



Jaguar X-Type 2 litre V6



AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

Controls/displays	★★★★○○
Handling/steering	★★★★○○
Comfort	★★★★○○
Space/practicality	★★○○○○

VITAL STATISTICS (cm)

length x width (inc mirrors)	467x200
front - legroom	88-111
- headroom (no sunroof) (min)	93
rear - typical legroom	99
- typical kneeroom	76
- headroom	92
load space (all seats in use) (litres/cu ft)	417/14.7
load length	100
load width (average)	109
load sill height (inside/outside)	15/69
load height	35-39

BRIEF SPECIFICATION

engine 2099cc, V6 petrol, 24 valves; 157bhp/148 lb ft with chain-driven double overhead camshafts; 61-litre fuel tank
drive 5-speed manual (5-speed stepped automatic optional); front-wheel drive
suspension front: independent damper/struts, coil springs, L-shaped lower links. Rear: independent multi-link, coil springs
tyres 205/55R16 on alloy wheels
brakes discs front and rear with anti-lock and traction controls
0-62mph* 9.4/10.8sec (manual/auto)
max speed* 130/127mph *maker's figures
official (combined) mpg 30.7/28.4

ALL THE WORLD OVER, PEOPLE like the looks of a Jaguar. The sleek, flowing contours make heads turn in Bahrain and Brisbane, as well as Birmingham and Bath. It's a real object of desire, even for those who can't afford the asking price.

Now, that asking price has been brought lower, in real terms, by the addition of a transverse, 2.1-litre version of Jag's V6 engine, driving the front wheels only.

All other X-Types are four-wheel drive saloons, so the underlying Ford Mondeo connection hasn't been too apparent. But now, the cat's out of the bag, so to speak, and we can choose to spend our 20 grand on a top spec Mondeo or the bottom-of-the-range Volvo S60 or this X-Type, and know that they all come from the same corporate group.

In truth, this Jaguar's looks are both its prime asset and its biggest liability. That low-slung curvaceousness results in restricted boot height, as well as demanding a more agile approach to entry and egress, especially at the back.

The front seats are sensibly shaped to cope with the semi-recumbent driving position, however, and a good set of adjustments (electrically powered on the dearer SE) should satisfy most passengers and drivers.

Actually, there's no difference in accommodation between this X-Type and its 4WD counterparts - rear legroom is adequate, but it's not in the Mondeo league.

Although 157bhp means this Jaguar is no slouch, accelerator response is blighted by the feeling, transmitted into the cabin, that its breathing is being restricted. It's extremely smooth and hushed, however, and pulls with ease and affability from very low revs.

The clutch is a shade weighty and the gears are mildly obstructive, but the steering's consistent, nicely judged power assistance feels ideal. Expect about 30mpg on a run and 30-70mph through the gears in about nine seconds.

The ride is boulevard smooth on a well-surfaced dual-carriageway, but jibs at sharp-edged faults and its mild damping can allow a hint of floatiness over undulations.

VERDICT

At a time when hatchbacks are growing taller and MPVs are in vogue, the X-Type Jaguar is bucking the trend. Its competitive price tag, those looks and that image are bound to woo new buyers to this adequately powered and adequately accommodating alternative to a 3-Series BMW and an Audi A4. If you can do without the prestige and bear its extra depreciation, a Mondeo for similar money is a formidable alternative in everyday use, if less so in your driveway.



LIKES ...

optional lumbar adjuster spot-on
absurdly flexible engine at low revs
single extra sweep after wash/wipe

and GRIPES

only six year's anti-rust warranty
prominent door sills inside
head restraints don't remove easily
odometer/trip computer often illegible