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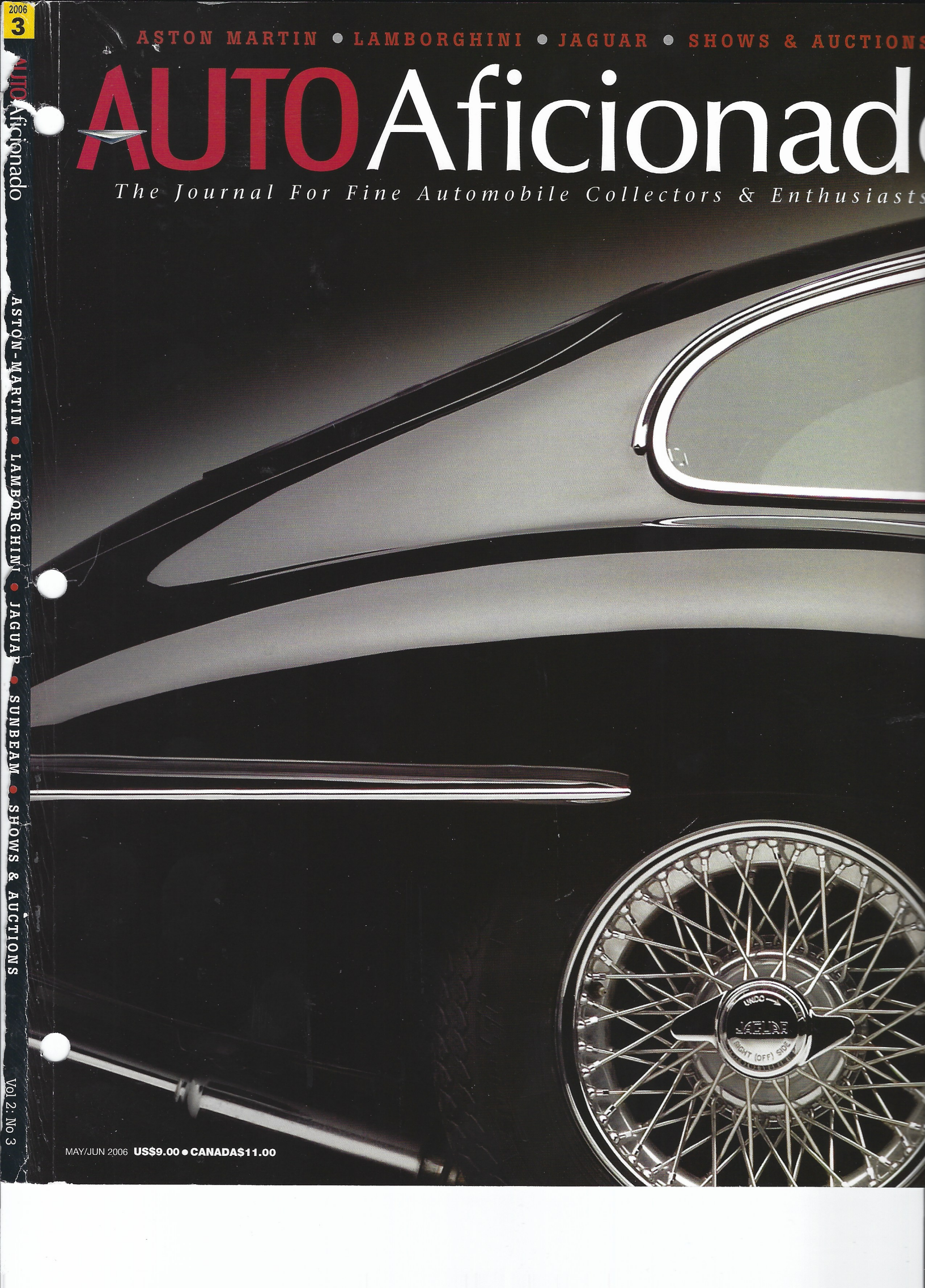
# AUTO Aficionado

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# LET THEM EAT DUST

*GARY WITZENBURG describes the  
2006 Jaguar Super V8 Portfolio  
as the richest, plushest, most  
expensive-ever Jaguar saloon  
and it is so rare you probably can't get one*

We're wafting noiselessly through the Valley of Fire north-east of Las Vegas, Nevada at super-legal speeds...not surprising considering the awesome motorcar we're in and the stupidly low legal limits on these mostly smooth, mostly straight and lightly traveled roads. My driving partner is minding the helm while I'm auditioning the 400-watt 15-speaker Alpine Dolby II surround-sound audio, DVD-based navigation and Bluetooth wireless cell-phone systems.

