,  
—*Your Officers*



Dia, 2003

Photo Courtesy of the Northern Jaguar Project, [www.northernjaguarproject.org](http://www.northernjaguarproject.org)

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## Time To Find Out What's More Exciting: 575 HP Or Drum Brakes And No Airbags

*By Kristen Lee, Jalopnik Reviews*

The 2020 Jaguar F-Type SVR AWD Convertible is not a brand-new car, despite what its model year would have you believe. Merely, it is a revision on a six-year-old car. But, laden with the latest technology and safety features, it would probably be completely alien to people half a century ago. Yet, I'd wager they would have no issue driving it today. And it would be just as enjoyable.

That's because, despite a 64-year span between it and a 1956

Jaguar XK140 Roadster, the fundamental idea and layout of a car really haven't changed. Both still have four wheels, two seats, a folding top, brakes, an engine and a transmission.

(Full Disclosure: I wanted to take another crack at an F-Type, so I asked Jaguar for one and it obliged. I was permitted to pick this white one up from a garage in Manhattan and it came with a full tank of gas.)

Sure, today's cars have more aids and traction control systems than ever, but both are machines that were designed to make driving fun. They still pull it off, and

spectacularly so.

My first Jalopnik Review of the Jaguar F-Type R Coupe hardtop from 2016 was not kind. Furious with claustrophobia, I declared it a cramped thing that was more



for showing off than actual driving enjoyment. I'm not walking back that review today, but I will concede the convertible F-Type is clearly the superior choice.

The F-Type SVR Convertible is Jaguar's top model, boasting looks, power, noise and a hefty price tag of \$126,700. It's a modern take on the idea of a British roadster, but it's definitely not small, nor light and chuckable. Rather, at 3,792 pounds, it's a fat-engined, supercharged and all-wheel driven thing whose mass you'll always feel no matter what you do.

It's thunderously fast, incredibly beautiful and painfully loud. So loud, in fact, that it will occasionally scare you.

Yes, this is a thing that actually happened. I floored the car under

an overpass with the top down and the ensuing scream that exploded from the tailpipes scared the living shit out of me. I wasn't ready for how loud it is. I can't remember the last time a car did that to me. I cannot believe this is legal. (It may not be?)

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### *The Techie Stuff*

From the front-mounted, supercharged, 5.0-liter V8 comes a claimed 575 HP and 516 lb-ft of torque. All of that is hooked up to the very excellent ZF eight-speed automatic transmission. If you haven't yet experienced the snappy glory of the ZF eight-speed, you need to get on that. No, it's not as fun or engaging as a manual, but as far as responsive and quick automatics come,

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F-type vs. XK140 —cont'd from [p. 2](#)

this is one of the best.

Aided by the all-wheel drive system, the F-Type SVR can hit 60 mph from a standstill in a claimed 3.5 seconds and its top speed is also a manufacturer-claimed 200 mph.

And in a sea of turbo-charged units and lag, it's nice to see an engine that's still super-charged, my preferred method of forced induction. Sure, it's not as efficient as a turbocharger, but the upside is that there's near-instant power delivery, a linear torque curve and unencumbered sound. Superchargers are neat. The most powerful American muscle cars today have superchargers.

Tunnels, overpasses and walls are no longer merely part of the scenery; behind the wheel of the SVR, they become opportunities. Chances to drop the car down two or three gears and stomp the loud pedal to hear the thing scream. With the top lowered, you're totally present for the noise. You're not isolated by a fixed roof and closed windows, like someone watching from across the street behind a thick pane of glass.

***Can't Escape The Teeny Tiny***

### ***Trunk***

As you would expect, the trunk is tiny. True, I only used the SVR as a weekend car for two people, but anything longer than that and we probably would have run into problems. It's a very oddly shaped trunk, too. There's a very narrow shelf bit



that extends inwards and the deepest part isn't particularly wide.

Ditch the hard suitcases if you choose to travel with this car. Ditch any sort of rigid container, honestly, and go for duffle bags or other soft, moldable or loose items.

### ***Driving***

As I reported two years ago, driving the XK140 Roadster is as analog as it gets. Manual four-speed, no synchros, unassisted brakes, unassisted steering, no traction control, no ABS. You could spend an hour figuring it out; the learning curve is ines-

capable.

There is no learning curve to the SVR, unless you count exercising some adult caution around the accelerator. You can get in it and drive it as easily as you would a Honda Civic. With its automatic gearbox, all-wheel drive and electronically controlled-everything,

driving it takes little to no effort. You could do it with one finger.

That being said, though, the inherent philosophy between the modern SVR and the now-antique XK140 has not changed, despite being 64 years apart. Both offer you a delightful,

open-top driving experience in a very pretty machine. Both are quick and torquey. (The XK140 is perfectly happy taking off in second gear; saves you the trouble of futzing with first.)

And both are lovely, long-distance grand tourers (despite others perhaps disagreeing and calling them sports cars instead), so long as you have the tops down. They're comfortable and have enough power to hang out in the low revs at highway speeds. The miles tick by, unnoticed. It's just you, sitting in a seat of a sports car for the next three hours. You can't help it, you just

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F-type vs. XK140 —*cont'd from p. 3*

feel cool. Particularly when that seat is upholstered in leather the color of a hot pepper. The XK140's trunk is more usable, though.

