



SELECTING THE RIGHT JAGUAR E-TYPE FOR YOU

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT “SERIES”

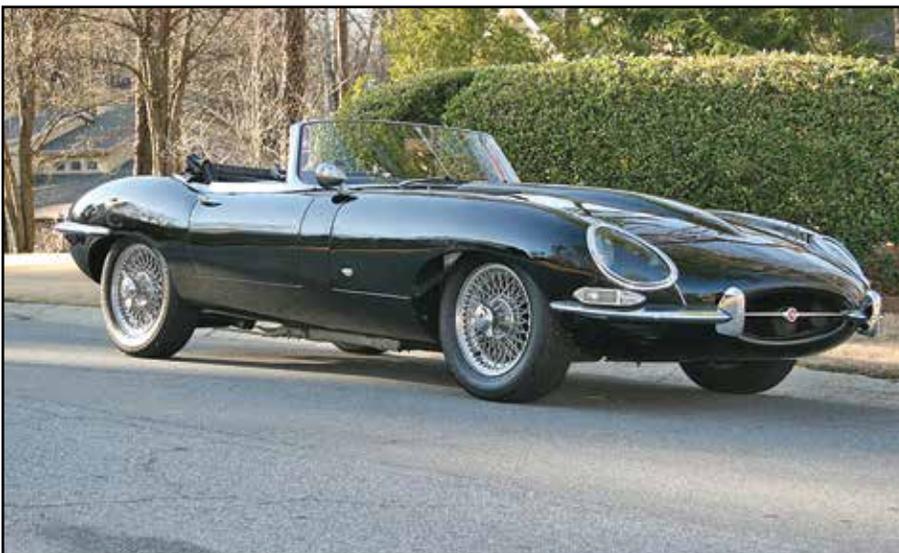
IVAN RUIZ

If you are new to Jaguar E-type it may be a bit confusing listening to folks talk about “a series 1.5 OTS with dual Strombergs” and have no idea what they are talking about. The objective of this article is to try to explain the different models from 1961 until 1974 so that you can make a more informed decision. . . plus have something to talk about at your next Jaguar club party.

1961 through 1964 – Series 1 3.8 liter

When Jaguar introduced the E-type in 1961 it was an instant sensation. Sleek, sexy, fast. . . all in an affordable package. Two body styles were available, the Open Two Seater (roadster) and the Fixed Head Coupe (coupe). The first cars are easily distinguished by the latching mechanism for the bonnet being located on the outer sides. On later cars that was moved inside. Also these early cars had many hand made features which were needed by the factory since all the mass production molds and techniques had not been completed. Jaguar had to rush production of the E-type to meet demand. For example on

1961 with outside bonnet latches



the early cars the bonnet louvers were welded in as a separate part and were not part of the bonnet stamping as in later cars. Also in early cars the front floors were flat but they found that leg room could be significantly improved by changing to dipped front well

The very early E-types, especially the outside latch cars, are in high demand because of their rarity and since they represent an E-type in its purest simplistic form. They are also the most uncomfortable with their flat floors and the limited amount a seat can slide.

Pluses:

Exterior design. You cannot beat the simplistic, non-adorned looks of the series 1 E-type

Interior design. This one may be subject to personal opinion, but I prefer the looks of the early aluminum dash and bucket seats. Granted the bucket seats were not too comfy (see minus below) but they sure look sporty.

From 1961 until 1964 the E-type was powered by the legendary XK engine with a displacement of 3.8 liters. I personally like the 3.8 liter engine over the 4.2 that followed in 1965, I find it revs better. This is one case where more is not necessarily better.

Minuses:

A non-synchronized gearbox was used until 1964. This gearbox is sometimes referred to as “Moss box” or “crash box”. Only 1st gear is not synchronized, the other 3 are. Yes, it does take some time to get used to not putting the car in first gear if it is moving, and given everything equal I would pick the full synchronized gearbox that came later. Still, if you find the “right car” and it happens to have the non-synchronized box. . . hey, it is not that bad. Just make sure you are indeed in first gear and not in reverse when



Interior of a 1963 roadster. Notice the aluminum dash and bucket seats.

the traffic light changes.
Bucket seats have non-adjustable backs, okay for short trips but a visit to your chiropractor will be needed after a long journey
A cooling system which is sub par for many USA cities.

