

Jag XJR takes a feather touch

By Gregory J. Wilcox
LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS

LOS ANGELES — It becomes apparent when the engine comes to life with a deep, tempered growl. There's a lot of power as your toe tips, so it's best to be light-footed while motoring about.

Indeed, the Jaguar XJR is a beast waiting to be unleashed.

The speedometer pegs out at 170mph. Consider that a prudent warning, not an enticement.

I was convinced this Jag could easily reach that speed, especially on an open stretch of highway.

Just knowing that a supercharged, intercooled 400-horsepower 4.2-liter V-8 under the hood was enough.

Besides, why rush things when getting wherever you are going is such a stylish journey?

The Jag is high-end luxury driving at the upper limits.

Eye-catching, too.

This is the third generation XJR, first rolled out for the 2004 model year, and has an aluminum chassis that's lighter and stiffer than earlier versions.

The review model came with a bright Jaguar racing green exterior and a champagne/charcoal leather interior packed with a small jet's worth of but-

tons, switches and, yes, radar.

The latter is an adaptive cruise control system that warns the driver when he or she is overtaking traffic too fast. And another system alerted me to objects that were getting close to the rear bumper and fenders.

The pampering for driver and passenger doesn't end here, though.

The interior also featured 16-way power front seats, heated front and rear seats, a two-zone



air conditioning system with a power-rear sunblind, DVD player and navigation system and a 320-watt-per-channel Alpine audio system and Bluetooth connectivity.

A collapsible umbrella — British racing green, of course — was tucked into the sleeve of the driver's-side door.

And that's just up front.

Snuggle up in the back seat, and the first thing you notice is the \$2,950 multimedia package that includes dual video screens in the back of the front-seat headrests and a control station be-

tween the two seats, dual auxiliary input jacks and rear armrest controls so you don't have to reach down for the main one.

Of course, all this comes with a price.

The one thing the XJR is short on is space to put stuff.

What looks like a broad center console disappoints.

Pop the lid and there is barely enough room for some business cards, a cell phone and some keys. There is overhead storage space for sunglasses, though.

The Web site Edmunds.com said the interior, much like the rest of the car, is a peculiar mix of current technology and heritage design.

"Burl walnut wood trim, chrome and supple leather are liberally strewn about, providing a coddling environment that would make the Fifth Duke of Wellington feel at home. Yet in reviews, we found this classic British style comes at the expense of ergonomics and general usability."

That might not be the only drawback, either.

This model featured air suspension, speed-sensitive steering and a set of \$4,500 Sepang wheels. While I thought it made for handling mellow as a cello, not everyone agreed.

