

Side 10

C-type in 70s contest



Arden can tune your new or your old Jaguar. The world's fastest E-type 0-240 km/h in 8.0 seconds. What the engine failure warning light means. How you change the bushing. Road testing a second-hand XKR. Young E-type expert.

Retro-tuning



Is that something of interest?

Anything was possible in the 80's. For example the German company Arden tuned Jaguars and was the first to do so. Arden still tunes Jaguars to this day and has experienced an increasing demand for the tuning of 80's and 90's cars. But who are the German tuners, and what do they do to the oh so posh Jags?

I have long wanted to write about German Arden, because it's remarkable that a German firm is tuning Jaguars and has managed to do so since the 80's. Despite specialising in just one single British car brand, the firm is still surviving in top form today, and will be celebrating its 50-year jubilee next year.

Arden tunes everything from F-Pace and XDE to F-Types. But it also sells parts for tuning old classic Jaguars, and then I came across Claus Ebberfeldt from Via Retro who himself discovered an advertisement for classic tuning in a German newspaper.

Ebberfeldt came up with the heading: "Will retro-tuning be the new trend?" So that was the theme of the Arden article – and

thanks for it.

50-year Jubilee

As just mentioned, it's nearly 50 years since Arden was founded, but the first genuine Arden Jaguar, named the AJ1, was launched at the Essen Exhibition 40 years ago in 1942. It was the XJ12 series III, but easier to tune and easier to style. Arden itself called it the world's first modified Jaguar, and the December edition of the magazine Rally Racing posed the relevant question: "Can one improve a Jaguar?" Although everyone knows the answer to that, Arden came up with the reply:

"Not improve, but individualise," said Arden.

I would also say that the answer is not

entirely unambiguous. Goodness knows, lots of strange things were done to cars in the 80's, especially by the many German tuners, but things can work out well: Is there for example anything more terrific than a Broadspeed XJ12, a TWR-XJS, or for that matter a Lowdrag E-type? These are all examples of cars that have been 'interfered with' by outsiders, (it's worth noting that Malcolm Sayer experimented with the LowDrag, but this was dropped by Jaguar – a tale for another occasion).



The AJ4 is based on the XJ12 series III, but this is not one of the original 234 cars from 1982. This one is from 2018 and built on a restored XJ12 in order to celebrate the first AJ4. A total of 235 new AJ4s will be made.



The engine in the first AJ4 from 1982 was tuned up from 265 horsepower to 320 horsepower. The new AJ4 will have the same treatment and specifications.

German Arden has been tuning Jaguars since the 70's, like this AJ1 from 1982. You can get your old classic car tuned by them. But do you want to do that?

These examples though are racing cars, and in the world of racing such improvements as these are as common as slick tyres are on a street racer. Today they don't take things so seriously and Jaguar have their own tuning section Special Vehicle Operation, but at that time it was almost unheard of.

Arden does not refer to its activities as either tuning parts or retro-tuning.

"We sell refinement parts to Jaguar, right from the XJ series to the most modern models", explains sales manager Dr Julius Arden in an email to us.

Arden's refined parts range today from minor items such as an Arden Leaper for 329 euros to a kit that gives an F-type Jaguar 703 horsepower for a trifling 30,000 euros, i.e. a measly quarter of a million DKK. Why Jaguars though? You might well ask. We'll return to that later.

What can one get?

I myself came across Arden in my search for titbits for my XJ81. I read somewhere that the innermost sections in the exhaust could be removed and provide 15 extra horsepower, and I just thought I'd check what a sports exhaust might provide and what it would cost, and if this could be acquired for such an old car from the 90's.

Arden came up trumps and there were a number of parts available for the old XJ40 derivative. Right from the fog lamps to a new 6.3 litre engine, providing 390 horsepower and by Jove also performance silencers. But DKK 14,000 for a couple of rear silencers was steep enough and those that were fixed weren't even leaky. So I left the shop.

THE HISTORY OF ARDEN

Arden was founded in 1972 by Jochen Arden in an old bakery in Zelem Castle near Essen. At the age of 21 he sold spare parts and did a bit of motor racing. In 1976 he founded Arden Automobile GmbH and moved to Kalkarer Street in Kleve. Two years later he expanded with a branch in Emmericher Strasse. In the late 80's Jochen Arden decided to buy out an earlier Daimler Benz dealership. In 1982 Jochen Arden signed a dealership contract with Jaguar and opened a new showroom.

