

25 years in our future that's traveled backward in time to us. The one you see here finished third at the million-dollar Spa race and then was shipped directly to its owner. It's not street legal (nor can it ever be) here, but some XJR-15s have been converted to highway-legal status in Europe, where vehicle standards are less stringent.

The XJR-15 was developed at Tom Walkinshaw Racing and uses the tub and componentry from the '88 LeMans-winning XJR-9. The cars were originally intended to be street-legal versions of the LeMans winner, but along the way metamorphosed into the Million Dollar Challenge Series machine you see here. JaguarSport's initial philosophy was "to offer LeMans performance to seriously rich customers used to roadgoing supercars."

The major design changes to separate the streetable XJR-15 from the XJR-9 were to provide more head and shoulder room for the driver and a viable space for the passenger (in Group C cars, the passenger space is vestigial at best and packed with electronics). In addition, the suspension had to be modified to provide streetable compliance and adequate ground clearance. A real windshield replaced the clip-in race unit, and the doors were fitted to the body and weather sealed.

The tub and body construction of the XJR-15 carry over the pure Kevlar/carbon fiber from the race car, but the team unanimously decided the high downforce racing body was too ugly for a street car, and almost completely

redesigned it. The shape is now more rounded, especially the nose, which is less shovel-like. The rear wing is better integrated with the bodywork, making it more impervious to damage. The new bodywork also incorporates pop-up headlights, turn signals, and much improved visibility.

The downsized Jaguar's single-cam two-valve all-aluminum V-12 (6.0 compared with 7.0 liters for the racers) powerplant is mounted longitudinally as a fully stressed member, and distributes the rear suspension loads into the tub. A six-speed Hewland transaxle delivers power to the 17-inch wheels and tires. Dry weight of the XJR-15 is 2314 pounds. Zytac and Lucas fuel injection (sequential) and digital electronic ignition produce a civil 450 horsepower, with 430 pound-feet of torque.

While the XJR-15 is a streetable version of a pure racing car, the Diablo was conceived and executed as a street car. The Countach first appeared in 1972, and wasn't retired until 1990—a long-lived design by any standard. Its striking shape came to epitomize the supercar image, and it appeared in countless movies and television shows. It was all angles, planes, scoops, and strakes, and none too aerodynamic. The Diablo by contrast seems smooth and rounded, a shape at peace with the air it moves through. Nonetheless, both the Countach and the Diablo are visceral, exciting machines.

A Diablo is as much the antithesis of conventionality as was its predecessor. Its posture suggests defiance, even insolence. Driving a blood-red Diablo is to watch



Considering the Jaguar's race-bred, there's an amazing amount of room even for drivers over six-feet tall. Inside, the layout is as beautiful as it is functional; even the weave of the Kevlar is matched panel to panel. The instruments, steering wheel, gear lever, and pedals are perfectly arranged strictly for business—and that's a pleasure. As with the rest of the XJR-15, the detail work in the 6.0-liter V-12 powerplant is impeccable; it looks crowded, but it's all in there in a logical placement.