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# Target acquired

**W**elcome to issue one of a new title dedicated to all things Aston Martin. From the finest classics to the latest production GTs, Aston Martin Driver will focus on everything that makes this iconic marque so great. We'll be combining top-class writing with stunning photography, all wrapped up in a package that's high on quality but realistic on price.

Aston Martin Driver will feature Aston Martin's all-time greatest road cars, as well as offering motorsport coverage, technical features, historic profiles and a whole lot more. Each and every issue will contain a minimum of 100 pages, all dedicated to the brand we can't help but love.

In issue one we're going to look at historic rivalries, modern dreams, the places behind the brand and the history of one of the marque's most affordable modern classics. We're going to visit specialists, look at the world of motorsport and show you exactly what's happening in the Aston Martin market ready to help you buy an Aston of your own.

Aston Martin Driver fills a unique niche in the market, offering Aston enthusiasts a quality magazine focused on their favourite marque. And as the latest addition to our portfolio of prestigious single-marque titles, it's in great company. Enjoy!

## Sam Skelton

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# UP FRONT NEWS

## F1 CHALLENGER UNVEILED

**The Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One™ Team today proudly unveiled its 2022 FIA Formula One® World Championship contender, a century on from the ultra-luxury marque's first entry into Grand Prix racing.**

Revealed at the assembly plant at Gaydon, the AMR22 commemorates the centenary of the marque's first Grand Prix. In attendance were three of the newest high performance road models in the Aston Martin range. The DBX707 was on show alongside the Valkyrie AMR Pro and the plug-in hybrid Valhalla.

Data from the last season suggests that brand awareness has grown since Aston Martin re-entered the Formula 1 arena, and website traffic increased by 15% on race weekends when compared with non race weekends. This increased to 25% on weekends where Aston Martin Lagonda supplied the Official Safety & Medical Car of Formula One®, with the Vantage enjoying global exposure during the dramatic season finale in Abu Dhabi. Social media benefited too, with the company's announcement of the Aston Martin Cognizant Formula One™ Team in January 2021 the brand's best performing Twitter post of all time.

The AMR22 will be raced by four-time F1® World Champion Sebastian Vettel and rising star Lance Stroll.

Lawrence Stroll, Executive Chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda, said: "The return of Aston Martin to Formula One® has been a monumental moment for the brand, with transformative impact for our performance credentials and global awareness. Through the race team and our status as the Official Safety & Medical Car of Formula One®, we have been able to showcase our product and test new technologies on the world's greatest circuits."





“Formula One® is enjoying tremendous popularity, particularly in our key focus markets like the USA and China, helping to amplify the Aston Martin brand, engage a new generation of customers and define our unique position in the crosshairs of ultra-luxury and high-performance.”

Tobias Moers, Chief Executive Officer of Aston Martin Lagonda, said: “Our involvement in Formula One® has already had an uplifting impact on all our employees and customers, helping us bring an agile Formula One® performance mindset to the whole Aston Martin business and reinjecting our racing DNA into our next generation of products.”

“Seeing the AMR22 on the assembly line at Gaydon today, alongside our flagship new models like Valhalla, Aston Martin Valkyrie AMR Pro and DBX707, is a great example of how we are creating a culture of engineering excellence at Aston Martin, establishing a dynamic and exciting innovation lab to drive forward future Aston Martin road car technologies and performance.”

The 2022 FIA Formula One® World Championship season will begin at the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix on 20 March 2022.



# DBX707 BRINGS 100 JOBS



**Aston Martin is to create more than 100 jobs at its St Athan site in Wales, following the launch of its new DBX707 model – the world’s most powerful luxury SUV.**

DBX707 will enter full production later this quarter at the ultra-luxury manufacturer’s plant in South Wales, with more than 100 new skilled automotive technicians required to support it.

Tobias Moers, Chief Executive Officer of Aston Martin Lagonda said: “As we ramp-up production of DBX707, we are delighted to have the opportunity to increase our team at St Athan and create more employment opportunities for the local community.”

“Our DBX SUV is the first Welsh-built production car for nearly 50 years and these new positions are an opportunity to join a team delivering our truly incredible new DBX707 derivative which is setting new benchmarks for performance in the luxury segment.”

Simon Hart, Secretary of State for Wales said: “The creation of more than 100 jobs working with a world-class and globally-recognised brand is a huge vote of confidence in the skills and expertise of the Welsh workforce.”