This Jaguar's twin-intercooled supercharged four-cam 32-valve Variable Camshaft Phasing (VCP), all-aluminum (alu-min-ium to you, mate) 4.2-liter V-8 is quietly delivering substantial numbers of its 400 race-bred horses through its six-speed ZF automatic transmission. The car's athletic and brilliantly isolated double-wishbone all-alu-min-ium Computer Active Technology Suspension (CATS – get it?) is unobtrusively ironing whatever lumps dare to protrude from the desert tarmac, and straightening occasional curves as if they were desert mirages. In twistier sections, its meaty 20-inch tires velcro the big cat's all-alu-min-ium body to the pavement, while its massive Conti-Teves R Performance ABS brakes and Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) alertly stand by to preserve our rears and reputations should we suddenly run out of road or talent.

Inside, the soft-grain rucked (ruffled or quilted, mate) Conker leather-lined seats support and cushion our bodies like a mother's loving arms. The satin-finish American black walnut trim on the doors and dash shine softly like the designer furniture that inspired it. The rich suede-like material above our heads spills over onto the pillars and visors. Everything looks and works splendidly, the only exception being Jaguar's improved but still clumsy J-gate shifter.

If we had rear passengers, they might be headphoned kids immersed in DVD movies or games on individual 6.5-inch screens in each front-seat head restraint, which would keep them entertained, while the large center console would keep them safely separated between potty stops. Or there could be busy business types using drive time to meet or



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*The elaborate-looking panels for both fore and aft passengers are actually pretty intuitive after a quick glance. The navigation screen is large enough to see and its control imaging requires neither the book nor headache medication.*

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catch up on work on the laptop-size picnic trays that fold down from the front seatbacks. Or NBA athletes, reclining in individually adjustable seats with individual (four-zone) climate control enjoying limo-like legroom shaded by rear and door-window sunblinds and energized by DVD audio.

If there is a better big-sedan experience, both dynamically and acoustically, than that provided by this powerful, agile, supple, distinctively sculpted, technology-packed, long-wheelbase Jaguar XJ, we don't believe it's available below its \$65,000 starting price. The more luxury laden Vanden Plas version starts at \$75K, and if a mere 300 thoroughbred horses doesn't get it done, you can opt for the 400-horse supercharged and performance-tweaked Super V8 for \$92K. Or the (essentially unobtainable) ultra-limited-production – just 150 for North America -- \$116K Super V8 Portfolio that we exercised across the Nevada desert.

### The all-alu-min-ium XJ

The new-generation 2004 XJ was launched in June 2003 in three distinct flavors: base XJ8 (now \$62,495), luxury Vanden Plas and supercharged XJR. Its look was so evolutionary that previous-generation owners bringing home new ones had to get different colors so their neighbors would

notice, but it far surpassed its predecessor in every measure. The bulk of that improvement, aside from significant content and quality enhancements, resulted from its all-aluminum monocoque (not just panels bolted to a frame) construction. Weighing significantly less than equivalent Mercedes-Benz, BMW and even aluminum-bodied Audi models enabled it to surpass them in measurable performance, braking and handling, as well as subjective feel. Unlike the notoriously tech-laden German luxu-sedans, it also incorporated new technology only where genuinely useful and in much more intuitive, user-friendly executions.

The long-wheelbase versions – stretched five inches overall and between the axles, yet just 53 pounds heavier – were added for 2005 in XJ8L, Vanden Plas and supercharged Super V8 models. The shorter Vanden Plas was discontinued, but the \$80K XJR remains. Then a significant round of improvements arrived along with the exclusive Super V8 Portfolio for 2006.

