

Article 4 - Jaguar Art of Performance Stadium Tour

Jaguar Art of Performance

Throughout the latter part of this year Jaguar Australia has been travelling the country with what they have called the "Jaguar Art of Performance Stadium Tour." A massive undertaking, where they have been bringing in millions of dollars worth of high performance Jaguars and booking major motor sport racetracks in each state, where keen Jaguar enthusiasts can have the opportunity to drive these magnificent cars.

In our state the event took place at The Bend Motorsport Park at Tailem Bend from Thursday 24th to Sunday the 27th of October.

I was lucky enough to secure a session on the Sunday afternoon at 2.30, so at midday I bid my long suffering wife goodbye as I headed off to "not another car show" and had a pleasant drive out to Tailem Bend.

As I approached the venue I could see a couple of XE's being thrown around the skid pans which were situated out the front of the main entrance. I got there with plenty of time to register and have a look around at the cars on display at The Bend complex, which included an E-type Jaguar and a Replica D type.

After having a look around the foyer displays I headed through to the reception area to be welcomed by the very helpful and happy Jaguar representatives. Prior to my 2.30 briefing I had time to enjoy the hospitality which included a hot and cold food buffet, extensive range of cool drinks and barista made coffee before heading out toward the track.

The track and pit area was a hive of activity with several high performance



Cars on display at The Bend complex included an E-type Jaguar and a Replica D type.

Jags tearing around the track, and others waiting for their turn.

The first car I encountered as I headed out toward the racetrack was a 5.0 litre V8 supercharged XE SV Project 8, which was number 1 of only 300 produced. A 441kw (600hp) supercharged car capable of a maximum speed 321kmh and 0-100kmh in 3.4s.

The Project 8 is the most powerful road legal Jaguar in history. Total production is limited to 300 cars worldwide, hand-assembled at the SVO Technical Centre in Warwickshire, England. There is a choice between a two-seat Track Pack version or a road biased four seater, both only available in left hand drive.

The Project 8 has achieved the fastest lap ever for a Jaguar on the Nurburgring, faster than any other four door production intent sedan in history. Much to my disappointment it was for display purposes only and no one was offering me the keys.

To my right there was a line-up of F types and supercharged V8 F-paces, some of which were currently being driven on track by the present group. To the left was a

beautiful 4 door XJ R 575hp car which was being used by professional drivers for track demonstrations. We had the freedom to wander around all the cars, which also included an I Pace AWD electric car currently being charged in the pit garages.

At 2.30 our group of 24 were ushered in to the training room for our briefing, prior to heading out on to the racetrack and skid pan. The format was that half of the group would head out on to racetrack and the other half over to the skid pan, and then we would swap over halfway.

Each person would have an experienced racing driver with them to help put the cars through their paces. The cars we would be driving were all road legal, standard jaguars, no roll cages, no harnesses, no dual controls, but all high performance cars capable of speeds in excess of 250km/h.

To aid in getting the maximum out of the cars, a series of cones were positioned around the track to indicate the best race line and where and when to brake.

So formalities out of the way we headed out to the track where I was fitted with a helmet and given control of a 5.0 litre V8 supercharged F-Pace with 405kW (543hp) of power and a top speed of 283km/h and 0-100km/h 4.3s.

My instructor's advice was to "put your foot down" and just listen to the roar, I didn't need to be told twice. Coming up to the first corner I started to slow prior



Article 4 - Jaguar Art of Performance Stadium Tour (cont)

to the braking zone and was instructed to keep accelerating.

It took a couple more corners to have the confidence in the brakes and how efficient they were at pulling up over 2,000kg of luxury SUV. On the third and final lap I was starting to relax more and get used to the capabilities of the car and the track layout. After reaching 217 km/h at the end of the straight it was time to reluctantly head in to the pits.

Fortunately I was able to park the F-Pace and jump straight in to a 3 litre V6 supercharged F-Type with 280 kw (375hp) of power, a top speed of 275 km/h and 0-100 km/h in 4.9s.

Once again an exhilarating drive with a very different feel from the F-pace, which saw the 3 laps disappear very quickly, this time with a top speed of 223km/h. Once again back in to the pits with just a short break before being ushered to the beautiful XJ-R 575 with 425kw (575hp) of power, a top speed of 300kmh and 0-100km/h in 4.4s.

This time the beautiful 4 door luxury saloon had three passengers with a professional driver showing us how it should be done. Reaching 235km/h down the straight I decided that I wanted one of these in my driveway, unfortunately there are over 300,000 reasons why this won't be happening.



Turbocharged XE on the skid pans showing the benefit of traction control.

Track work finished I had time to check out the electric AWD I-Pace which was charging in the pit-lane garage, at 294kw (394hp), a top speed of 200 km/h and 0-100km/h in 4.8s this luxury car is not just designed to do the school run and go to the shops.

Next it was off to the skid pans where we could test our driving skills in the wet in the 221 kw (296hp) turbocharged XE.

Two different courses were set up, where, under the instruction of skilled drivers, you were guided around the course of witches hats trying to throw the back end around without (unsuccessfully in

my case) losing control and spinning 360 degrees.

Then it was on with the traction control for a demo of how the cars can compensate for a lead-footed driver. There were 2 different tracks to drive on, which demonstrated well the cars ability to prevent losing control in poor conditions and /or with bad driving habits.

Then it was back to the main building to have a last look at the cars before picking up a parting gift and heading home.

It was a fantastic afternoon out, and a brilliant promotion of the Jaguar marque by Jaguar Australia. Everyone involved was extremely friendly and helpful and judging by the response of all participants, everyone seemed to be having a great time.

Registrants of all ages and capabilities were catered for. Non drivers and those a little less confident in driving at speed were allowed to drive all cars within their comfort zone or were driven around the course by experienced drivers.

With the day over it was back in to my own car, where I had to remind myself that I was driving a 19 year old S-type, and was no longer on a racetrack, so it was a sedate trip home daydreaming of one day owning an XJ R 575.

Stewart McGavin



Prior to heading out onto the racetrack/skid pan each group were given a safety briefing.