The new DBX707 is the ultimate SUV in every respect – with 707PS and 900Nm of torque, an increase of 157PS and 200Nm over the standard DBX, it can reach 60mph in just 3.3 seconds. With a 9 speed gearbox with a new wet-clutch transmission, gear changes are

significantly faster and the feel is more direct. A bespoke engine calibration and new ball bearing turbochargers contribute toward its power increases.

Aston Martin’s Head of Powertrain, Ralph Illenberger said: “With this exceptional new model we have truly unlocked the performance potential within the DBX to create a world beating high-performance SUV. The huge gains we have found in both power and torque demonstrates not only the inherent prowess of the 4.0-litre biturbo V8, but Aston Martin’s appetite and ability for finding uncompromising engineering solutions. The combination of this magnificent engine with a new 9-speed ‘wet-clutch’ transmission sits at the heart of DBX707’s formidable capabilities and unforgettable character.”

Full scale production will begin later in the first quarter of 2022, with first deliveries to begin early in the second quarter.







## RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES

**Customers will soon start receiving their Aston Martin Valkyries. The model has now entered full production and the first customer car is complete, with deliveries expected in the coming weeks.**

Aston Martin Chief Executive Officer, Tobias Moers commented: "It is an immensely proud moment for us to complete our first ever hypercar. The Aston Martin Valkyrie programme has tested everyone who has worked on it to

the limit but the commitment to the dream has produced a truly incredible car, an F1® car for the road. The Valkyrie is born out of the steadfast dedication of a large group of highly skilled engineers and technicians who have worked tirelessly to get Valkyrie to the production stage. I'm sure our customers will be delighted with what they have achieved."

Valkyrie will be built at Aston Martin's UK headquarters in Gaydon, like all Aston Martin sports cars. A dedicated team manages production in a specially



commissioned area, with each of the 150 cars taking over 2000 man hours to create. The hybrid V12 powertrain delivers a maximum of 1155PS, incorporating technologies taken directly from Formula 1. It is set to become the era-defining hypercar.

## DB5 JUNIOR APPROVED AS OFFICIAL PRODUCT

**The Little Car Company's DB5 Junior has been approved as an official Aston Martin product by Aston Martin's three-time Le Mans class winner and High Performance Development Driver, Darren Turner.**

Created in collaboration with Aston Martin, the DB5 Junior is an electric two-thirds scale version of the marque's most iconic product. Production will be limited to 1059; one for every example of the full-sized model, and all will be offered to owners of full-scale cars first in order to ensure that those who

wish to own both can own matching chassis numbers. Completed at Bicester Heritage, Oxfordshire, the DB5 Junior was subjected to the same testing procedures as Darren Turner would apply to the full scale machines. Prices begin from £3,5000, and there are three models; the standard DB5 Junior, the Vantage at £45,000, and the No Time To Die edition at £90,000 with a smoke screen and miniguns. Three colours are available as standard, with eight as cost options and bespoke options available. 24 interior colours are available. For more information visit [www.thelittlecar.co/db5junior](http://www.thelittlecar.co/db5junior).







### BESPOKE 1961 DB4 GT ZAGATO RECREATION

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#### 1967 DB6 MK1 VOLANTE VANTAGE

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This stunning DB6 Volante has been fitted with a manual gearbox and upgraded to 'Vantage spec'. Finished in Sierra Blue exterior and a Magnolia Leather interior. Only 10,509 miles.

#### 1964 DB5 - BESPOKE BUILD

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In stock and already undergoing a complete restoration, we have a small number of DB5 available to purchase which can be fully customised and completed to your bespoke specification.

#### 1963 DB5 JUBILEE SILVER

£499,950



Finished in a Jubilee Silver exterior with a contrasting Black Leather interior, the stylish colour combination gives an already rare car a unique touch. Only 47,534 miles on the clock.

#### 1968 DBS EV

£499,950



In stock and already undergoing restoration work & power train conversion to full EV this DBS can be fully customised and completed to your bespoke specification.

#### 1967 DB6 VANTAGE MKI LHD

£439,950



Presented in stunning Pacific Blue with a Tan Leather interior. Comprehensive, fully documented restoration by ourselves in 2008. Only 2210 miles on the clock since then.

