

The Jaguar XK120 in the Southern Hemisphere

by John Elmgreen and Terry McGrath

Review by Paul Skilleter

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The featured book this month is an absolutely enormous tome compiled by two of the world's most knowledgeable XK enthusiasts, both Australians. John Elmgreen is in Sydney (memorably, I once drove his XK120 roadster across the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge) and Terry McGrath is near Perth, Western Australia. Back in 1985 they published a book called *The Jaguar XK in Australia*, a true labour of love which they did not think would appeal beyond a very small group of the most dedicated XK enthusiasts. But it eventually sold out and if you want to get one today, you'll have to be prepared to pay a good few hundred pounds.

The two never stopped collecting information, though, having always intended to produce a second edition. This finally appeared a few weeks ago as *The Jaguar XK120 in the Southern Hemisphere*, and even more than the first, it is an astonishing book, covering XK120s not only in Australia but also New Zealand, Asia including Japan, Northern Africa and South America. Every possible XK120 sold in or reaching these countries has been identified and recorded as far as the authors could, and their stories told. In fact some 925 individual cars are featured, the great majority with the help of period photographs, some taken when the car was new or nearly new, and some even in colour.

This aspect of the book is one of its greatest attractions, as the photographs (and there are over 1,000!) are mostly not the usual somewhat staid factory or press pictures, but were taken by the owners of the cars or their friends, and show the XK120 concerned in context at the time – outside the owner's house, with his wife, family or girlfriend, after an accident, in a race or hill-climb, or later in their lives, abandoned, stripped or awaiting restoration. Wherever possible the authors have sought to include pictures which also feature people along with the car, which really brings to life the fact that these machines were bought and enjoyed by real people.

The book also lists the cars by chassis number, registration number where appropriate, when and where exported when new and by which distributor, and by current or last known owner. There are 11 chapters, which are: Chap 1, Export of the XK120; Chap 2, XK Enthusiasts in Australia; Chap 3, Import and Sale of the XK120 in Australia; Chap 4, Australian XK120 Histories; Chap 5, New Zealand; Chap 6, Asia; Chap 7, The Middle East; Chap 8, Northern Africa; Chap 9, Southern Africa; Chap 10, South America; Chap 11, Car and Owner Index, Addenda etc.

Within the chapters there is also a vast amount of general information on the XK120 so all in all, this is a book whose appeal extends way beyond those living in the territories

covered. Yes, it's expensive, but the cost will soon be forgotten in view of the many hours of enjoyable browsing it will give – and, who knows, as only 750 of the limited edition of 1,000 have been printed, it could itself become a collector's piece in the years to come.

The basic data is as below. If you are interested in purchasing the book contact the authors via JT Publications. If you are in the UK and Europe, my company (Paul Skilleter Books/PJ Publishing) will send you the book from stocks held in the UK (Terry McGrath reciprocates by mailing our books in Australia). Full purchase details are on the JT Publications' website.

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