

Invest.**RESTORE**.Keep.\$ell.

By Mark Mayuga, President, Jaguar Owners Club of Los Angeles

This Four-Part Series of articles is about the future of our fascination with the JAGUAR Automobile. The automobile collecting hobby, business, and culture is a 20th Century phenomenon brought on by wealth, mobility, super-highways, and the wide-open spaces of this great country.

PART 3. **Keep . . .**

Keeping an older JAGUAR automobile is a challenging commitment by any standard. If you have purchased, inherited, invested, restored, or just decided to own a JAGUAR for the first time, it is an emotional decision and a financial one too! There are many factors to consider besides the obvious ones. Older JAGUARS are either restored, abandoned, kept in near perfect condition, abused, or a project that never was completed.

If you are long-time JAGUAR owner, then you know the idiosyncrasies of “old JAGS”. You are a veteran of oil leaks, leaky radiators, spongy brake pedals, stuck carburetors, pitted chrome bumpers, and dried out leather seats. Most of the maladies are due to owner neglect, mechanics who don’t understand British cars, and the passing of time. JAGUARS were birthed in the moist cool climate of England. If you look on GOOGLE EARTH you will see that the California is considerably nearer the equator meaning, hot, dry, and humid conditions.

Combine all those elements and you have a recipe for either a potential restoration project, you got lucky and found one that was pampered by its owner, you made a good potential investment, or, you just want to have the car of your dreams and be happy you got what you wanted.

Here are some simple tips on how to maintain your JAGUAR during occasional use. You don’t want it to deteriorate to a point where you might have to invest major bucks to bring it back to running condition:

1. Invest in a “**trickle charger**” to maintain your battery charge and inspect your battery water level at least once a month.
2. If you are not going to drive the car disconnect the battery altogether but do maintain a charging mode on the battery.
3. If you just want to **drive the car once a month** or on weekends, make sure you get the engine and water up to normal operating temperature. Oil attracts moisture and you want to get it hot enough so that moisture is evaporated. If you

don't get the car hot enough, the moisture collects in your exhaust system and causes rust in the pipes and mufflers. Moisture also creates sludge in your engine oil pan, valve heads, and block oil passages. **DON'T IDLE YOUR ENGINE FOR A FEW MINUTES THEN SHUT IT OFF**, this creates a greenhouse effect, and the result is fouled spark plugs, gasoline in the oil and on the cylinder walls, and leaves gasoline vapor in the carbs which can start a fire. Drive your car at least 25 miles and recycle your air-conditioning and heater to keep the seals fresh and the heater core clean from residue and corrosion.

4. **Tires**, once again if you are not going to drive the car for an extended time it would be best to put the car on jack stands and keep your tires at normal air pressures. Radial tires use to leak air naturally. Modern radial tires don't leak as much now as they use to. Some tire shops will suggest NITROGEN in your tires. NITROGEN is a larger molecule and so it doesn't leak out as quickly as air. Tires have a shelf life of six years on average then the side walls start to deteriorate. This is natural for rubber compounds like any other man-made material. The vulcanized rubber oxidizes because of the chemicals, moisture, heat, air pressures, and more that they are subjected to while driving or standing. Consider changing your tires after six years regardless of age or use. Maintain a 32 PSI for your normal 70-80 Series tires. Lower profile tires, 65-45 require at least 35 PSI.
5. **Gasoline tanks** are another moisture attractor. Many a good JAGUAR have been known to leak from the gas tanks without any notice. There are several opinions on how to treat gas tanks. One thought is to keep it full of gas that way the moisture can't start eating away at the metal walls. Another idea is use "**STABIL**", a gasoline stabilizer that protects against moisture build-up, and the third option is to keep the tank totally drained of fuel, especially if you are not going to drive the car for an extended time.

