

# An Exhausting Experience



***After his recent visit to Elite & Performance Jags in Derby (see April edition of Jaguar Enthusiast magazine), Nigel Thorley got a call back to check out their new performance exhaust system for the XK8.***

**J**ohn Marshall of Elite had told me that they were developing an extremely high quality stainless steel exhaust system to enhance the XK8 and XKR models and their first prototype was ready for fitment. They enlisted the help of member Mike Campbell from the Cheshire who kindly supplied his nearly new XK8 Convertible for the trial fitting and evaluation.

There are numerous exhaust systems on the market for the XK models and as the original equipment from the factory is quite long lasting, why would you want to fit another one anyway? Performance, appearance and sound are three good enough reasons. With a correctly designed, fitted and tuned system, it is possible to certainly improve the brake horsepower of your car by a margin, a well fitted system, particularly with the right tail-pipes always look good and although the XK is no out-and-out sports car like a TVR, it could certainly do with a bit more noise to raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

Danny Carpenter from Elite studied the existing XK system and from this



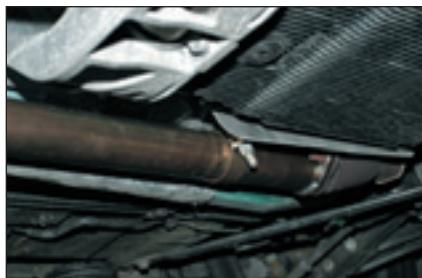
*The underside of Mike's car fitted with the prototype Elite exhaust system, a good fit and finish assured.*

designed their new system that replaces everything aft of the exhaust downpipes (and catalytic converters) which form part of the exhaust manifolds on the AJ-V8 engine. One of the first important aspects was that the new system should follow the exact line of the original system to ensure good fitting, rattle-free on the road and just as importantly not hang down causing problems with ground clearance which would also look unsightly. This also means there is no need to specially drill the body to accommodate the uprated system.

The rear silencers are slightly smaller than those fitted by Jaguar but the hangers are adapted so that there are no changes to be made if you, sometime in the future, want to refit the original system to sell the car, and retain the performance exhaust system for use on



*Elite & Performance premises in Derby.*



*Aft of the catalytic converters, with the new system there are two new short stainless pipes. This provides an added benefit for those who want to extract even more performance from their XK. The removal of these two short pipes would allow the existing catalytic converters to be removed and replaced with an upgraded one for performance purposes.*



*The centre silencers have a balance pipe built in, this eliminates any possibility of horrible noises from back-draft emitting from the pipes on the over-run.*



*The intermediate silencer can also be removed and replaced with straight pipes for those who want to increase performance and overall noise levels. Someone can buy the whole system and because of the use of olive joints over the rear axle pipes, the silencers can easily be removed, replaced with straight pipes for that "fun run", track day or for the whole summer but if going on an overseas journey, or for the winter, you can easily refit the silencer.*

another vehicle.

The quality of the system is undeniable. You only have to visually check the



*Although the tailpipes on this particular car were similar to those used by Jaguar, Elite will have a choice of three types, the one shown which is adjustable, slightly larger and fits the earlier bumper style XK8s well, a much larger oval type and a twin tailpipe system like that on the latest XKR.*

fitment and finish of every aspect. All the pipework is manually bent to shape so there is no creasing of the metal, all the pipes and silencers are polished and the bracketry and bolts are also stainless steel.

The new system offers advantages in performance through enhanced gas



*Smart joining of the tailpipe to the rear silencer clearly shows the fit and finish achieved with this system from Elite.*

flowing. This is automatically picked up by the car's engine management system so no changes are necessary to the running of the car. Elite claim there is a significant amount of extra power at the bottom end, below 4000rpm which is

very useful and where most owners will get the best advantage.

The price of the new system is £1,500 including Vat for either the Roadsport or Tracksport system or if you buy either with the facility to inter-change silencers (as mentioned in the article), the combined price is just £1,700 including Vat.

### An Exhausting Test

Thanks to the good offices of Mike Campbell the owner of this XK8, I was given the opportunity to drive the car and was most impressed.

You certainly can't ignore this car when it starts up. It has a distinct yet relatively subtle burble to the exhaust note which is certainly not obtrusive yet is something one would expect from a sporting car of this nature. For far too long the XK8 has been a quiet cruising machine that effectively appears a luxury saloon in sports clothing.

Once out on the road the background noise from the exhaust system settles down and doesn't create any vibration or reverberation, in fact at normal town speeds of up to 40mph you wouldn't know any different unless you have the window or the roof down or the car passes you in the street. Get onto the country lanes and use the intermediate gears and you pick-up that lovely burble; under steady acceleration the noise becomes attuned to the engine speed making for a very pleasing quick rumble, particularly nice when you enter and leave a tunnel! The nice thing is that on deceleration there is no back-lash or harsh vibration running under the car, so often the case with performance systems.

This type of system gives something to



*One of the later XK8s this car featured the relatively new elm wood veneer to the dashboard.*

the XK that it has been lacking for all these years without making the car harsh. The XK is naturally a relaxing car to drive and often so-called "improved" exhaust systems and performance options take away from that refinement that we expect from a modern Jaguar. I have to say that this Elite system is all benefit and the car well deserves it if you can afford it!

Fuel consumption should hardly be affected by the change although this may depend on how you drive the car; the "sound" may make you want to enjoy the car and the gearbox more, even if it is an automatic!

Elite also did other work to Mikes car

like the fitting of the R-Performance wheels and tyres, the whole set currently on offer for £2400 fitted. They are currently developing other enhancements for the XK which we will keep you informed of in the future.

In the meantime if you want to speak to Elite about the XK8 exhaust system or any other issues raised by this and the previous article, see the advertisement elsewhere in this magazine and/or visit their website.

Elite are currently working on similar exhaust systems for both the S-Type and X-Type models.

*The rear end view of the XK8 looks a little more business like with the larger tailpipes.)*