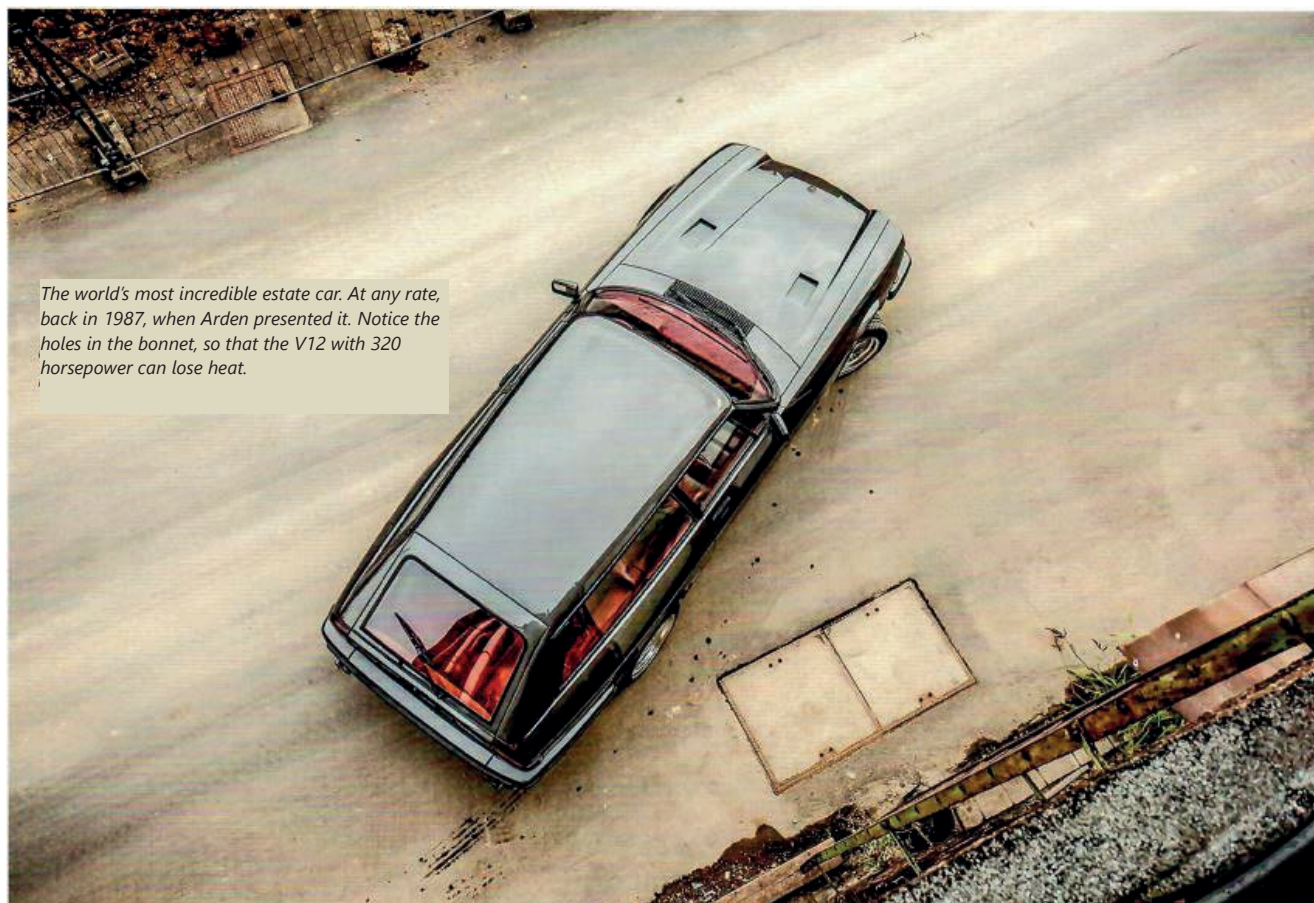


CAR DESIGNER

In December came the AJ1, an XJ12 with skirts and tuned exhaust, which put Arden on the world map.

After the first creation, the AJ1, there followed the AJ2 – an XJS cabriolet. It was presented in 1985 at the IAA exhibition in Frankfurt, the same year as Jaguar came up with the convertible version SC, and three years before Jaguar launched its cabriolet model.





The world's most incredible estate car. At any rate, back in 1987, when Arden presented it. Notice the holes in the bonnet, so that the V12 with 320 horsepower can lose heat.



Jaguar didn't have one like this in its range at that time.



Nor this. And never did. Arden made 5.



Or this. The Arden XE rivalled the M3 with 463 horsepower.

You might wonder how one can survive as a German tuner of a now minor English brand. One of the reasons was probably that Arden produced things in the 80's which Jaguar themselves were not quick enough to put on the market or didn't want to. Such as the AJ2 from 1985; this was an XJS cabriolet which overtook Jaguar's own by three years, and the AJ3, an XJS estate car, which was then the world's fastest of its type with its 320 horsepower. That was a lot in 1987. It was also necessary to stand out, for Lynx had been making their version since 1982. The creations caused a stir, and when the AJ4, a refined XJ12 came out, 234 of them were sold. The AJ4 had a four-gear automatic box from ZF, which Arden had in fact been in on developing, and which later found its way into Jaguar's

manufactured cars.