### ***Excess Is A Thing***

Aesthetically, the two could not be further apart. While the XK140 has very classically flowing lines and exaggerated fender arches, the F-Type definitely has a bit of Nissan 350Z-esque flavor to its profile. Swoopy lines are absent here, and whole thing just looks meaner. Mean is the signature face of the 21st century.

Modern safety standards have decreed the F-Type be far chunkier and thicker than the XK140. In the event of a crash, I don't need to tell you which car I'd prefer to be riding in, but I will say the low window line of the XK140 is perfect for resting your arm on while you drive. There's something very glamorous—and very lost—to that simple act.

And then there's the matter of the power. A 600-HP car sounds desirable on paper, but in practice it's a near-dud. The SVR is breathlessly fast and that makes it incredibly fun, but it's still mad-

ness. The car knocks on the ceiling of what's legal and safe in no time. You start thinking about open drag strips or closed-circuit courses. That temptation alone makes driving it always a bit wistful.

This is where I am deeply conflicted. On one hand, I understand the draw of a big HP-



touting car. It's exciting on a Neanderthal level and appeals to the same part of me that likes fireworks displays and dumb action flicks. On the other, the SVR's added power and speed answer a question nobody really asked.

It's a car that's stylish, but the Big Mean speed edges dangerously close to Too Scary To Actually Use. The SVR will relax, but you're very aware it is relaxing because you and the silly (to the car) social construct of laws and safety told it to.

### ***Money And Musings***

Out of curiosity, I also put in a

call to Jaguar's heritage arm to see if they could dig up this XK140's original build sheet. I'm always interested to see what old cars cost in their day and what sort of options they came with.

The Jaguar spokesperson there determined the car was, in fact, the SE (Special Equipment) version, meaning that it had been fitted with the bigger-valve, C-Type cylinder head, which bumped power up to 210 HP. It was dispatched from the factory on March 3, 1956, and original MSRP was \$3,910 plus shipping. In today's money, that's roughly

\$37,000.

Conversely, the base price of the F-Type SVR Convertible starts at \$126,700, but my loaner came with stuff like carbon ceramic brakes (a \$12,240 option, what the hell!!), so final MSRP arrived at \$151,510.

The average median income (of men) in 1955 was \$3,400. That means the XK140 would have sold for a little more than the average man's annual salary, or about 15 percent more.

The average median income of a family in 2019 is \$75,000. The F

—*cont'd on p. 5*

F-type vs. XK140 —cont'd from p. 4

-Type SVR Convertible I had, with all its options, sells for double what an average family in America makes. The difference in price is massive. It's actually sad how expensive cars have gotten today.

The knowledge weighed heavily on me. I won't even pretend to know how much you prioritize cars and fun in your annual budget, but this SVR cost far too much money for me. Undoubtedly, the interior leathers were nice and the engine is a masterpiece and I felt like a movie star driving around in it, but I couldn't justify an average household spending twice its annual income on a car who's price'll drop faster than a buck during open season once depreciation hits. (By the way, you can

get a supercharged, V8 F-Type from 2016 for about \$55,000.)

Looking at the car's window sticker begged the question of who, exactly, it was for.

This is a very glaring piece in the F-Type SVR's puzzle. Especially, especially, especially after you find out how much the XK140 was once priced out. The overarching argument comes down to vintage analog versus modern comfort and ease. But is that modern comfort and ease worth four times vintage analog?

The SVR is a highly capable machine which few will ever scratch beyond the surface, though it's very enjoyable to try. Its power is its one trick, and if

you don't think you'll ever get tired of that, then you're all set.

The XK140, though, is your teacher. You learn with the car, or else something's going to grind in a nasty way. Your relationship with it is born from trial and error. That's a relationship that lasts.

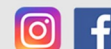
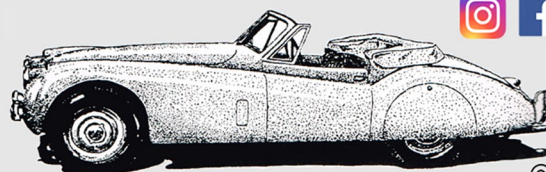
Will an F-Type SVR be remembered as fondly as an XK140? Will people talk about how they saw one once and will never forget it? Will they remember the first time they drove one? Will the cars sit patiently in garages as collectors and enthusiasts scour the world painstakingly for restoration parts?

I guess we'll find out in the next 64 years.



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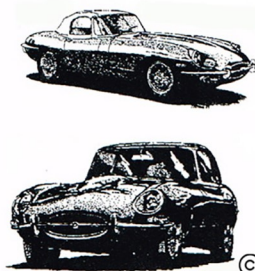
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# Club Calendar 2020

Lots of fun activities coming!  
Stay tuned ...

## Ongoing

*Third Sunday of Each Month*

*9am—noonish*

Park City Cars and Coffee

Hugo Coffee

1794 Olympic Parkway, Kimball Junction



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# Club Officers

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If Harmony  
Is What You Crave  
Then Get a Tuba  
—*Burma Shave, 1954*