Most important are improvements to both 4.2-liter V-8s that move the silky naturally-aspirated version to an even 300 SAE bhp (from 294) and the boosted engine to 400 from the previous 390. Peak torque is up to 310 and 413 lb-ft, respectively, while regulated emissions are down to ULEV (ultra-low emissions) and LEV2 (low emissions

### He said, She said A Jaguar's tale

#### LOOKS:

LC: *An authentic modern era Jaguar sedan.*

TC: *The dark red one matches my toes, (OPI, "I'm not really waitress red").*

#### INTERIOR:

LC: *A little tight, my leg lost circulation on a 4-hour drive.*

*The storage and accessibility are terrific.*

TC: *The carpet feels great on my feet. I didn't need the book or an engineering degree to work the radio and heating system. The seats are easy to adjust, very comfortable and still have a classic Jaguar aroma, too.*

#### HANDLING AND RIDE:

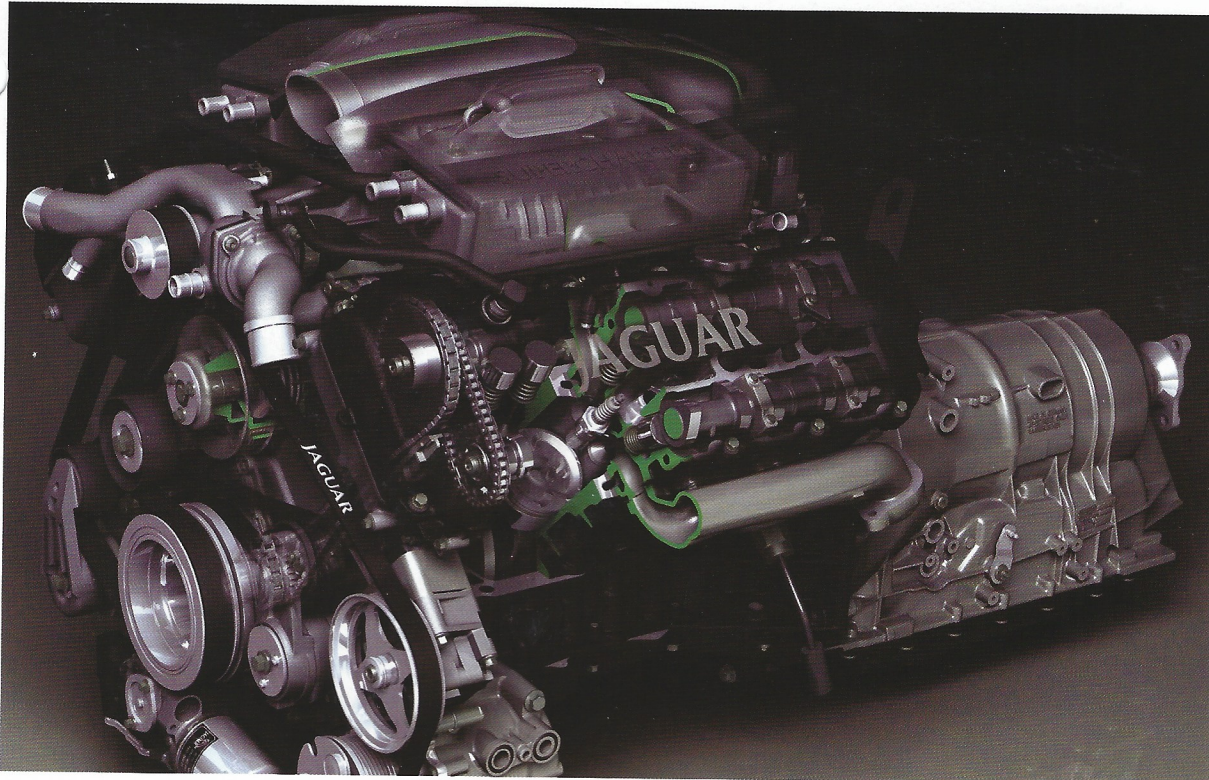
LC: *The sport setting is great. It helps the Pirelli P-Zeros do their work and leave enough compliance to know you are in a big Jaguar.*

TC: *For some reason women seemed to scowl at me when I drove the Jag, older men who knew what this car really is didn't hesitate to come and chat. I found the turning radius similar to a small ocean liner. The beep warning lets you know you're about to hit something before you do. I love being a passenger in this car, it feels very elegant. I even just like seeing it in our driveway.*

Mr. & Mrs. Editor

*The interior is nothing if not opulent. This is the Jag for passengers if you can keep the driver's hand off the sport setting.*





## JAGUAR SUPER V8 PORTFOLIO

### ENGINE

Type	V-8, front mounted
Displacement, cc	4196
Bore/stroke, mm	86.1/90.4
Compression Ratio	9.1:1
Valvetrain	DOHC, 4v
Supercharger	Eaton M112
Block/head	Aluminum
Engine mgmt	Denso 32 bit
Horsepower/rpm	400/6100
Torque/lb-ft/rpm	413/3500

