

# Keeping up the Pace

**Eamonn Wall** gets behind the wheel of Jaguar's new sports utility vehicle

Jaguar Land Rover have been very busy over the last few years trebling sales and making large profits. These profits has been reinvested in the Company and much of it was used by Jaguar to develop a new aluminium platform from which it developed three new vehicles, the small saloon XE, the larger XF saloon and its recently introduced estate version, and the crossover vehicle the F Pace. All three vehicles come with the option of 4WD and use mostly new in-house developed four cylinder engines built at a new factory in Warwickshire. Six cylinder engines are also available being the exiting engines used within the brands.

The F Pace is the better looking vehicle of the three and was designed to be an SUV version of the two door sports car the F Type. The rear lights design certainly echo those of the F Type and look very smart. During the design phase, much emphasis was placed on achieving very good handling combined with a spacious body.

I test drove the 2-litre diesel 4WD automatic version and confirm that it is a lovely vehicle to drive. It handles and rides very well indeed. Its 8-speed auto box is very smooth and preferable over the giddy 9-speed box found in the Discovery Sport. The 178bhp engine averaged 40 mpg during press-on motoring. In everyday use the engine is powerful enough and quiet nippy, but if you really want to leg it for overtaking it is not that explosive. Certainly, the 3-litre diesel would be faster but it is a lot more expensive. A new 237 bhp diesel four pot is now available and I reckon this would be



the one to go for. This same engine is also available in the new large Discovery where it does a good job.

The interior is nicely designed and is based on the one found in the XE saloon. The boot is a good size but ground clearance is not great, and unfortunately, suspension raising air springs are not available. Prices start at £34,500 for a rear wheel drive manual and creep up to £55,000.

The F Pace has been very well received, winning many global awards and is selling



The F Pace is Jaguar's Porsche-bating machine and one that drives very well

extremely well. It is doing very well in the USA where of course it comes equipped with a snarly 3-litre supercharged six cylinder engine. The factory is working 24 hours per day to meet demand. This summer, Jaguar will launch a smaller version: the E pace priced from £25,000. The E Pace is not based on the aluminium architecture but on the steel-bodied Discovery Sport. More interesting is the newly released Range Rover Velar which is based on the F Pace but with a slightly higher body, electronic locking rear differential, softer air suspension, and 4WD on all models. However, prices commence at £44,500. So for now, the F Pace is Jaguar's Porsche-bating machine and one that drives very well whilst being a practical family car.

*Eamonn Wall is a forestry and arboricultural consultant and director with Eamonn Wall and Co.*