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3.8 liter engine, they don't come any prettier!



1965 through 1967 – Series 1 4.2 liter

In 1965 the E-type was refreshed mechanically and with some interior upgrades. The bucket seats gave way to seats that had movable seat backs. The aluminum interior trims were replaced during 1964 with black molded plastic and leather covering the center console. The console also gained an armrest which doubled as extra storage. In the engine bay a 4.2 liter engine replaced the 3.8 and the brake booster

popular to those that simply want to drive their E-type. A larger 2+2 body style was introduced which was available with an optional automatic transmission.

Pluses:

Exterior design. Still looks great with its simple bumpers and covered headlights. The 2+2 body style did look a bit out of proportion.

Gearbox: Okay, the full synchronized box is much better

Seat comfort: A little better than before but do not expect miracles, you will still need to visit the chiropractor after a long drive.

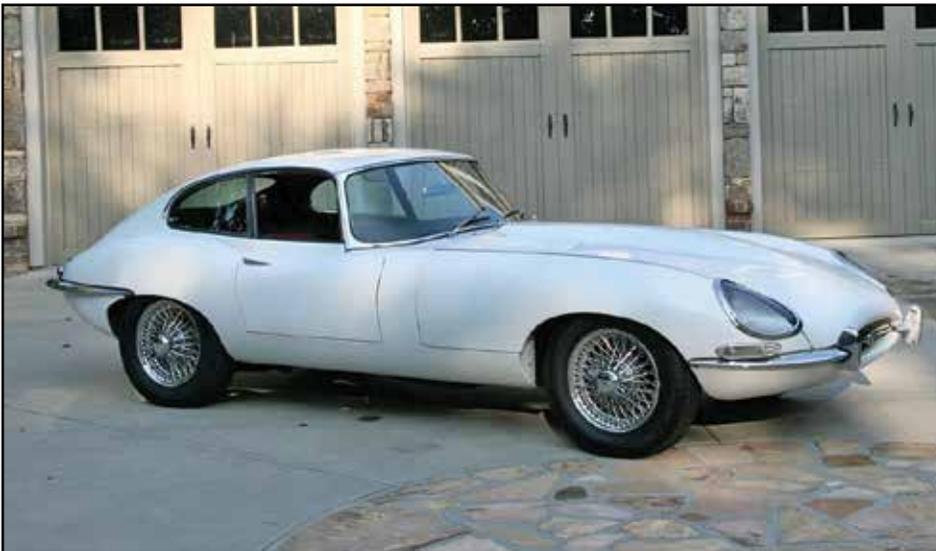
Minuses:

All 6 cylinder E-types lack a lot of room for the driver. Depending on how you are built this can pose some challenges.

A cooling system which is sub par for many USA cities. Jaguar tried a different radiator but the results were mixed. I've owned several e-types that do not overheat regardless of the conditions and others that are very "particular" to driving conditions.

Late 1967 to 1968, Series 1.5

The USA started imposing emission and safety requirements for cars imported in model year 1968. Jaguar started making those modifications in late 1967 and throughout 1968. Hence these cars have many features of the series 1 and the series 2 that would follow. Although the factory



1965 Fixed Head Coupe

was replaced with a more reliable unit. A full synchronized gearbox was now standard. The exterior had no changes which is the reason these particular years are probably the most



Interior of the 1965 Fixed Head Coupe, notice the armrest and leather covered console.

never referred to them with this name. . . these transition cars are commonly known as series 1.5 One of the first changes was the removal of the glass over the headlights; this necessitated the redesign of the headlight openings. Later the interior toggle switches were changed to rockers in an attempt to minimize injury from “pointy” switches during an accident. The three SU carburetors which had powered the E-type since 1961 were replaced with two “smogged” Stromberg carbs. This had the effect of losing a significant amount of horsepower, and thus performance.

Pluses:

Exterior: although the headlight covers are gone, the small bumpers and taillights are still unchanged.



1968 series 1.5, notice the open headlights

Minuses:

Performance. . . the beast has lost its claws as horsepower dropped from 265 bhp to 245 bhp. Interior rocker switches. They are much less reliable than the earlier toggle switches.