#### 1961 DB4 SERIES 2 SALOON 3.7 MANUAL

£429,950



Sublime example in original Goodwood Green with Black leather. In exceptional condition with a comprehensive documented history. 98,195 miles. A fantastic addition to any collection.



# WATCH IT

**The Laureato Chronograph Aston Martin Edition is the latest creation from Girard-Perregaux, tailored to those who appreciate luxury and performance. Its dial is suffused with an application of Aston Martin Green, the outcome of a process involving the application of paint 21 times to the dial and forming seven distinct layers of paint.**

It also features cross-hatching, inspired by the quilted upholstery found in many of the marque's products. Three counters grace the dial, including two chronograph registers and a seconds display. There is an octagonal bezel, honouring the Laureato of 1975. Its satin finished and polished edges collaborate, creating a wonderful play with light.

Marek Reichman, Aston Martin Executive Vice President and Chief Creative Officer, added: 'As Aston Martin and Girard-Perregaux strengthen our partnership, the same is happening with our common design ethos, geared towards discreet luxury. Evidence of it continues to appear in

subtle touches throughout the watch, for instance, in its partially openworked hour and minute hands, which have been purposely designed to evoke thoughts of racing cars, eschewing extraneous material to deliver superior performance. Likewise, the central chronograph

seconds hand features a counterweight that resembles the sides strakes first seen on the 1958 Aston Martin DB4.'

Just 188 Laureato Chronograph Aston Martin Editions will be produced. It is available in all authorised Girard-Perregaux retailers worldwide.



# SCOTCH BONNET



**Bowmore Masters' Selection is the first single malt whisky to be created by Bowmore Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky in collaboration with Aston Martin.**

Imagined and defined by Bowmore Master Whisky Blender Ron Welsh and Aston Martin Chief Creative Officer Marek Reichman, it bridges two distinct worlds in the luxury sphere in a distinctive manner.

Each Master imparts their own creativity and character, leaving a unique fingerprint upon every creation.

The whisky is formed from a base of 21 year old Bowmore matures in Pedro Ximenez and Oloroso sherry casks. The remaining parts include exceptionally aged Bowmore matured for over 35 years. It utilises a concept known as the Golden Ratio, as championed by Marek Reichman. "Proportionality defines every precise detail of designing an Aston Martin. We are constantly striving to achieve the Golden Ratio;

the optimal of proportions. And it is this force which guides the creation of absolute beauty. To achieve this, we must combine our skill, passion and experience.

Coming together with Ron just brings a whole new perspective on this and is hugely inspiring and enlightening.

This whisky perfectly and harmoniously brings us together to create a beautiful, yet powerful equilibrium."

Bowmore Masters' Selection is available in key global markets including the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Canada and USA at an RSP of \$300 plus associated duties. It is available now. [www.drinks mart.com/reducing-drunk-driving-or-drink-driving](http://www.drinks mart.com/reducing-drunk-driving-or-drink-driving)





