



THE MOST STUNNING CAT IN TOWN

The Jaguar F-Type S is beautiful, with a powerful engine and a visceral growl

PHOTO AND STORY BY KATHY RENWALD

When driving the Jaguar F-Type S, you will be searching out every tunnel or overpass in your orbit just to hear the sound it makes. Mash the gas pedal as if squashing a cockroach and the most stirring sound fills the air. Grumbly, but not gauche like a muscle car, and urgent. Maybe the next best thing is a pipe organ in a cathedral. In Jaguar's beautiful F-Type sports car, only the essential ingredients are used and, like a wine reduction sauce, what's left is intense.

Jaguar offers a few different takes on the elegant, two-seater F-Type. Ponder a convertible or coupe, V6 or V8, manual or automatic. There's something for every dumbstruck romantic who desires one.

My test car, the 2017 F-Type S, came with a six-speed manual transmission, 380 horsepower and soft-top convertible roof. While it starts at \$92,500, a bunch of enhancements poked the price up to



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\$111,125. A bundle called the Premium + Vision is a \$4,300 option and combines various parking and driving aids with essentials like heated seats and the wind deflector for top-down driving. This clever bit of packaging makes the option seem almost essential. To not choose it, I fear, makes you a cheapskate.

When the F-Type was sitting in front of my house, which is rare, it created a commotion. People who would never look at a Porsche, or BMW M-series, melted at the site of the Jaguar. It is stunning, feline, forceful and perfectly proportioned. The only thing better looking is the coupe version of the F-Type. The hardtop elongates the side profile and gives it a flawless grace.

Inside the F-Type, things go stealth. It's all

2017 JAGUAR F-TYPE S

Base Price: \$92,500 (convertible); \$89,500 (coupe)
Price as Tested: \$111,125
Engine Type: 0-litre V6 supercharged
Power: 340 hp
Torque: 332 lb.-ft
Fuel Consumption City: 14.9 L/100 km
Highway: 9.8 L/100 km
What's Best: Fabulous looks, inspiring sound, proper sports-car handling.
What's Worst: Computer interface is clunky, wish it fit short people better.
What's Interesting: Door handles retract when not required. The flush design improves aerodynamics.

black all the time, with the only deviation coming from red seatbelts. The optional performance seat is a body-hugging contraption that feels like it's made for a rocket launch. A flat-bottomed steering wheel and closely spaced clutch, brake and gas pedal facilitate spirited driving. On the centre console, a touch-screen computer is the portal to navigation, music and climate

control and, like other Jags and Land Rovers I've driven, it's not as good as the competition with its slow response time and many layered commands. Really, the only control that matters is a little one near the shifter that has a checkered flag on it. Light it up and Active Sports Exhaust takes over, producing a deeper race car-like growl.

As pretty as the F-Type is, the drive is all masculine. Shifting gears requires attention and some talent. You need to feel in your feet where the release point of the clutch is and execute with finesse. This is called driver involvement, and it's a rare and beautiful thing to experience. The electrically assisted steering is light at parking-lot speed and firms up as speed increases. It's very accurate. With a supercharged V6, the F-Type S is capable of going from zero to 100 km/h in 5.7 seconds. You are never wanting for power and, from a dead stop, it's a pavement melter.

Around town, what with speed humps, potholes and traffic lights, this Jag is a bit of a chore to drive. Changing the suspension setup from dynamic to comfort mode will knock off some of the harshness, but you really need to get out of town for some fun. On a country road with less traffic, it's blissful to drive with the top down. There's very little intrusion of wind into the cockpit, so I imagine it could be driven late into the season for autumn leaf peeping and apple picking. The trunk, by the way, is bigger than you might expect.

I regretted just one thing about the Jaguar F-Type — it didn't fit me very well. The seats are too low, the dash too high and the clutch pedal travels just a little too long for a perfect driving experience. Boo hoo. Otherwise, it's a delicious rush to drive it.

Except, better not live in a small town. It's so beautiful and the sound is so visceral everybody will know your whereabouts at all times. Otherwise, sign me up for the F-Type, because I believe the F stands for fountain of youth. 🍷

Kathy Renwald is an award-winning automotive writer, photographer and videographer.

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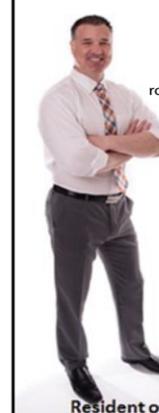
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