1969 thru 1971, Series 2

The series 2 cars saw the continuation of changes legislated by USA emissions and safety requirements. It is important to realize that many of these changes to the E-type were made to make them compliant for USA importation rules and not a desire on Jaguar to fix something that was broken. Quite the contrary sometimes happened things that work just fine on series 1 cars dash (such as the toggle switches) were now being replaced with less reliable, but compliant, components.

The biggest change in the series 2 cars were the bumpers, which had to be made bigger and lower to meet USA specs and the engine emission equipment which every year got stricter. The series 2 cars are the slowest and probably less attractive of all E-types. On the positive side they are also more affordable than a series 1 and in some ways more reliable.

Pluses:

Not a bad car to drive, if you don't mind not going too fast. Cooling system finally received a decent upgrade; these cars are less likely to overheat. Seats were again improved this time with an adjustable back and headrests.

Minus:

Exterior design. It lost the clean lines with the big tail lights and low bumpers, although still looks very good and much better than a Camry. Performance, just adequate. Series 2 interiors got better seats with adjustable backs and headrests. This car also has air conditioner.

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1971 through 1974, Series 3 V12

During 1971 was the only year where Jaguar manufactured both the 6 cylinder and the 12 cylinder E-types. The objective was to add some

excitement back to the E-type by introducing a brand new “exotic” V12 engine. At the same time this would provide the car with the performance it lost with all the emission control requirements. The most obvious difference in the series 3 is the body. While the 6 cylinder e-types were offered in three body styles . . . open two seater (roadster), fixed head coupe and 2+2, the series 3 only came in 2+2 and roadster. The reason is simply that the size of the V12 engine, especially when coupled to the automatic transmission, will only fit in the 2+2 body style. The V12 roadster is simply a “chopped” 2+2 . This is also the reason why the 6 cylinder e-types were only offered with an automatic on the 2+2 body style . . . the automatic transmission would not fit in the roadster or coupe.

The other big difference is when you open the bonnet. This is a massive engine!

Pluses:

Exterior design . . . although a much bigger car, the lines seem to flow much better than the series 2. Not as nice as the series 1 but better integrated than the series 2.

Interior comfort . . . finally an E-type for a tall driver. The doors are massive compared to the earlier cars.

An AC that actually works.

Automatic transmission option on the roadster. I am normally not a big fan of auto transmissions but on the series 3 cars it actually is a good combination. The Jaguar V12 is not the performance brute of a Ferrari or Lamborghini. It is a docile giant more suited for boulevard cruising. In this environment the auto transmission is very well at home.

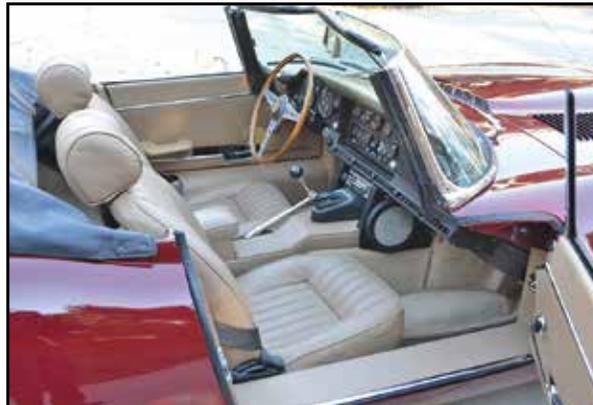
Minuses

Very busy engine compartment, some components are a pain to reach More things that can go wrong. The series 3 had more bells and whistles such as electronic ignition,