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**BEHIND THE WHEEL**

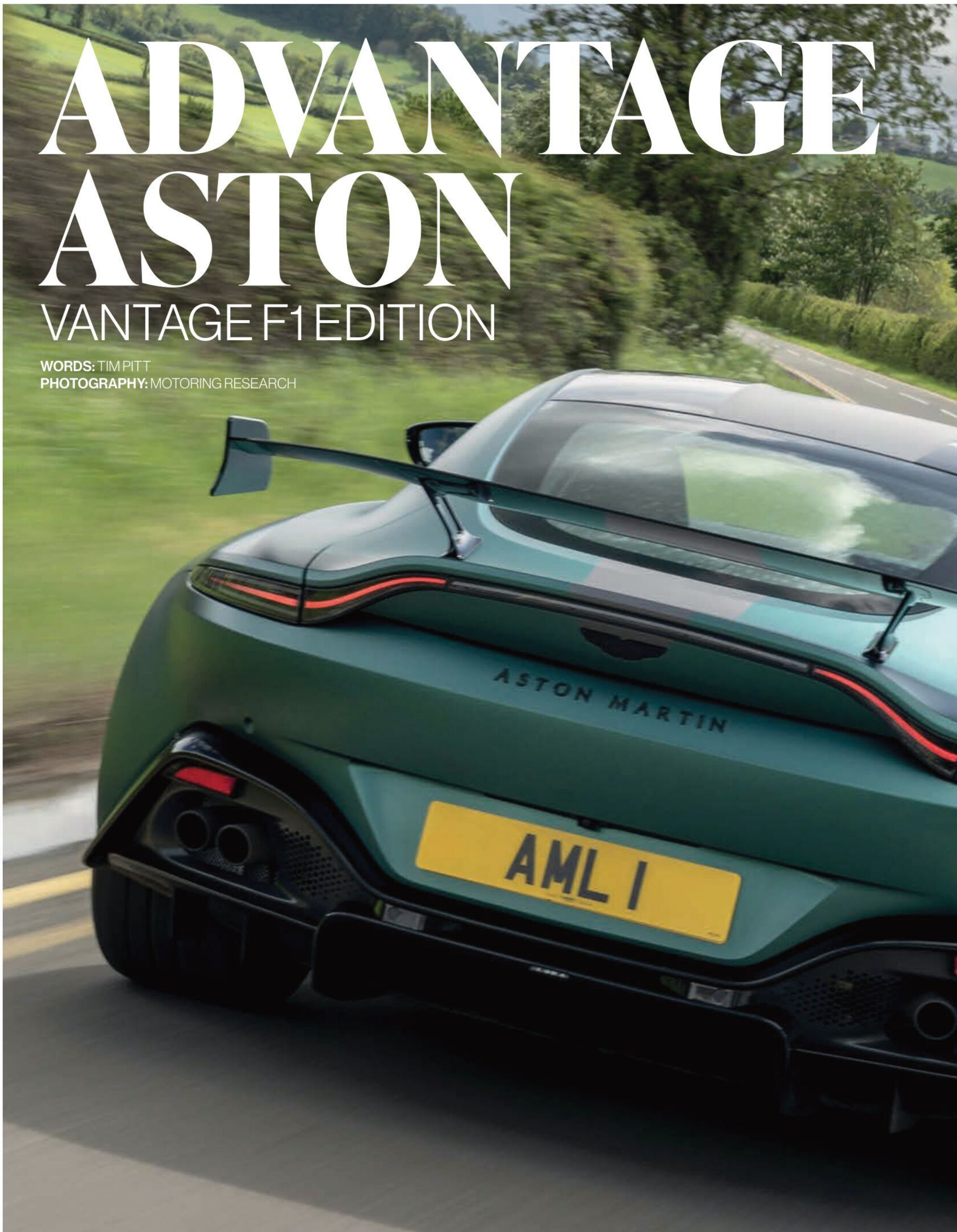
VANTAGE F1 EDITION

# ADVANTAGE ASTON

## VANTAGE F1 EDITION

WORDS: TIM PITT

PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORING RESEARCH







**As the showroom version of  
the official grand prix safety  
car, the Vantage F1 Edition is  
something rather special...  
as we discovered on both  
road and track**



**BEHIND THE WHEEL**  
VANTAGE F1 EDITION







*“Back in the real world, the 535bhp Vantage F1 Edition is a serious supercar, a rival for the Audi R8 and Porsche 911 Turbo”*



The car feels taut and tightly controlled, but never abrupt or skittish – an ideal balance for broken B-roads

**A**s one of Formula 1's official safety cars, this Aston Martin was designed to hold up traffic. You'll have seen it on Sunday afternoons, orange lights ablaze, leading Messrs Hamilton, Verstappen and Bottas in steady single file while an incident is cleared. It seems apt, then, to be driving at Silverstone, acting as a rolling roadblock for something far faster. Once again, the Vantage F1 Edition is the slowest car on the track.

In fairness, even a pukka F1 car might struggle to gain ground on a Valkyrie. Wrapped in red and black camouflage, Aston Martin's £2.2 million hypercar is undergoing final shakedown tests on the day of our visit. With 1176hp to shift just 1030kg, it looms large in my mirrors, then slingshots past, the scream of its 11,000rpm Cosworth V12 slicing the atmosphere clean in half. A few laps later, it's back behind me again. Just... wow.

