

2 Cost considerations

– affordable, or a money pit?



Purchase price

Buying the best car you can afford is certainly true with the XK. The buyer must consider the amount of work that may be necessary to put a cheap car into good order.

A service history is vital, although these days not necessarily with a franchised dealership. A fully stamped-up service book is a good sign but look for proof that the work has actually been done. Never take an XK on face value, as there are hidden issues that could cost a lot of money to rectify.

Servicing

Typical intervals are:

Regular service 10,000 miles

Renew sparkplugs 20,000 miles

Renew air filter 30,000 miles
(20,000 XKR)

Major service 60,000 miles

Parts price (approximate)

Brake pads (front): ●x68

Brake pads (front, Brembo

R-Performance): ●x250

Brake discs (front): ●x190

Brake discs (front, Brembo

R-Performance): ●x410

Brake pads (rear): ●x42

Brake pads (rear, Brembo

R-Performance): ●x250

Brake discs (rear): ●x168

Brake discs (rear, Brembo

R-Performance): ●x410

Engine top timing chain tensioners:

●x57

Water pump: ●x96

Thermostat: ●x31

Front shock absorbers: ●x128

Front shock absorbers (CATS): ●x183

Front shock absorbers (R-Performance):

●x220

Rear shock absorbers: ●x141

Rear shock absorbers (CATS): ●x189

Rear shock absorbers (R-Performance):

●x210

Wheel bearings: ●x46

Rear bumper bar mounts: ●x36

Top wishbone bushes: ●x30

Headlamp unit: ●x429

Heading HID Xenon: ●x750

Used parts

In ready supply but ensure they are tested before purchase. Many refurbished parts now also available.



Buy the best you can afford, it's cheaper in the long run.



So many XKs were produced that there's a good supply of used, good condition parts to keep costs down.

7 Fifteen minute evaluation

– walk away or stay?



Road test

Assuming you have adequate insurance cover, it's vital you road test any car you're considering purchasing. This should be agreed with the owner prior to viewing, asking him, if practical, not to warm the engine, thus allowing you to start it from cold.

In the driver's seat, ensure all the controls you need work correctly, including electric seat adjustment, steering wheel and mirror adjustment. Turn on the ignition and allow the car to cycle. Drop the driver's window, so you can hear the engine as you start it: listen for any rattles or other noises from the engine area, or for blows from the exhaust system. Engine rattles on start-up could be attributable to timing chain issues. If the engine sounds 'flat' when starting this could just be due to a poor battery, but it could be the start of the Nikasil lining in the bores breaking up (a common problem on pre-2000 engines).

A quick glance in the rear view mirror should show any haze or blue smoke coming from the exhaust, which should never be a problem with these engines if maintained properly. Check the instrument visual read-out for error messages, warning lights, etc. Disregard the auxiliary gauges (except fuel) as they are generally accepted as 'comfort' instruments, and don't provide sufficiently useful information.

The engine should tick over smoothly and quietly. Rev the engine, again listening for unusual noises or hesitation from the throttle indicating problems to be investigated. Normally-aspirated cars have variable valve timing (VVT). If the engine is smooth and quiet upon



A road test over varying conditions is a must when considering an XK.



Dry dust and dirt isn't anything to be frightened of.



The most accurate auxiliary gauge is the clock!



Rubber wheelarch extensions should always be fitted with the bigger rear wheels.

the wheels protrude slightly beyond the leading edge of the body.

Alloy wheels tend to 'stick' to the hubs due to galvanic action, so they should always be refitted with the aid of copper grease, which forms a natural barrier and enables the wheels to be removed easily (another sign of good care and maintenance).



Ensure the car sits evenly and squarely on the road.

Overall stance

4 3 2 1

XKs should sit square on the road, with no height difference front-to-rear. Overall ride height will vary according to the wheels and tyres fitted, and slight differences are detectable with differing suspension set-ups.

Bodywork panels and paintwork

4 3 2 1

XKs were well made and reasonably well protected, but, bear in mind that the earliest models now date back to 1996, so it's inevitable that some areas will be suspect. Apart from the items covered in the Fifteen Minute Evaluation, it's a simple matter of checking the overall view of the car, ensuring panels fit well, and there are no dents or scuffs to mar a good finish to the paintwork.

Like any other car, XK bodywork can corrode, so look at common areas like wheelarch lips, sills, rear wing to bumper, and any chips around the



Minor corrosion in an older car is normal and not a major issue.



A seemingly minor matter, like switch illumination, can be problematic.

console area, which is prone to problems with the lighting, auxiliary switching, and radio functions. Whilst not difficult to replace, bulbs (there are up to a dozen of them) can be surprisingly expensive: they're specialist bulbs, each of which must be fitted into its correct place, and it can be a fiddly job, removing the console trim, wood surround, etc.

Look for any warning lights on the dashboard, which should be investigated. Common areas of concern are the ABS/traction control warning lights, which, at worst, could mean repairing or replacing the ABS module under the bonnet at considerable expense. A car will fail an MoT test with either of these warnings present. There's also a 'limp home' mode, which restricts performance when the system detects a problem. In many cases this can simply be due to a loose wire, but in others it can be major issue, so beware if this happens during your evaluation.



ABS modules are expensive to replace, although they can now be repaired.



XKs are quite 'colour sensitive.'

The majority of exterior paint finishes were metallic, so this shouldn't affect price, but, some colours are more popular than others, like blues, reds, and silver. Full leather interior is also desirable, as is walnut veneer, but prices are rarely affected.

All cars were equipped with alloy wheels and many cars were, or are now, equipped with the larger 19in or 20in split-rim alloys with low profile tyres. They look good, fill the wheelarches, but aren't cheap to refurbish, so if fitted, it's highly desirable to have them in excellent condition. Alloy wheels from the later XK model range (2006 on) will NOT fit these earlier models. A full-sized spare wheel is desirable, but not always practical, as the larger 19in and 20in will not fit in the bootwell area.



Buyers like 'big' wheels: the early 17in Revolver wheels are the least desirable.

There has been a trend with XK owners for retro-fitting styling and exhaust enhancements. Only the very late XKR models had a four-pipe exhaust system, but owners can now fit specialised stainless steel systems with two or four, small or large bore pipes. The most common styling changes include fitting alloy mesh grilles to the mouth (similar, but not the same, as those on XKR models), lighting changes, and – one which is particularly useful – the fitting of a separate boot button lock to the earlier cars that only have a key lock or dash mounted release method.