

2006 Jaguar S Type R “Hello, My Name is James.”

I was born in Castle Bromwich, England at just over 4000 lbs. and am quite proud of my heritage. While they could call me a bit of a mixed-breed, with 20% of my parts from North America, 15% from Germany (argghh!) and the remainder from merry old England – but trust me – I’m a limey through and through. They send a few lucky ones across the pond to the home of the yanks – I guess I fit that bill as it appears my lot in life is to run the highways and byways of a place called California. Don’t tell my friends, but I quite like this California place – more sunshine than my birthplace – and they have a road called Highway 505 – much better than the A4...but I wasn’t supposed to talk about that.



I recently met this fellow who seems to be quite up on cars....he wasn't very impressed with my countenance at first – I could tell. Well, I've had cousins, sisters and brothers for several years who, quite frankly look very much like myself, so this fellow kind of compared me to them. But I had a few things in store for him...it's such a delight to surprise and amaze. See, while my looks are no longer novel, I'm the equivalent to that Kirstie Allie on the yanks' telly....I've been recently invigorated, lost a few kilos (not really) and feel quite full of myself. While my cousins may have been quite sociable and capable of carrying on a very civilized conversation, my creators had something different in mind for me. They said I would be “special” – not a brag or boast – this is simply what I was told early on. It seems they brought out some “Type R” bits to make me stand head and shoulders above the rest. An intercooled supercharger was one. I don't even know what this contraption is, and I have one! But this fellow who was driving me last week, well – he expressed himself in very un-gentlemanlike superlatives when he let me run up the highway unfettered...apparently making quite an impression. I could have told him to put his cell phone, CD's, notepads and PDA's away before he asked me to perform on a freeway ramp. I had to subdue a major guffaw when all hell broke loose with his belongings...flying every which way. Thankfully, my creators used high quality materials on my insides, so there was no worry about damage from flying personal objects. With 400 horses under my hood, and (I don't understand this, but some people seem to like it) 413 ft. lbs. of torque, I could tell that this driver might just have to head to the osteopath for an adjustment after experiencing this. One other nicety that was afforded my “special” nature was these contraptions called “floating calipers” not unlike racing brakes, with 14” front and 12.8” rear ventilated discs. It seems the

yanks change their minds frequently – wanting to go very quickly at one moment and reversing course and needing to halt forthwith. These brake accoutrements apparently satisfied this test driver as he used them over and over, apparently just to make sure they really worked, which of course they did!!

There were several moments when I felt like I really bonded with this “test driver” that drove me for a week. First, on a ride through the country, I distinctly heard him say that I manage bumps and cracks in the pavement better than any sporty type he’d encountered. Something about “firm, but with feeling” seemed to be his sentiment. As we cruised this place called Highway 505, this brute started playing with my buttons, not sure of what he had – only to discover my, (and I’m quite proud of this feature), “adaptive” cruise control. I laughed my ##@** off when he veritably jumped out of his driver’s seat when, as we slid down the highway at a pre-determined speed, I saw a car approaching and slowed him – encouraging him to change to the fast lane where my vision was clear and we could return to our previous brisk pace. I know he was scared of this at first, but soon he was giggling to himself as he realized we could go to Seattle together without any foot pedal required. Then there was this place called Thunderhill. Talk about bonding – I really can’t relay everything that happened at this place as I am pledged to secrecy. However, I CAN state that we bonded even more and he made weird comments like, “the cornering is amazingly flat!” and “turn in for a car this heavy is amazing” as well as a passenger who apparently owned something called an AMG Mercedes who said “I’ll never speak badly about a Jaguar again!”

So I’ve had fun telling you about my week with this fellow who seems to be hooked on driving anything he can get his hands on. But it’s time to fess up. There were some awkward moments in our relationship. One such situation surrounded my sound system and an import called Sirius that my creators inserted in my dash at the last minute. His statement was something like this: “the integration of the mediocre Alpine CD sound system with the aftermarket Sirius add-on radio was so bad that it wasn’t ready for release to the public.” I trust that this is not a good thing. He also fiddled with my HVAC system quite a bit – he must not be that bright, as he never did really seem to be comfortable with how it worked. Oh, and I know his back side must be on the wide side, as I seemed to pinch him every time sat down.

These truths being exposed, I think our week together with this “hooked on driving” guy went very well. I overheard him say to a friend that he was “blown away” by my Jaguar R Type parts, and that he would recommend that any sporting type had better take me seriously. While my creators are proud of me by charging 66,000 of your dollars for me, this test driver said that this might be just a bit on the high side, but I’m still a worthy competitor among the modern super sedans. I blushed when he used the term “super” to describe my sedan-ness. All in all, I’d have to say that this fellow gave me quite a workout, and to tell the truth, now that we are apart, I really miss him.

Regards,
James the Jaguar

Written by David Ray for The Wheel, and www.hookedondriving.com