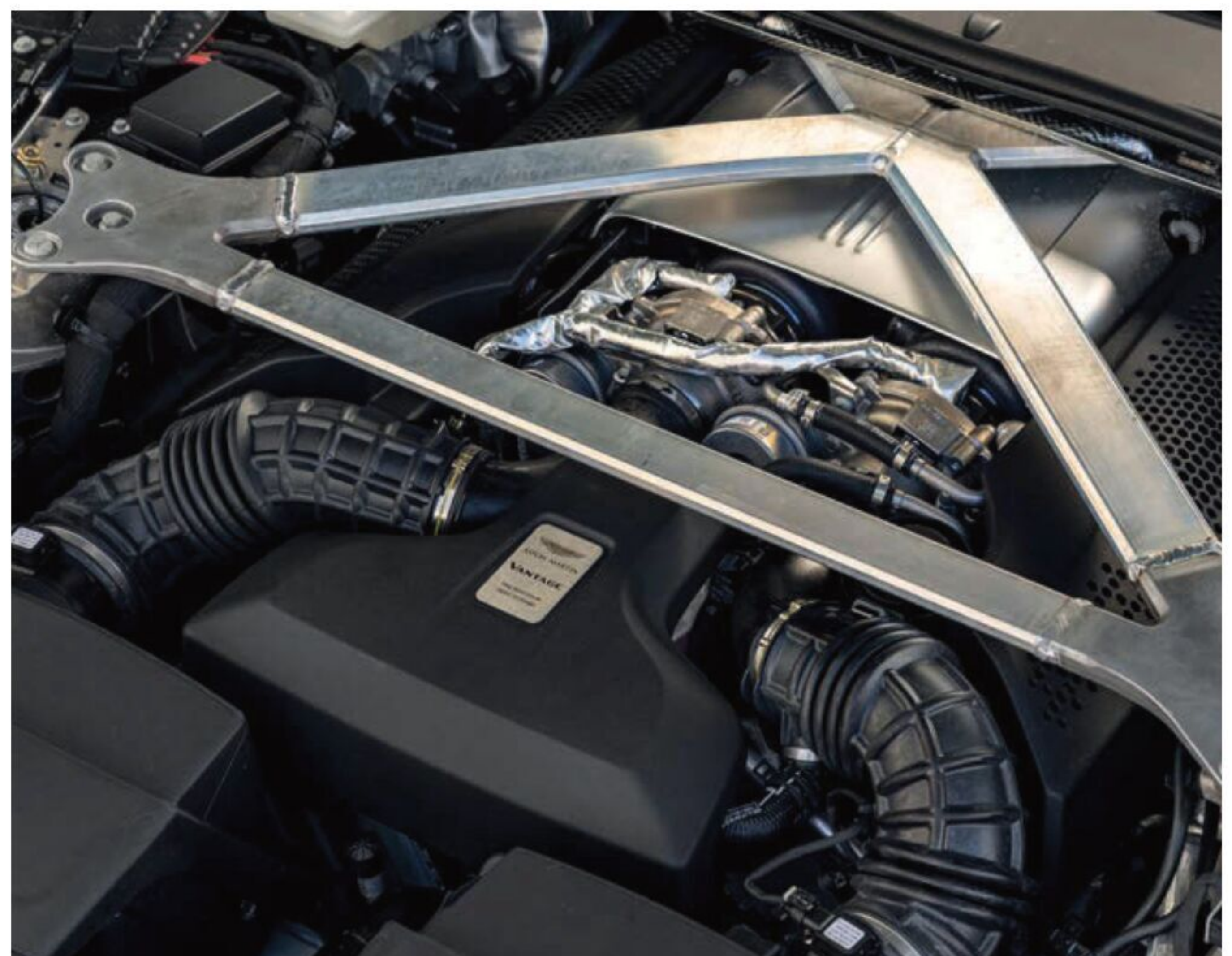
Back in the real world, though, the 535bhp Vantage F1 Edition is a serious supercar, a rival for the Audi R8 and Porsche 911 Turbo. It's also a landmark Aston Martin, the first launched under new CEO Tobias Moers. Where this car leads, others will follow.

You can't blame Aston for leveraging its F1 investment, particularly after 61 years absent from the sport. And the flagship Vantage – which shares safety car duties with the Mercedes-AMG GT R, covering twelve of 2021's 23 grands prix – provides a tangible link from racetrack to the road.

Sadly, there's no light bar on the roof, but the (optional) satin green paint and matt black stripe of my test car echo the livery of the Aston Martin Cognizant racer. You'll also find plaques bearing the Formula 1 logo on the front wings and centre console, just to hammer the point home.

