

First Drive: The Jaguar F-Pace SVR Edition 1988

Editor: In July 2022 we referred to a press release from Jaguar regarding the 2023 F-Pace SVR Edition 1988. Twenty (20) examples of the 394 special-edition F-Pace SVRs planned for global production were ear-marked for Oz. It is unclear if the cars have reached Australia yet, but various international magazines have just released their first test drives of the car.

EVO Magazine- Review

This limited-run F-Pace SVR adds an extra layer of desirability to an already accomplished and characterful performance SUV package.

Its rivals have come to offer more tech and more sophisticated powertrains since its launch, but the Jaguar F-Pace SVR remains one of our favourite performance SUVs on sale. Heaps of character from its supercharged V8, an excellent saloon-derived chassis and a sharp design make it one of a kind.

Now, for a premium over a basic F-Pace SVR, you can have the Edition 1988, developed by the boffins at JLR's SV Bespoke department as a homage to the TWR-Jaguar XJR-9 and its 1988 Le Mans win.

The Mechanical's

Power output and bodywork are unchanged from the regular F-Pace SVR. Being from JLR's SV Bespoke department, however, it's a limited-run offering, with just 394 to be built – this references the number of laps Jan Lammers, Johnny Dumfries and Andy Wallace completed at Le Mans in 1988.



As a tasteful reference to the Silk Cut scheme, Jaguar opted for subtle Midnight Amethyst paintwork, a near-black shade that reveals its purple hue only with direct sunlight. A set of stout, 22-inch forged wheels are also part of the package, finished in a desaturated Sunset Gold Satin shade. All badging is painted to match the wheels, with a standard-fit black pack darkening the grille and window surrounds.

Performance

At its heart is JLR's ubiquitous 5-litre supercharged V8, a unit that's gradually being phased out in 2023 after serving a host of models since its 2009 debut. An output of 542bhp and 516lb ft of torque make it a strong performer, but these figures are unchanged from the standard car – as a result, the 0-62mph sprint happens in the same 4sec with top speed at a quoted 178mph. Power is sent to all four wheels via an eight-speed ZF

torque-converter automatic, although a transmission tune from the hardcore Project 8 saloon does provide a well-deserved boost in shift aggression.

A combination of its power output and exhaust sound makes the SVR Edition 1988 feel as quick as you'd ever reasonably need on the road. Its powerplant is incredibly effective both from a standstill and in-gear, with that high torque figure making pull relentless. Despite the addition of today's restrictive gas particulate filters, it still manages to create one of the most feral sounds of any production car on sale.

While the 1988 does feature that Project 8 transmission map, shifts are just as comfortable as you'd expect from a Jaguar for everyday driving. Turn it up a notch and into manual mode, though, and it delivers impressively sharp upshifts not dissimilar to those you get from a dual-clutch unit. However, rev matches



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on downshifts are somewhat lackluster – likely due to emissions regulations – making engine braking less predictable and effective than you might like.

Handling

With weight standing at 2058kg, there's no doubt the F-Pace SVR is a big car, but its rear-biased all-wheel-drive system and saloon-derived chassis make it an engaging drive. Roll is minimal given its dimensions, with the steering responsive and a tendency to oversteer making it an engaging car to drive on a British B-road should you have the room. There has been no great sacrifice to ride comfort to achieve this, either, as while a tricky road can make the ride a little busy, damping is good, with imperfections quickly dealt with on the whole.

As hard as manufacturers try, physics is impossible to overcome, and so the SVR's tyres do occasionally make its weight known. It's easy to reach the limit of front grip, with a lack of steering feel making it difficult to determine exactly where this point is. Granted, the F-Pace is not a low-slung sports car, but it reaffirms just how much weight matters. Forward visibility is also limited, making it tricky to place the SVR on B-roads, but we can't imagine too many buyers will exploit its performance in such an environment.

Brakes

One element that does almost appear to have broken the laws of physics is the brakes, with the setup providing a positive feel and great confidence from speed, despite the energy they're dealing with – they were perhaps a little over-servoed in our test car, but the alternative is certainly less desirable.

Interior

The cabin is typical F-Pace, only now with Sunset Gold highlights across the dashboard, the steering wheel and its tactile paddles. Those supportive SVR bucket seats are trimmed in high-end semi-aniline black leather, with the range-topping Meridian sound system and 360 surround cameras fitted as standard. At the heart of the cabin is the latest iteration of JLR's Privi Pro infotainment system, one of the quickest and most intuitive on the market – it does take some time to boot up from cold, but seamless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto integration are strong compensation. Climate controls are a mix of physical dials and digital screens,



Just 394 cars have been built – this references the number of laps Jan Lammers, Johnny Dumfries and Andy Wallace completed in their winning Jaguar XJR-9 at Le Mans in 1988.

but with these controls static at all times, they're far more intuitive than in the likes of a Volkswagen Group product.

Price and Rivals

The cynic would call a Le Mans-inspired SUV a pointless exercise, and while its ties to the iconic racer are tenuous, it's a tasteful nod to Jaguar's colourful past. The premium over the ordinary SVR is perhaps less tasteful, and one that most won't be able to stomach. Thankfully, it's not a model designed for the masses. Combine this with its soon-to-be-retired 5-litre supercharged V8 and there's no doubt some 1998s will find their way into collections.

The standard F-Pace SVR is an attractive proposition, outgunning the Porsche

Cayenne S and S E-Hybrid and offering more useability than the Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio, all of which are similarly priced. Jump to the cost of an Edition 1988 and it's no longer as competitive, but for those with the spare cash, it's a unique performance SUV worthy of consideration.

Local prices in Australia were reported in July 2022 to start from \$189,531 plus on-road costs, nearly \$45,000 more than the standard F-Pace SVR, which was priced at \$145,146 plus on-road costs. ■

Information for this story sourced from EVO, The Rob Report, and Drive Australia.

