

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

## NEWLY ACQUIRED JAGUAR E-TYPE ROADSTER FEATURED IN EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

March 18, 1996...Glenn D. Lowry, Director, The Museum of Modern Art, today announced the acquisition of a Jaguar E-type Roadster, only the third automobile to enter the collection. Given to the Museum by Jaguar Cars, the 1963 opalescent dark blue car is the focus of an exhibition opening at the Museum on April 4. **REFINING THE SPORTS CAR: JAGUAR'S E-TYPE** explores the history and the unusual design method of what is widely regarded as the paradigm of the modern sports car. Organized by Christopher Mount, Assistant Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, the exhibition continues through August 20, 1996.

The exhibition features the new acquisition and includes an additional E-type engine, photo panels of the C- and D-type series which preceded the E-type, and original engineering drawings. Many of the objects have been lent to the Museum by the families of the car's original designers and engineers, and from the archives of Jaguar Cars.

Although the car was introduced more than thirty years ago and production ceased in 1974, the sleek, bullet-like shape of the Jaguar E-type continues to be one of the most influential and imitated styling forms in sports car design. Better known in the United States as the XK-E, the car is noted for its beauty, its profile, its speed, and, at the time it was introduced, its affordability. It was conceived by Jaguar to be the synthesis of a competition racer and an everyday-use car. While it included luxury appointments it was priced for a large consumer market.

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"Since 1972, when the Museum acquired its first car, a Cisitalia '202' GT, we have been committed to expanding this facet of the design collection," commented Terence Riley, Chief Curator, Department of Architecture and Design. "We developed a wish-list of ten to twelve cars, with the E-type at the top. When we approached Jaguar to acquire one for the collection, the company was very enthusiastic. From a private collector they secured a car that we considered to be in pristine condition and they donated it to the Museum. Because of the E-type's beauty and sculptural quality, its functionality, and its seminal impact on overall car design, it perfectly suits the criteria of a landmark design object."

"Rarely has a car inspired the kind of passion in both car enthusiasts and the general public that the Jaguar E-type has. Even today, the E-type is considered an icon of the postwar British sports car," said Mr. Mount. "The exhibition showcases a prototype of good car design while illustrating the processes and decisions that went into creating it."

First introduced at the 1961 Geneva Auto Show, the Jaguar E-type was designed by Malcolm Sayer, a car stylist at Jaguar Cars Ltd. who was trained as an aerodynamicist. Mr. Sayer modeled the E-type after the C- and D-type racers also designed by him and used predominantly for competition at Le Mans, one of the most prestigious racing events in the world. The engine for both of these cars was a modified version of the one installed in the XK series, later adapted for use in the E-type. It is from the XK series that the E-type obtained its American designation of XK-E.

The E-type is one of the first large-production cars to evolve out of aerodynamic concepts, which until that point had been used only on sophisticated racing cars and airplanes. In designing the E-type, Mr. Sayer approached the exterior shape first, seeing the

silhouette as paramount to the car's performance. Mr. Sayer used secret mathematical formulas to calculate the ellipses that defined the classic outline as well as the bumpers, lights, wheels, and other exterior elements.

Scale models of Mr. Sayer's car were tested in a wind tunnel to assess its response to air resistance from various angles. Attention to this detail produced fluid, uninterrupted lines that tapered from every angle, a contrast to the large, finned American sedans of the period that only allowed for aerodynamic motion from front to back.

The mechanics of the E-type were also based on the C- and D-type race cars, including such elements as its independent front and rear suspension, rack-and-pinion steering, disc brakes, and an advanced semi-monocoque construction. This construction, borrowed from the airplane industry, made the car lighter and faster. The 3.8-liter, six-cylinder engine allowed for performance that was comparable to a racing car, including the ability to reach a speed of 150 miles per hour and accelerate from 0 to 100 miles per hour in 19 seconds.

The exhibition is made possible by Jaguar Cars.

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For further information or photographic material, contact the Department of Communications, 212/708-9750.