Other external changes are more functional. The upswept front splitter, carbon fibre canards and fixed rear wing might look a tad 'Halfords', but they contribute 200kg of downforce at Vmax of 195mph. Enlarged 21-inch alloys also help towards a Nurburgring lap time of 7min 30sec – 15 seconds quicker than a standard V8 Vantage.

Interestingly, Moers was adamant that “gains in performance came via genuine improvements in the car's dynamics, and not by fitting track-optimised tyres”, so the F1 Edition wears jack-of-all-trades Pirelli P Zeros. I suspect F1 safety car driver Bernd Mayländer uses something a little stickier. Under the skin, spring rates are near-identical, but stiffer damping,



The AMG-derived 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 develops 535bhp at 6000rpm – up 25bhp on the standard car



# FROM ROAD TO RACETRACK

The Aston Martin name didn't only return to the F1 grid in 2021; it also became joint-supplier of the Official Safety and Medical cars of Formula 1.

Naturally, the DBX SUV takes on medical car duties. Its considerable power and voluminous cabin are ideal for ferrying trained medics to emergency situations at high speed – the importance of which we saw in dramatic form in 2020 following Romain Grosjean's shocking accident.

Onboard equipment includes a large medical bag, defibrillator, two fire extinguishers and a burn kit. It's driven by Alan van der Merwe, with Dr Ian Roberts alongside, and a local doctor in the rear. The fourth seat is left for a racing driver who may need to return to the pit lane.

For sports car fans, though, it's the Aston Martin Vantage safety car that's most exciting. Driven by Bernd Mayländer, F1's safety car driver for the past two decades, it remains on standby in the pitlane for the duration of every other F1 race (duties are alternated with the Mercedes-AMG GT). Like the road car, power has been increased to 535hp, and a new front splitter generates more than 155kg of downforce at 124mph – that's over 60kg more than the already-updated road car.

The body gets further bracing to increase structural stiffness and Aston Martin has honed the suspension, steering and dampers. It has also deployed experience from sports car racing, including class victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, in creating a thermal management system robust enough to go from top speeds to idling in the pit lane without a cool-down lap. The extra vents in the bonnet are one small clue to what's been modified beneath.

Other FIA-spec bits include the official FIA Safety Car livery, side-mounted radio antennas, an LED rear number plate and a bespoke roof-mounted LED light bar. The roof light bar sits on a carbon fibre plinth, which has been aerodynamically profiled to offer minimal air resistance; impressively, it also channels a flow of air toward the enlarged rear wing, to further increase rear downforce.

As F1 fans will know, there are bright orange lights on the outer edges of the light bar that illuminate as the safety car joins the track; a central amber flashing light then takes over once it's in position ahead of the race leader. For drivers, this indicates that nobody is allowed to overtake. When the light goes off, the Safety Car will soon peel back into the pits, with racing ready to recommence.

What about the inside? Normally, F1 fans only get close-ups of the drivers, but did you know Mayländer also sits on an FIA-approved racing seat, complete with six-point safety harness as also found in F1 cars? On the dashboard are two screens: one gives a live TV television feed and includes a number of customisable displays, including live lap timing and the track position of all active racing cars.

Aston moved the rotary dial on the centre console rearwards, to where the cup holder normally sits. It has been replaced by a switch control unit whose functions include activating the siren, radio communications and the all-important light bar LED controls.

Ingeniously, the Marshalling System has been integrated into the instrument cluster, allowing driver and co-driver to show which colour flag is being shown at any point on the track – the very same system as used in F1 cars.



**Nobody should criticise Aston Martin for leveraging its F1 investment, particularly after 61 years absent from the sport**

stronger bump stops, a reinforced undertray and a smidge more negative camber all sharpen the chassis. Aston Martin has even deleted a rubber bush to remove slack from the steering column.

The AMG-derived 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 gets a gentle massage, too: up 25bhp to 535bhp at 6000rpm. Driving the rear wheels via an eight-speed automatic gearbox – now with a torque-cut function for sharper upshifts – it propels the Vantage to 62mph in 3.6 seconds. That compares with 3.7 seconds for the Audi R8 V10 RWD and just 2.8 seconds for the latest Porsche 911 Turbo (which benefits from four-wheel drive traction).



