



JMX Taurus

Wallflowers need not apply.

• There are lots of ways to get yourself noticed. You could climb the side of a skyscraper while the crowd below prays for a stiff breeze. You could don a "Down with Waylon" T-shirt and walk into a crowded country bar, whistling a Boy George tune. Or you could slide behind the wheel of a sleek JMX Taurus. This last method is guaranteed to provide a healthy dose of the kind of attention that does not require

protective gear.

Wallflowers, be forewarned: the JMX Taurus may bring you more attention than you can stand. A slow drive through our local styling-assessment center, the University of Michigan campus, proved that this is a rubberneck machine of the highest order. Heads spin, fingers point, mouths go "Ooohh!" Inconspicuous this car is not.

The head-turning Taurus turned up on our doorstep courtesy of JMX Aero-

Styling, a Houston-based purveyor of aftermarket body pieces for the Taurus/Sable. The company's founder and owner, Joe Morrow ("JMX" stands for "Joe Morrow Experimental"), used to be in the business of outfitting BMW and Mercedes models with all manner of accessories and aero kits. On the lookout for new projects, Morrow noticed that no one was making kits for modifying Ford's shapely aero twins. Hearing opportunity's knock, Morrow designed and built a package for the slippery sisters and formed JMX Aero-Styling to sell the kits.

The basic JMX aero kit consists of a front air dam with fog lamps, two side skirts, a wraparound rear bumper, and a rear spoiler. All the pieces are made of fiberglass. For the full JMX effect, a number of other additions are available, including



braking or spirited cornering. In addition, the stiff springs, in combination with the wide tires, frustrate the linear steering and the comfortable ride of the stock Taurus. The JMX Taurus undoubtedly has more grip than the stock car, thanks to its stickier rubber and lower ride height, but the smoothness and precision of the factory setup are gone. If you value refined handling, don't fix what isn't broken.

We also recommend skipping the gold-trim kit. For about \$300, you get a tacky gold antenna, gold tape stripes, and a few gold emblems—hardly the stuff that Eurosedan dreams are made of. More appropriate is the tinted-glass option; our white Taurus was stunning with the blacked-out windows. (Our test car's sunroof, by the way, came not from JMX but

from Don-Mar Enterprises, of Jacksonville, Florida.)

Joe Morrow designed the JMX Taurus as an inexpensive alternative to the pricey AMG treatments often lavished on Mercedes. While we doubt that any Eurosedan maven would ever mistake a JMX Taurus for an AMG Mercedes, there is no denying that the former turns a lot of heads for relatively few dollars. Our Taurus L test car with the full JMX treatment came to \$19,500. Skip some of the less attractive options and you could pick up a similar car for much less. The basic aero kit retails for about \$2500.

JMX Aero-Styling is currently manufacturing about 150 Taurus kits per month, and that number is expected to triple in

the near future. In addition, JMX is working on a turbo kit for four-cylinder Tauruses, though no firm plans have been announced.

The factory Taurus is a handsome car right out of the box, and you may feel that the JMX treatment doesn't improve on the basic design. But that's not really the point. The Taurus is one of the best-selling cars in the country, and that's a drawback to drivers who don't want to see themselves coming and going. For the driver who wants a Taurus but also wants to be the center of attention, JMX Aero-Styling has the answer. Besides, who wants to hang out on the edge of a tall building?

—Arthur St. Antoine

JMX TAURUS



a suspension package, a gold-trim kit, tinted windows, a burlled dash, and several wheel-and-tire combinations. Our test car was outfitted with all of these options; it boasted 225/50VR-15 Fulda tires on Böttger alloy wheels.

Before you run to your garage to warm up your toolbox, know that this is not a do-it-yourself package. JMX Aero-Styling sells the pieces to authorized trim shops only; most of the finished cars are then sent to Ford dealers for sale. About 35 installers nationwide have been trained to do the work. Each trim shop fills orders for about ten Ford dealers. If you already own a Taurus or Sable, the parts can be added to your car by one of the designated installers. Your best bet is to call JMX (713-432-0126) to find a participating trim shop or Ford dealer in your area.

The first step in a JMX aero make-over is matching the fiberglass pieces to the car's contours. They are then bonded to the body with adhesive and riveted into place. When the glue has dried, the rivets are removed and the holes and seams are filled. The parts are then painted with an acrylic-urethane enamel treated with a flex additive. The door handles, the side mirrors, and several of the stock trim pieces are painted to match. The result is a well-fitted, color-keyed, seamless shape that doesn't suffer from the typical "add-on" look. Indeed, the disguise is so well done that many onlookers didn't recognize our JMX car as a Taurus in fancy clothes.

The suspension package (about \$500, installed) consists of high-rate springs that lower the car 1.25 inches in the front and 1.5 inches in the rear. Although the lower stance makes the Taurus look considerably more aggressive, we recommend that you skip this option. For one thing, it puts the front air dam so close to the pavement that it can easily be scraped during hard

Vehicle type: front-engine, front-wheel drive, 5-passenger, 4-door sedan

Price as tested: \$19,500 (base price: \$10,650)

Engine type: V-6, iron block and heads, Ford IEC-IV engine-control system with port fuel injection

Displacement 182 cu in., 2986cc

Power (SAE net) 140 bhp @ 4600 rpm

Transmission 4-speed automatic

Wheelbase 106.0 in

Length 190.0 in

Curb weight 3300 lb

EPA fuel economy, city driving 19 mpg

CAR and DRIVER