Alternative solution on gas tanks is to go to your radiator shop that services gas tanks and have them pressure test it for leaks, repair those seams or rust areas then have it coated inside with a gasoline tank coating urethane material. This process coats the entire inside of the tank with a moisture-resistant coating that retards moisture build-up and keeps your tank from rusting from within. SUMMIT RACING EQUIPMENT has a product, KBS, which is very good for protecting gas tanks.

6. **Paint** on older JAGUARS is considered one-step and is usually oil-based enamel. This means the paint will oxidize over time if not waxed and protected from the sun. Invest in a good indoor-outdoor car cover but don't get one that is waterproof. If you live in a humid climate your car cover acts like a greenhouse and traps moisture which can lead to rust on the chrome and aluminum fittings.

Let your cover breath, it will allow moisture to evaporate and keep the dust and bird droppings off your car. If you store your car indoors, a single ply cover is good enough. Some folks will cover their cars with a plastic drop-cloth, again depending on where you live, I would not recommend a plastic cover as moisture tends to collect under a plastic cover. There are new polishes and waxes on the market that promise all sorts of things. There is the NANO CERAMIC TECHNOLOGY which seems to be the latest paint dressing, not sure how good this stuff is, time will tell and the weather.

7. **Leather Seats** were common in most JAGUARS and bolsters, center counsels, and arm rests were covered in leather too. JAGUAR leather was supplied by Connelly Leather and was vat dyed. This means the leather colour was throughout the hide and the finish was natural. The pores of the leather were not coated with colour dye. Non synthetic leather food is the appropriate dressing to keep the leather soft and supple. Think of it as your skin and that you wash and maintain your skin so that it stays nice. Modern leather interiors are now dyed with a vinyl base dye and require less maintenance and are more durable, but they don't quite have the supple feel of the original leather. In either case, monthly treatment of the leather surfaces is recommended. Modern leather preservatives and cleaners are silicone based and work with modern dye surfaces. Use saddle soap or plain water with a mild detergent (DAWN) to clean dirt, grime, sweat, and oil stains. If you need new leather seats or carpets, there is **WORLD UPHOSTRERY** in Santa Paula for interior kits or **XKS MOTORSPORT** in San Luis Obispo for excellent complete interior restoration.
8. **Wood dash boards, facias, and door capping** on early JAGUARS was common and looked spectacular when they were new. The coating was a basic marine varnish that was applied with many thin coats. Over time the varnish suffered from the effects of heat and UV rays and the varnish became brittle, the wood became sun bleached, and the veneer started to become unglued. Keeping that wood in good condition is a challenge. The solution is to have the wood resurfaced and re-veneered if severely damaged. This is an expensive proposition and just a few shops in the USA still do this type of restoration. Ask your club members or your JAGUAR restorer who to take your wood bits to for a refurbish.
9. **JAGUAR carpet** was originally Wilton Wool with a jute substrate/backing. The carpet material was either glued in place, attached with plastic plugs, or just laid on the floor of the car. Cleaning and preserving the original carpets is a challenge to any owner. Being a natural fiber, special care had to be taken to preserve the colour and nap of the wool carpet. Mild soap and water were the first choice to clean oil stains. Water from leaking door seals would rot the jute backing and a nasty odor would occur. Keeping your door seals fresh is the best way to

preserve you wool carpeting. Modern replacement carpet is now synthetic and easier to maintain and clean.

10. **The JAGUAR engine** is a robust unit either in 6-cylinder or 12-cylinder configuration. The most important areas to maintain are the cooling system, oil, and the fuel system. If you drive your car occasionally or everyday your **cooling system hoses** are important first and foremost. Always maintain a 50% glycol/coolant to water ratio. I recommend distilled water which has no minerals that can cause corrosion in the aluminum heads, engine block, and heater core as there is no minerals in the water. Check the hose clamps for tightness, they do loosen over time if they are the screw type due to hot and cold expansion. Also make sure your thermostat is working properly. Early JAGUARS ran a 75-degree C TSTAT and the early fuel injected cars ran a slightly higher operating temperature 85 degree C TSTAT for better emissions performance. Don't over cool your fuel injected car, the water temperature sensor will read a false code and your gasoline to air mixture will be too rich.