*“It also sounds spectacular:  
throbbing menacingly at idle,  
then puffing out its chest with a  
stentorian roar”*



The one area left more-or-less untouched is the cabin. On the plus side, that means a snug, low-slung driving position and a roomy 350-litre boot (on par with a mid-size hatchback). But it also means a cluttered dashboard, plastic shift paddles and a dated Mercedes-Benz media system with blocky graphics. Together, they put a real dent in the Vantage's showroom appeal.

Speaking of showrooms, the F1 Edition is offered as a coupe (seen here) or Volante convertible. Prices start from £142,000, some £17,600 more than a regular Vantage. Time to discover if that's money well-spent.

### **ON-TRACK ACTION**

Exiting the pit lane, I click the steering wheel toggles through Sport and Sport+ modes into Track, then accelerate hard up the main straight. The Vantage instantly feels on it. There's a pleasing heft to its steering and turn-in feels swift and alert,



remarkably so for a front-engined car. Yep, this is fun.

So much fun. The ZF transmission isn't as razor-sharp as a twin-clutch 'box, but it's well worth taking control with the paddles, enjoying the thump of full-bore upshifts as the V8 howls towards the redline. Traction out of corners feels mighty, while the optional carbon-ceramic brakes are progressive and utterly tireless.

If anything, the lower limits of the P Zeros feel like a bonus here, making the car slower but ultimately more malleable. You can make things neat and accurate like Mayländer, or keep your foot pinned and throw more shapes than a Strictly Come Dancing contestant. Before long, I'm coaxing the Vantage into long, smoky slides, then holding it there, feeling like a hero, until the car pulls itself straight. And until the Valkyrie arrives to show me who's boss.

Ultimately, the Vantage F1 Edition isn't a dagger-between-the-teeth track warrior like a McLaren 620R or Porsche



## BEHIND THE WHEEL

### VANTAGE F1 EDITION

911 GT3; it's a road car at heart. So I leave Silverstone behind and dive into deepest Northamptonshire, taking the long route to famous petrolhead pub Caffeine & Machine.

### B-ROAD ANTICS

Away from the racetrack, the first thing I notice is the ride. It feels taut and tightly controlled, but never abrupt or skittish – an ideal balance for broken B-roads. Cocooned in the hip-hugging seat, I quickly find a flow, blatting between bends as the Vantage hunkers into the tarmac. The AMG 'hot vee' V8 (so-called because the two turbochargers nestle between the cylinders) really comes into its own here, too. Brawny and effortless low-down, then increasingly feral as the revs rise, it provides every journey with a sense of occasion. The Vantage feels over-engineered like a classic muscle car, like it has more power than grip, and I rather like that.

It also sounds spectacular: throbbing menacingly at idle, then puffing out its chest with a stentorian roar. When it comes to aural excitement, only a handful of naturally-aspirated supercars – such as the R8 – can compete.

Arriving at Caffeine & Machine in Warwickshire, the Vantage draws visitors away from their lunchtime lattes. The famous AML 1 number plates help, I'm sure, but whatever your thoughts on that spoiler, the car clearly has presence.



Besides, driving an Aston Martin guarantees you an extra-large helping of goodwill – quite unlike the reaction you get in a Ferrari or Lamborghini.

That said, under Tobias Moers the company is moving in a different direction, its emphasis shifting from front-engined GTs to mid-engined supercars. The Valkyrie and newly revealed Valhalla represent the exotic new breed. The Vantage F1 Edition takes a step in this direction, but retains its old-school charm. The forthcoming V12 Vantage – due in 2022 – will hopefully go even further. It certainly sounds magnificent in the teaser video.

For now, many small changes add up to the best Vantage yet. This is still a flawed car in some respects, particularly its interior and infotainment, but it has so much character – backed up by real dynamic talent – that you probably won't care. Race on Sunday, sell on Monday? Something like that. **AMD**









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# ASTON MARTIN *driver*

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# SIXTIES' SENSATION

## BUYING A DB6

**WORDS:** RICHARD GUNN

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** RICHARD GUNN, KELSEY ARCHIVE





Although it might not have quite the cachet of its DB4 and DB5 predecessors, many argue that the DB6 is actually the best of the trio thanks to its extra space, luxury and sophistication. If you're tempted, what should you check before taking the plunge?





## BUYING GUIDE

### ASTON MARTIN DB6

**O**ne of the many contradictions of the classic car world is that the earlier and less-developed a model it is, the more

desirable it seems to be to enthusiasts. That's especially true of the DB4, DB5 and DB6 ranges which, although distinct types in their own right, are all clearly closely related on Aston Martin's evolutionary path. The three machines share a commonality of styling and mechanical layout plus, of course, awesome performance and seductive glamour, which echoes down from the first DB4 of 1958 through to the final DB6 of 1970.