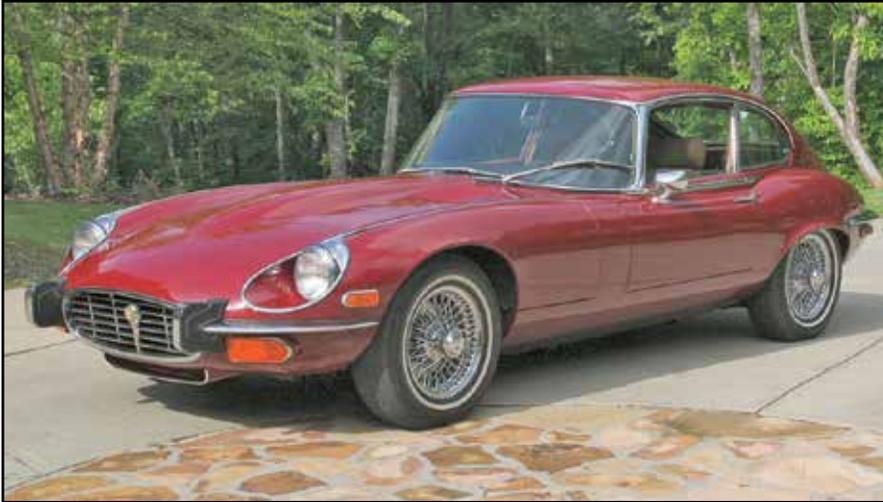
1970 series 2 roadster, notice the large taillights under the bumper

Series 2 interiors got better seats with adjustable backs and headrests. This car also has air conditioning



Engine now only has two carburetors and is not as attractive as before





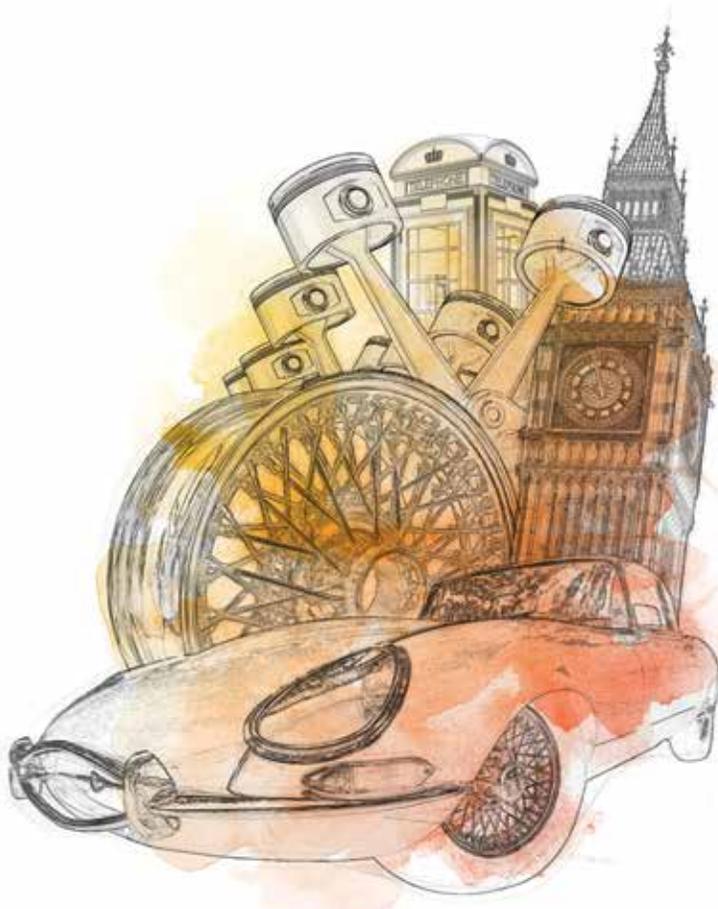
The series 3 coupe only came as a 2+2. I find the lines of the 2+2 work better on the series 3 than on the prior series

power steering, air pump, AC... which over time will need work.
Power steering takes away much of the road feel. Although I understand the need for power steering on a car with this much weight, Jaguar went overboard with a power steering arrangement better suited for a 4 door sedan.

In Summary:

Which series is right for you is very difficult to answer. If you want a highly collectable car then perhaps an early 1961 is the right car for you. If driving the car is your major goal then a nice

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It sure looks busy under a series 3 bonnet!

series 2 would be a better choice. A 1962 series 1 3.8 is entirely a different car than a 1973 V12. Which series you select will very much depend on your budget and how you intend to use the car. How tall (and big) you are will also play an important factor. Also remember that vehicle condition plays a very important factor when selecting a car that is now 40 to 50 years old. Although you may desire a 1967 4.2 series 1, a wiser decision may be to buy a very nice 1969 series 2 over a ratty 1967.



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