

Jaguar XF has sharp claws

 By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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The Jaguar XF is one of the latest members of the leaping feline family with looks, class and performance claws sharp enough to attack the lucrative top-end market segment dominated by the three German brands.



The Jaguar fleet of 37 derivatives is a fraction of the size of Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz who each have way more than 100 versions to choose from – but it is precisely the whiff of exclusivity that adds to the appeal of the British cars. Leading the Jaguar attack on the snob segment is the true-blue F-Type which is the first authentic British sports car in years and already a world-wide hit. It is supported by the classy XF, XE and XJ sedans which are all growing in terms of status and sales.

Sleek and smartly dressed

The variant which came our way recently is the XF 2.0 R-Sport executive sedan, sleek, low and smartly dressed in metallic glacier white with black body trim – conservative, yet sporty and it takes just a quick glance to pick up the tell-tale signs of its naughty nature: huge silver and black alloys, gaping shiny twin exhaust outlets, prominent black grille with silver trim, trunk mounted spoiler, R-Sport front bumper and the final giveaway, a slim R-Sport badge embedded in the side power vents.

A peek through a window reveals sporty black and red stitched front seats, gear selector flappies on the steering wheel and the trademark central transmission selector control with driving options that include S for Sport. The car's interior furnishing is executive smart, from electric seat settings, pile carpets, dual-zone climate control and state of the art infotainment system linked to an 8-inch touchscreen to mood lighting, a multi-function steering wheel and lots of storage spaces, including a lockable glove compartment.

The XF wafts along gently in commuter traffic and Sunday family drives, cocooning occupants against outside noises, hiding the willingness and naughty character of the 2.0-litre engine under the long sleek hood which only takes a quick right-foot nudge to change the XF from purring kitten to snarling wild cat.



Rapid off the mark

Power from its 177kW/340Nm engine is good enough for an effortless 0-100km/h sprint in seven seconds and top speed of nearly 250km/h. But the XF is not only rapid off the mark it also behaves like a true thoroughbred if shown the whip, even when pushed fairly hard through the twisties. Fully equipped with a brace of driver assistance systems such as power steering, speed proportional steering, torque vectoring braking and a sport suspension upgrade (an optional extra on our test vehicle), it is the kind of car that stimulates driver confidence.

The new XF slots comfortably and with poise into many roles, from chauffeur-driven executive transport, daily commuter and comfortable family-pleasing long-hauler to a willing, smile-inducer when the whip is out and the pleasure pedal is mashed to the carpet. Although not an automatic choice in the higher echelons of executive cars, the Jaguar brand in general and the XF in particular, can no longer be ignored because it presents a case so strong and appealing that it has become a truly worthy challenger to the Big Three.



With a price tag of R849,800 (which, in the case of our test car, included a number of optional extras), the XF R-Sport is not cheap or even affordable for the Average Joe, but it is a very attractive package for those who have thick wallets and like to be different from the herd.

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

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