Clean Oil is also important for your engine's health. Older JAGUARS used oil as part of their running, it is normal to use a quart of oil every one-thousand miles. Clean oil lubrication is the most important and filter quality is also important. **WIX** makes a good spin-on filter for older JAGUARS that has a one-way valve in it so that there is oil kept in the filter. So, when you start from cold you have oil immediately circulating to your valves, rings, and bearings. If your JAGUAR has a cartridge type filter, **MOSS MOTORS** has a good quality oil filter and "O" ring kit available. The most important thing to remember is get that oil hot if you are the occasional driver, moisture is your enemy and sludge will form if you don't get the engine and coolant up to operating temperature.

The **Fuel System** is also a critical component in keeping your JAGUAR engine in good running order. The old S.U. (Skinners Union) carburetors had paper seals and rubber diaphragm for the fuel jet. It is important to check the base of the carbs when you take your car out for a drive. That rubber diaphragm can get old and stiff and cause all types of idling issues or running issues. If you smell gasoline vapor it usually is the carb flooding because the jet is stuck and raw fuel is flowing into your intake manifold or worse on to your engine compartment. Sitting for long periods of time causes the rubber to deteriorate. Before heading out turn on your ignition but don't run the motor, put your hand under the carb and see if it is wet with fuel. If it is immediately shut off your car and let the car sit for a 24- hour period, then check it again, the fuel will soften the rubber seal and maybe the leak will stop, if not you will have to replace the carb jet and rubber diaphragm.

11. The **Suspension and Steering gear** are also important systems to keep an eye on. Cars that sit over a period will experience a wheel bearing going out of round. In other words, the round bearing will take a set, become oval and you will have bearing failure in the future. Again, a monthly drive will solve this potential issue. The same can be said about shock absorbers, if they are not exercised the internal seal takes a set and your shocks will fail to do their job. Think of the JAGUAR suspension system as your muscles; they need to be kept limber or they become weak and lose their tone.

JAGUAR had several steering systems in their cars. The XK-120 had a worm and roller system which was OK, but the bushings would become soft, and steering became spongy. The XK-140 was fitted with the first production rack and pinion steering unit. This was a simple system and only required occasional grease. The early sedans would still have the worm and roller system and power assisted was added in the MK VIII and MK IX models. A similar system was in the MK 2 sport sedans and finally power assisted rack and pinion was standard with the XJ6 Series 1 sedan. The only maintenance was topping up the fluid with ATF. Parking was the bane of the power assisted system as the high-pressure hose would start leaking at the fitting or internally inside the rack unit itself. The rack mounts would become spongy over time and should be replaced with urethane replacement parts which resist heat and oil contamination. This is also recommended for the XJ6 and XJS automobiles up to 1987 for XJ6 and 1990 for XJS.

12. **Brakes systems** on early JAGUAR cars consisted of brake drums and shoes. The MK VII and XK-120, and XK-140 were fitted with these brakes also. They were barely adequate. The big improvement came with the **DUNLOP DISC BRAKE** introduced with the XK-150, MK IX, and MK2 3.8 Sport Sedan and later fitted to the stunning E-Type 3.8 Sports Car. Some owners have gone to retro fitting WILWOOD DISC BRAKES to their XK-120 and XK-140 cars, this is a popular upgrade especially if you are going to drive your car often. The disc brake pad material that is being produced today is superior to what was available 60 years ago and I recommend you consider fitting new pads from **EBC GREEN STUFF DISC BRAKE PADS** or **RAYBESTOS DISC BRAKE PADS**, their material is superior to other brands like API, WAGNER, and CENTRIX. The DOT 3 brake fluid attracts moisture, and a once-a-year flushing of the system will guarantee 100% brake system performance. Recommend upgrading to DOT 4 Disc Brake Fluid which will not harm your paint, is synthetic brake fluid with the right viscosity for non-ABS systems.

