

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

give it a try on a two-foot deep, frozen lake and curvy, uphill iced roads. There were treacherous situations, but the AWD and DSTC systems worked even better than anticipated.

Also keeping the flagship S80 a safety leader are front side airbags, inflatable curtain airbags that deploy from above the side windows, and WHIPS, which move the front seats backrest in a rear-end collision to minimize whiplash injury. Pricing starts at \$33,520 for the S70 AWD and \$35,820 for the S80.

—Kimatni D. Rawlins

1999 PORSCHE 911 CARRERA 4

There is no doubt that Porsche Cars will reach their year 2000 goal of 20,000 sales with the introduction of the four-wheel drive 911 Carrera 4.

Since sports, fun, and excitement are synonymous with "Porsche," we knew our one-day excursion to Atlanta's Motor Speedway to evaluate the new 911 would be fulfilling.

The latest driver control safety feature on the C-4 is its "Porsche

Stability Management" (PSM) system. It incorporates the use of anti-lock braking; traction control and Automatic Brake Differential, mated to the four-wheel drive system to keep the car stable at all times. I can still hear the echoing commands of my

driving instructor, Pierre, "hard left, hard right, now left," as I made intentionally sharp turns at high speeds for a demonstration of how PSM works. Brake pressure is applied to one wheel to keep under-



steer or oversteer to a minimum. With the system on, the C-4 adheres to the road even during the most dynamic of turns, while with it off, the car has the propensity to spin out during the same maneuvers.

The 3.4 liter, rear mounted, 296-horsepower six-cylinder 911 Carrera 4 coupe starts at \$70,480, while the Cabriolet will set you back a cool \$79,920. Several options are also available, if you're so inclined.

—Kimatni D. Rawlins

MERCEDES 2000 S-CLASS

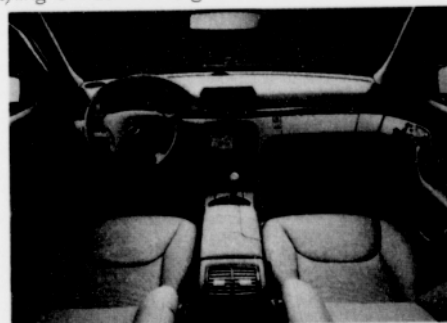
The S-Class has been doing Tae Bo! The new car is lighter, sleeker and quicker. Plus, it's more luxurious and less expensive. By judiciously employing aluminum and high strength stressed steel, the big Benz drops 500 pounds. The styling is much more graceful and contributes to a cd of 0.27, the lowest of any production car.

Two V8's are offered, a 275 hp 4.3, and a 302 hp 5 liter. The new S500 is faster from 0—60 with less horsepower than the 1999 S500's 315.

The 2000 S-Class' very long list of standard features includes GPS navigation, computer controlled air / hydraulic suspension and 16 way power front seats that can be heated or cooled by 10 fans—IN THE SEATS!

Pricing starts at \$69,700 for the S430 and \$77,850 for the S500. The S500 actually costs less than a 99 S420 which starts at \$78,183.

—L. Conrad Bell



JAGUAR'S LONG AWAITED S-TYPE SEDAN MAKES SPRING DEBUT

By Jacqueline Mitchell

When Ford bought Jaguar in 1989, Jag loyalists anxiously awaited the first generation of Ford-influenced Jags to hit the market. Would it look like a Ford, a Jag, or a hybrid of the two?

After nearly 10 years as a Ford unit, Jaguar unveiled the S-Type sedan at the British Auto Show in England last October.

Journalists from across the world descended upon the much-anticipated car—including myself, *African Americans On Wheels'* Editor-in-Chief Jacqueline Mitchell.

At first glimpse, it's a looker, and still vintage Jaguar. The car is a medley of

traditional Jaguar styling with a contemporary flair. The front-end styling is all Jag. Ford's influence, however, is more apparent in the rear, which was a disappointment. It appears as almost an afterthought to an otherwise handsome car.

The rear-wheel-drive sedan shares the underpinnings and many parts with Ford's Lincoln LS sedan and the upcoming Ford Thunderbird. The S-Type is 6.6 inches shorter and about 300 pounds lighter than the short-wheelbase XJ sedan, or about the same size as an Audi A6. AAOW publisher Randi Payton had a chance to actually test drive the vehicle on the rolling mountain roads of Bel Air, Calif. While the 3.0 liter V6 is quite capable of powering the S-Type, the 4.0 liter V8-equipped version had a bit more pep and was more fun to drive.

The base price of the S-Type 3.0 is \$42,500; the 4.0 is \$48,000, a price Payton says makes an ultra-luxury nameplate more affordable to a larger buying segment.

"The value and position and sporting credentials of this car will enable us to bring the unique Jaguar ownership experience to a far broader audience," said Michael Dale, President of Jaguar Cars.

AAOW's Payton points out that Jaguar could lose some of its distinction and prestige if too many folks start cruising around in Jags. On the other hand, it may be the best marketing move since BMW introduced its entry-level 318ti hatchback a few years ago. By broadening the net, Ford might catch some buyers who, once they've slid behind the wheel of a Jaguar, will become hooked for life.

