

Who has a crowbar and loves tariffs? This guy.
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Ford F-150 Limited: More luxury, plus a Raptor motor.
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Guess who's getting a little faster?
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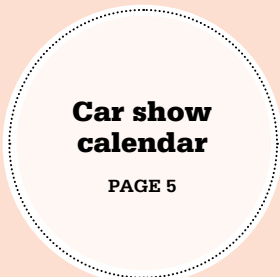


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TEST DRIVE

Wagons, Reconsidered

2018 Jaguar XF Sportbrake S

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

We've been here before. Wagons were once the go-to family car choice for American auto buyers. They were cast aside in the Eighties, as the first minivans appeared. 'Vans gave way to SUVs, which in turn ceded the top popularity slot to crossovers.

Crossovers — a blend of station wagon and SUV — are the current vehicle of choice in the family mover segment, but we've seen signs of an uptick in wagon interest recently.



If it is a trend, it makes sense. In luxury or sporting form, a well done wagon is a fine alternative to more commonly seen choices, like crossovers and utes.

Jaguar has been here before, too. The last Jag wagon we drove across these pages was the 2005 X-type Sportwagon. That small wagon (discontinued after 2009) was the best version of the X-type.

The new wagon entry is known as the XF Sportbrake. "XF," because it's the newest member of the XF series,

2018 Jaguar XF Sportbrake S
Base MSRP: \$70,450 · As Tested: \$84,815

and "Sportbrake," in a bit of linguistic redundancy. The definition of a shooting brake has evolved over the years to mean a sporting station wagon. So a Sportbrake is, by extension, a reeeeally sporty shooting brake. Whatever the label, it's a decidedly upscale wagon, athletic



2018 JAGUAR XF SPORTBRAKE S is the British maker's luxury sport wagon, itself an upscale version of the sleek "shooting brake" body style. The sole engine option is Jaguar's supercharged 3.0L V6, rated at 380 horsepower.

and luxurious. It competes in the marketplace with the similarly described Mercedes-Benz E400 4Matic wagon and the Volvo V90 Cross Country T6 AWD.

The Sportbrake shares the same platform as the XF Sedan, and surprisingly similar dimensions (length: 195 inches, width: 82.3 inches). The suspension of both versions is largely the same up front, though the models part company on the back end. Here, the Sportbrake employs an air suspension system, to maintain a level ride height no matter how much cargo is being carried.

That suspension — a near 50/50 front/rear weight distribution — and low, car-level ride height conspire to give the Sportbrake a more agile feel than you would

The Sportbrake's more subdued engine soundtrack is likely the right move for the marketplace.

surmise, given its size. A nice balance between road feel and ride quality can be achieved, using Jaguar's Configurable Dynamics to fine tune steering effort, throttle response, suspension settings and shift points. Sport mode sharpens the car's reflexes, with a modest giveback in ride comfort. The AWD system maintains a rear-wheel-drive bias in normal conditions, but can push as much as 50 percent of available torque to the front wheels as needed to maintain grip in slippery situations. And when roads are dry

and twisty, AWD works in concert with other, onboard traction control systems like Torque Vectoring and Dynamic Stability Control, to maintain the best line through corners.

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