### CHASSIS

Wheelbase, in.	124.4
Track, f/r, in.	61.3/60.9
O/A weight, lbs	4001
Brakes	Teves R, ABS
Rotors, dia.in.f/r	Brembo 14.4/13.0
Gearbox	ZF auto 6-spd/rev
Damping	eCATS, 2 stage
Susp f/r	air springs, wishbone

### PERFORMANCE (m f g)

0-60 sec.	5.0
Max Speed	155 elec limit
EPA fuel mpg	17/24

vehicle, level 2). The standard cat now leaps from naught to 60 in 6.3 seconds, the force-fed one in five seconds flat. Meanwhile, largely thanks to the lightweight body, EPA economy (regardless of wheelbase) is a class-leading 18/27 unboosted and 17/24 supercharged.


Also significant are upgraded brakes across the line, a new tire-pressure monitoring system with radio frequency transmitters at each wheel (including the spare), an electric rear sunblind now standard on all LWB models, DVD-based touch-screen satellite navigation on all but the base XJ8 and a wide array of new-look standard and optional alloy wheels ranging from 18-inch multi-spoke "Tucanas" on XJ8s to 19-inch five-spokers on XJR and Super V8 to muscular 20-inch "Callistos" on the Super V8 Portfolio. New laminated windshield and door glass further quiet the cabin and make smash-and-grab thefts a whole lot harder. Cosmetically, all 2006 XJs get the sporty chrome mesh grille inserts previously worn only by supercharged cars, and the previous model's chrome body-side and front and rear window moldings are deleted for a sleeker, cleaner look.

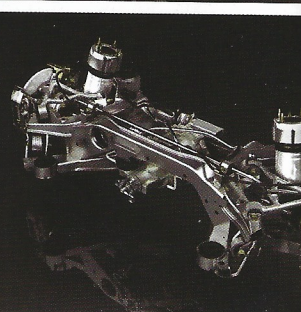
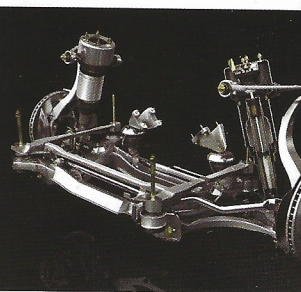
### Useful technology

A healthy complement of electronic controls transparently enhances the XJ pilot's driving experience. The six-speed ZF automatic's electro-hydraulic controls adapt and respond to road conditions and the way the car is being driven. The ARTS continuously adjusts damping in milliseconds to suit driving conditions, varies the rates of its air springs according to load, and lowers ride height 0.6 inches at high cruising speeds to reduce aerodynamic drag and enhance stability and, as a result, fuel economy. The DSC senses instability

and uses engine torque control and selective braking to correct it. And while most drivers thankfully won't ever need it, in case there's an unfortunate meeting with the scenery or another vehicle, Jaguar's Adaptive Restraint Technology System (ARTS) senses the collision's severity and the position of a front passenger and deploys the air bags accordingly.

This most impressive Super V8 Portfolio edition was previewed by the Concept Eight show car unveiled at the New York Auto Show in April 2004. The near-identical production version arrived a year later resplendent in the same rich metallic Black Cherry paint, sporting the same big, bold bright-aluminum front-fender vents and five-spoke polished-alloy Callisto wheels, though in a slightly more modest 20-inch size versus the concept car's 21-inchers. It also sports a matched pair of extra-large exhaust outlets, a tinted-glass power sunroof and the uniquely trimmed, feature-packed, ultra-plush interior described above, nicely accented by polished aluminum Portfolio-logo finishers on each door sill.

One of these big Jag-essence defining beauties would be a handsome addition to anyone's collection and a supremely satisfying daily driver, should you be so inclined. But with only 145 available for the US and another token five for the neighbors to the north, aspiring owners may have to settle for the "ordinary" Super V8. Here's a tip: we might forego the big, clunky (this writer's opinion) fender vents, individual back seats and rear center console (which make it tough to stretch out back there), upgrade the already excellent audio, install the 20-inch wheels and tires, paint it Black Cherry or (the other Portfolio color) Winter Gold metallic and spend the \$24K difference on a sexy second-childhood sports car for those special sunny days. 



*Corporate 4.2-liter supercharged DOHC 4-valve V-8 produces 413 lb-ft of torque that seems to be everywhere above tick-over. Air springs and a choice of two levels of damping produce the ride of a cruiser or the control of a sport sedan with the push of a convenient button.*