1725-1899kg class winner

There's a new Jag on the block this year. The XF Sportbrake claims top position in this weight division, closely followed by its saloon stablemate and a host of other rivals



Jaguar XF Sportbrake

3.0D V6 Premium Luxury

Price	£42,610
Target Price	£38,198
Kerbweight	1880kg
85% match	1598kg
Max towing weight	1850kg
Towball limit	75kg

THIS MAKES IT the second year in a row for the Jaguar XF, but this time it's the turn of the Sportbrake to take the honours in its class.

You'd expect the estate version of the XF to be more practical than the saloon, and you'd be right. But that's not the only reason the Sportbrake has the edge over last year's winner. For some reason the Sportbrake felt better tied down than the saloon, and even more unshakable when pulling a caravan at high speeds and through extreme manoeuvres.

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Strong crosswinds caused problems for several cars in this year's tests, but the XF Sportbrake was one of a handful that seemed largely impervious. Through the lane-change test, too, the Jag was resolute and in control, however much the caravan slid around behind it.

As well as being exceptionally stable, our Sportbrake came with the 3.0-litre six-cylinder diesel engine rather than the 2.2-litre four-cylinder of the saloon. The smaller engine wins the financial argument, but in terms

of performance and refinement, the six-cylinder is a noticeable improvement. The 10.7-second 30-60mph time shows the Sportbrake to be one of the quickest cars in this year's tests - but it's not so much what the Jag does as the way it does it that makes the car seem special.

There's a sense of occasion to the cabin, with the gear selector that rises theatrically from the centre console when you prod the engine's start button. And although there are more spacious estates, it's reasonably

practical, taking all but one item of our typical holiday luggage.

Any doubts about quality or reliability should be quashed by Jaguar's first place in the 2013 JD Power Customer Satisfaction Index.

Towing	***
Solo	***
Practicality	���○○
Buying and owning	����○
Verdict	****
An exceptional tow car, a	and a refined

For weights and specifications of every car, turn to page 72



Jaguar XF

2.2D (200PS) Luxury

Price	£33,945
Target Price	£30,044
Kerbweight	1735kg
35% match	1475kg
Max towing weight	1850kg
Towball limit	75kg

THE XF 2.2D saloon may have been outpointed by the brilliant Sportbrake, but it's still quite a car.

Make no mistake: the Jag can really shift, taking just 13.3 seconds to go from 30-60mph when towing. The XF stops as well as it goes, needing

just 10.2 m to come to a full stop from 30mph in the dry. It was also superb in the lane-change test.

Our practicality judges were impressed that, despite the saloon body style, they could find room for almost all our typical holiday luggage. Further marks were earned by the fitment of trailer stability control.

Towing	* * * * * * * *
Solo	***
Practicality	●●●○○
Buying and owning	����○
/erdict	€ € € € €

Brilliant to drive, whether you are



Land Rover Freelander

2.2 SD4 190 4WD HSE	
Price	£37,215
Target Price	£34,420
Kerbweight	1805kg
85% match	1534kg
Max towing weight	2000kg
Towball limit	150kg

THE FREELANDER'S STABILITY at speed really stood out this year. In strong winds we were amazed by the Land Rover's ability to track straight and true when other cars wandered nervously. There was no sign of it showing its age in the lane-change

test, either, where it rivalled both of the Jaguars for grip and composure. An electronic parking brake held car and caravan still on the test hill.

However, luggage space is tight, so a couple of items from our typical holiday luggage load wouldn't fit. Our top-spec HSE model is very pricey - there's better value to be had further down the range.

Towing	*******
Solo	����○
Practicality	���○○
Buying and owning	����○
Verdict	****
C b	l +l

Even better than expected, the facelifted Freelander is ageing well.



Volkswagen Passat Alltrack 2.0 TDI 177 DSG £31,760



THE VW PASSAT Alltrack feels solid on the motorway, towing well in gusty weather. In the lane-change test, it took charge of the caravan, and the hill start posed no challenge. There's lots of luggage space, too.

Towing Solo Practicality Buying and owning **** € € € € € A very capable 4x4 estate.

Mercedes-Benz E250 CDI Estate AMG Sport

THE LATEST E-CLASS Estate is a practical car, offering 695 litres of load space with the seats upright and

1950 litres with them folded down. It tows well, too, with little movement unless hit by especially strong winds.

Towing	●●●
Solo	●●●●
Practicality	����€
Buying and owning	***
Verdict	****
A fine tow car, but very e	expensive.

Honda CR-V 2.2i-DTEC EX



THE HONDA CR-V wasn't unshaken by crosswinds, but at legal speeds it proved stable enough. Acceleration is

dogged: 18.7 seconds to go 30-60mph. Official figures promise 48.7mpg on the combined cycle.

Towing	****
Solo	***
Practicality	****
Buying and owning	****
Verdict	****
Practical, reliable, but cou	ıld be quieter.

Kia Sorento 2.2 CRDi KX-2



THE KIA SORENTO needed more steering corrections in crosswinds than the best cars in this weight

division, but easily coped with the hill-start test. Our practicality testers were impressed with the roomy boot.

£28,900

Towing	���○(
Solo	���○(
Practicality	����€
Buying and owning	���○(
Verdict	

Powerful, roomy and well equipped.

SsangYong Korando sx



WITH A FEW reservations, the Korando makes a decent tow car. At speed it proved stable, even in strong

winds, and it pulled from 30-60mph in an acceptable 18.4 seconds.

Towing	***
Solo	●●○○
Practicality	♦♦♦
Buying and owning	***
Verdict	***
	1

A lot of car for the money, but it struggled with the lane-change test.

Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.9 DDiS SZ5 5dr



The revised Grand Vitara's styling is fresh and its emissions are lower, but its 1.9-litre diesel engine takes 20.7

seconds to pull car and van from 30-60mph. It also struggled with winds.

Towing	��⊕○○
Solo	●●○○○
Practicality	����○
Buying and owning	●●○○○
Verdict	●●○○○

The facelift can't disguise the fact the Grand Vitara is showing its age.

executive express.



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