



NL **SR-DF-67**

**#67**

**Jaguar XK8  
Convertible (X100)  
(1997)**

**Vitesse  
V100D**

**Period:** 1996-2006

**Built:** 90,064

(of which 60,655 convertibles)

**Engine:** 4.0-litre V8

**Power:** 290 PS

**Top speed:** 250 km/h

**Price:** fl. 219,150 / £ 48,000

**Predecessor:**

Jaguar XJ-S Convertible

**Successor:**

Jaguar XK Convertible

**Date acquisition:**

27/12/1997

Approx. first plate    Approx. last plate

**PP-RP-23** **22-TP-SZ**





JAGUAR

You can imagine the excitement among British motor journalists when the XK8 appeared on the scene in March 1996. Despite the long production run, the XK8's predecessor – the XJS – was never seen as particularly stylish or desirable car. At the XK8's reveal at the New York motor show that neatly coincided with the inclusion of an E-type into the NYC's Museum of Modern Art's, Autocar wrote (06-03-1996): "Every car nut from Coventry to Detroit knows the truth. The XK8 may be the XJS's replacement, but the car it succeeds is the E-type. Like the Mini, the beautiful E-type was a symbol of swinging Britain in the 60s. Offering sensational styling and 150mph performance at a modest £2,200, it changed the public's perception of sports cars forever. The XK8 takes Jaguar coupé style on from E-type in a way the XJS never did and nowhere more strongly than in the chrome flash that races across the open nose."

Unlike the XJS which was seen as "too combative" when it arrived in 1975, the XK8 design – described by designer Geoff Lawson as having "muscular flowing shapes" – was admired from the outset and the car welcomed as "the most sophisticated sports car Jaguar has ever built, and one of the very prettiest". Upon closer inspection, during the full road test in the 02-10-1996 issue, the enthusiasm for the car remained largely intact. The brand new V8-engine, built in a new plant in Bridgend (Wales), was lauded for its "much more cultured noise than its supercharged six-cylinder counterpart in the Aston Martin DB7". It concluded that the XK8 was a truly accomplished GT car: "The seamless way in which the five-speed automatic gearbox blends with the 4.0-litre V8 to carry you so immediately yet so serenely down the road remains an experience of rare quality. Like all good GTs, it only becomes a sports car when you want it to. Not for the first time in its history Jaguar has endowed this car with a delicacy to its steering and suspension that makes it almost as engaging to drive at 20mph down to the shops as it is at 70mph through a favourite bend."

Despite all the enthusiasm there was also criticism. Autocar lamented there was "a little too much Ford switchgear". As the XK8 was "burdened with the XJS's short wheelbase", the cramped interior was also seen as a pain point. As Autocar explained: "To give the XK8 a realistic production future, it would have to share its major inner body architecture and much of its running gear with the cramped old XJS, itself derived from the original 1968 XJ saloon". Given that some interior trim parts fell off during the road test, Autocar was also critical of the build quality of the cabin. As I write this information card, this neat Vitesse model has been in my collection for 25 years.



Burl walnut wood and sumptuous leather abound in the XK8 exterior for a quintessential British ambience.



The shape of XK8 grille, its sculpted bonnet and the placing of the indicator/reflector lamps are clear references to its illustrious forebear, the E-type.



The XK8 replaced the XJS, which had been introduced in 1975 and never quite won the critical acclaim it deserved.