The king pin

The king pin is called Jochen Arden, who, as a 21-year-old, had started a spare-parts sales outlet in a former bakery in Zelem Castle, in Kranenburg, above Essen in mid-west Germany. Ten years later he opened a Jaguar dealership in the town of Krefeld, a bit nearer Essen, and the same year came the AJ1. Three years later he opened outlets in England and in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, USA, and, with the AJ2, Arden became registered as an official car manufacturer, and was able in the year 2000, to buy Zelem Castle, where everything had started.

Jochen Arden had the castle restored and you can now find new horse-power in the old stables, since they house a car

museum, which also contains other things than Arden Jags. It has been the setting for the Arden British Day for the past five years (except last year), where up to 700 guests with Jaguars and other British motor vehicles like to meet up. It could perhaps be an event that the clubs could drive to?

Jochen Arden's loving treatment of his favourite brand has its origins from many sources. In addition to continuing to make AJ cars, the firm expanded in Asia and had a crack at motor sports. Arden won the European GT championship in 1993 in an Arden-tuned E-type.

Another source was that Arden quite genuinely fitted the first ABS system and the first airbag in a Jaguar and also produced the first five-gear automatic box from ZF.

ARDEN HAS A WEBSHOP

If you want to see what is available in the way of retro-tuning for your classic Jag, then check Arden's web page. You can also survey the cars for sale, read the story of Arden or the brochures on the new terrific Jaguars such as the F-Type offering 703 horsepower.



The Arden AJ23 F-Type won the tuning readers' prize in the magazine Sport Auto. Available with over 700 horsepower.



The latest creation is this AJ25, F-Pace in a new design and with an injection of steroids.



Arden Racing had great success in the GT European Championship, coming second in the total E-Type championship, back in 1993.

The man himself, Jochen Arden, at the most recent Arden British Days 2020 at Zelem Castle. He participated in his own personal white, refined E-type.



The AJ2 required a lot of work to strengthen and get approval for the design, but in return Arden was given the manufacturing number 770, and was now officially a car manufacturer. The AJ3 was again a model absent from Jaguar's range – the XJS as an estate car, the world's fastest. Three of them were made from 1987-89, and later two more. It was available with a rebored 6.3 litre V12 with 455 horsepower and a five-gear manual box or a four-gear automatic gearbox. The AJ4, which was based on the Jaguar XJ12, was a very successful model, 235 being supplied. In 2018 a new version of the AJ4 came out, where Arden promised to supply the same number. The AJ5 was an XJAO with two turbos for each cylinder, and otherwise it kept in step by "Ardenising" Jaguars on all models until today except the E-pace. In parallel with the Jaguars, Arden has also been producing Range Rovers since 1998 – the AR1 etc, a few AB1 Bentleys, and the AB2, based on the Arnage and Continental, and the new Mini – AM1 to AM3.

ARDEN BRITISH DAYS

In tandem with this work, Jochen Arden restored Zelem Castle which he bought in 2000. It is now the location for a museum with veterans, modern cars and racing cars in addition to his own creations. Every year 250 British cars meet up for Arden British Days. Next time will be 12th September 2021. Read more on burg-zelem.de/en

ARDEN RACING

Jochen has a soft spot for racing. So Arden also has a large racing section, where they participate in e.g. the Oldtimer GP, and sponsor the talent Cedric Piro

Why Arden chose Jaguar

Why Jaguar though? Well, Mr Arden has just always liked British cars.

"They stand out amongst cars with a special atmosphere and mood. The Arden design is based on respect for the sophisticated, British lifestyle", Arden assures us in an email, whilst also boasting a bit:

"Adding German technology made Jaguars reliable." Indeed. I.e. combining the best from Germany and England in one car.

That's always been the ambition, they say.

The name Arden has moreover English roots, perhaps right back to Mary Arden, the mother of Shakespeare, they write and tell us

Large firm

Today Arden is a place where both classic cars and brand new ones are overhauled. Cars are restored, serviced and sold. The range of creations has reached the AJ25, which is an F-Pace, and at the same time they're making a new interpretation of the AJ4, 235 of which are being made. Arden is not content with Jaguars, and now Minis, Bentleys and Range Rovers are being enhanced. The network of dealers in other countries is up to 22. It will be exciting to see, however, whether Arden can see themselves styling and tuning electric cars, for that is the direction Jaguar is going in now. Or can Arden be satisfied with the classic section: with the purchase, sale, renovation, tuning and service for the classic models? Is retro-tuning a big enough thing? Time will show, but the trend is at any rate that retro is now so

modern that Arden itself is being copied.

"We see a high demand for 80's and 90's designers. Unfortunately, we find many replicas of our brand, of poor quality, which have nothing to do with us. Retro-tuning is important for us, since most cars are made to order, and don't reach the market, but end up in collections, or are sold on. We see especially an increased interest in AJ4 and AJ3 estate cars," Arden says.

Yes, it's looks as though retro-tuning is something of interest. Something of great interest. At any rate for the moment.