

ICONIC CARS.

ANOTHER ICONIC CAR IN THE CLUB IS THE BEAUTIFUL RED MARK 2 JAGUAR OF BOB ADBY, A FREQUENT PARTICIPANT ON OUR OUTINGS.

THANKS, BOB, FOR ALLOWING ME TO EDIT YOUR ARTICLE.

THE STORY OF A CLASSIC CAR.



This Jag is an early 1961 Jaguar Mark 2 with a 3.8 litre engine produced before the merger with BMC in 1966 when quality control flew out the window under their auspices! These problems were mainly solved when Ford took over in 1989. Coincidentally Jaguar is now owned by the giant Indian manufacturing firm of Tata.



Jaguar cars are the brain child of Sir William Lyons. Lyons commenced vehicle manufacture by building sidecars under the company name Swallows Sidecars. The company progressed to building special bodies on other manufacturers' chassis, especially Standard and Austin 7 products. In the early 1930's he progressed to building his own cars under the SS name and added the title Jaguar just before WW2 broke out. The SS title was not marketable after WW2 and the vehicles were marketed as Jaguars.

In 1948 Jaguar released the XK120 with a 3.4 litre twin cam motor.

This engine when coupled with 4 wheel disc brakes dominated the Le Mans 24 hour races in the 1950's and when these mechanicals were mated with the company's first monocoque compact sedan in the form of what is now known as the Mark 1, back in 1955, a new family of performance saloons was born. The Mark 2 followed in 1959 with improved suspension, greater glass areas and more chrome. In 1961 a 3.8 litre engine option was added. The vehicle was claimed to be the fastest mass produced 4-door saloon at the time and they dominated saloon car racing until the mid 60's when American V8's hit the race tracks.

As with most classic cars, the Mark 2 has no electric windows, no intermittent wipers, no air-conditioning nor sufficient ventilation for Australian conditions....all those things we take for granted in our modern cars! It is just not an Australian summer time vehicle and if the forecast is for anything more than 30 degrees it stays in the garage.

The steering at parking speed is absurdly heavy bordering on impossible for anyone other than strong young males to cope with. Many have now been fitted with later market power steering options. By the bye, a U-turn in the Mark2 Jaguar takes 6 lanes!

When this Mark 2 Jaguar was purchased on the Gold Coast in 1994 it was an auto ...it was driven back to Sydney, only just made it to my carport in Chatswood at the time, and remained there for six months. Then began a back to metal restoration and mechanical rebuild which was completed in 1997.

The paint job at the time was exquisite....the car has never been polished, just gets regular washes. After 25 years it still presents great and gets lots of looks and comments.

In 1999 I had its automatic transmission, which I despised, replaced with an XJ6 manual gearbox. Converting the vehicle to a much later model Jaguar gearbox has proven to be a long and arduous saga of financial disaster and endless visits to Jaguar experts until finally resolved only a few years ago. The lesson learned is if you want a manual motor car, ensure it is configured so when you buy it.

Little is known of the history of this vehicle. In spite of the mechanical and financial heartaches it has inflicted (the major failure being a fractured axle tube at the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse at the most south western point of Australia back in 2012), it is now a pleasure to drive and on the whole very reliable.

Although a matter of personal taste, I do not think any motor manufacturer has ever produced a finer looking 4-door saloon than this vehicle. Mark 2 Jaguars continue to dominate British television cops and robber dramas and murder mysteries to this day. Who could not appreciate the aid given to Inspector Morse, by his vehicle, in solving every case put before him?



No Mark 2 could be said to represent economical motoring. When touring a V-12 E-Type is more frugal. However this one travels no more than 2000 miles in an average year, so at least insurance is very cheap.

Jaguar work can be carried out by many workshops but it is best to have one of the specialty firms with which you should develop a trusting relationship as all classic car owners know.

This vehicle will long outlive me as I have a daughter who admires it immensely. As is often said by the owners of classic and vintage motor vehicles, “we are merely the present day custodians of these finest remnants of the World’s motoring heritage which must be passed on to future generations”....quote/unquote!

References:

Jaguar: The Complete Illustrated History
Sir William Lyons: The Official Biography

Philip Porter
Philip Porter/Paul Skilleter