13. The **Electrical System** on all JAGUARS has been the challenge of ownership. It either works with no problems or is a nightmare! The early cars were POSITIVE GROUND, which was common in Europe, but not in the USA. Many a mechanic

would reverse the battery connections and “poof” blow all the fuses! The LUCAS wiring looms were cotton coated and colour coded. The male and female connectors were steel, and these tended to corrode and rust. Also, being steel they would get hot, and the tension would gradually relax, and a poor connection meant a non-functioning switch or poor headlights or worse the generator would not be charging the battery! Later looms used brass fittings which solved the connection problem. Invest in a can of electrical connector cleaner, the stuff really works!

Exercise your electrical switches also. You want to make sure the contacts are clean and bright; this is done when you engage the switch several times. This is especially important with window switches in the XJ6 and XJS models. Don’t forget to open the sunroof a few times, apply grease to the slide track occasionally. Make sure your generator or alternator belts are tightened to specification and are in good shape. Inspect for cracks and oil on the belts, oil is the enemy of rubber belts. And don’t forget to top up your battery with distilled water. Invest in a hydrometer, it indicates the acid health of your battery and the charge. Trickle chargers are available on EBAY and AMAZON for nominal prices. Also, the units available at your local auto parts store is probably OK too! The best one I use is from INTERSTATE BATTERY. It gives you a selection of maintenance trickle charge, fast charge, and START charge. The enemy of batteries is heat. Batteries located in the boot last longer than the ones located in the engine compartment.

14. SUMMARY: The decision to KEEP your JAGUAR or sell it has several considerations.

- 1. Emotional involvement, 2. Financial Burden VS. Investment, 3. Market values for your used car, and 4. What’s Next? These four considerations carry considerable weight in the greater scheme of things.**

Ownership of an early or late JAGUAR is usually an emotional decision based on personal choices. “A JAGUAR was the car of my Dreams” or “When I finally make it big, I’m going to buy my first JAG” and there is always the “This was my dad’s pride and Joy, and it has a lot of old memories for me and my family”. Sound familiar, these are all reasons that I have heard so many times and they are legitimate reasons to hang on to that old car. If money and budget are not an issue, hang-on to the car. History and tradition are all good reasons to keep the old girl.

BUT, if the car is costing you more than your budget to maintain they it becomes a financial burden, maybe it is time to say good-bye. The cost of maintaining an old JAG can be enormous, especially if parts and service technicians are no longer available to you. If finding someone to service your car is getting to be

impossible then maybe it is time to say good-bye. Saying good-bye is another challenge.

The challenge here is to determine the market value of the car's worth, what's the re-sale value and where do you list it FOR SALE? There are many on-line websites you can list your car. There's always a Classic Car brokerage, listing it on your Jaguar Club's website, the JAGUAR JOURNAL, the list goes on. The challenge is which one is the most effective with the least number of looky-loos! And then there is the challenge of fraud buyers, transfer of funds, evaluation by an independent appraiser, the list goes on. It used to be simple, not anymore. Determining which direction to take can be a daunting task and don't rush into it. Ask your friends in your club or just cruise the various websites and take notes how sellers present their cars and the detailed descriptions of the features. Don't forget to include a little history of the car too. How it was maintained and driven regularly or is in original condition. Have a realistic expectation of what you want to sell it for. Especially if the car has been sitting for 30 years, it will need extensive restoration and that will affect the selling price. It always helps to have the car running if possible. That detail can mean the difference of thousands of dollars at the selling price.

And finally, if you sell your car what is your next move, do you find another car or do you invest your money in something other than an automobile. Maybe to pay for a college student tuition or a vacation of a lifetime. These are decisions that all are important and should be considered in a timely manner. Don't rush into it and Good Luck!