Looking at the cars dispassionately, the DB6 is arguably the best of the bunch. It took many of the best ingredients of the previous machines and improved on them, while still retaining their overall appearance. The aerodynamics were improved, while a lengthened wheelbase gave more space inside. Power steering became available, as did air-conditioning, and fuel-injection came along towards the end. And the DB6 generally felt plusher and more lavish, indulging the driver with bigger and better instrumentation, and passengers with more comfortable seats.



However, when it comes to matters Aston Martin, being dispassionate isn't really an option. And so the DB4 will always be better regarded as the more desirable because it was the first of the breed, has the most purity, and is so bound up with the company's motorsport heritage. As for the DB5, it's now saved the world so many times in the hands of Sean Connery, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig that it occupies a position in the British national consciousness that is insurmountable. This all leaves the DB6 somewhat overshadowed in the

hierarchy, although the good news for buyers is that it also makes it the most affordable of the breed. That said, as with anything Aston Martin, 'affordable' is a very relative term here.

The DB6 formally entered the world in October 1965 at the Earl's Court Motor Show. It was clearly a development of the DB5 shape, after Touring of Milan (the Italian carrozzeria behind the DB4) had its proposals for a DB5 replacement







turned down. Wind tunnel testing proved that there was considerable scope for improving high-speed stability, with the eventual solution being the adoption of a Kamm tail abruptly ending the lengthened DB5 chassis. The Superleggera tubular construction process was also dispensed with, in favour of a framework of folded box sections. Other recognition points were a raised roofline, steeper windscreen and split quarter bumpers. Inside, power steering and air conditioning were optional extras, as was a Borg-Warner three-speed automatic for those who didn't want the five-speed manual ZF transmission, although the auto 'box wasn't at all well-regarded.

Before long, the standard 282bhp DB6 was joined by the 325bhp Vantage model with three Weber carburetors instead of SUs, plus a high compression ratio cylinder head. In addition, there was also the DB6 Volante – Aston Martin-speak for a convertible. The first 37 used a shortened DB5 chassis with a DB6 nose, but in 1966 the al fresco Aston became fully DB6-based. That same year, coachbuilder Harold Radford built seven shooting-brake estate cars, while FLM

(Panelcraft) Ltd completed a further three to an alternative design.

By 1969, the DBS – which would eventually supersede the DB6 – had been on sale for two years. Nevertheless, there was a final flowering of the DB6 in the form of the MkII (which, at one point, was going to be called the DB7; badges were even made up for it). The main differences were the flared wheelarches over wider wheels and an optional AE Brico fuel-injection system, which proved unreliable and was only fitted to 46 cars. Many parts from the DBS were also shared with the MkII.

In November 1970, production of the DB6 MkII ceased, although examples continued to be sold new into early 1971. Over the course of five years, a total of 1567 saloons and 215 Volantes had been produced. Today's survival rate is impressive even by supercar standards of the 1960s; but what should you be looking for in your quest for the ideal DB6?

### **BODYWORK CHECKS**

Because they don't have the same Superleggera construction of previous cars, DB6s are stronger. However, with a combination of aluminium and steel construction, you do have to keep an eye out for two different types of corrosion. ►





## BUYING GUIDE

### ASTON MARTIN DB6



Rust affects the steel at the foot of the bulkhead, the jacking points and side members. The box sections (sills) between each wheel also fall victim to 'tinworm', but they're clothed in aluminium, so any problems are difficult to see. However, if the area around the jacking points is sagging, it probably means the metal here is weak. The upper assembly for the rear suspension Watt linkage is behind the back seat, and should be examined for rot. It often hosts rot that goes unnoticed until issues are very advanced. Bumper supports are vulnerable, so are the door hinge mountings and the pedal box.

If water gets into the boot, it will start to pool, especially around the wheelarches, leading to rot. Don't forget to lift out the spare wheel to see what lies underneath in the well. Under the bonnet, vulnerable spots are the area around the washer bottle, along with the master cylinder pedestals. Brake and clutch fluid does them little good.

Turning to the aluminium, any bubbles

***“It leaves the DB6 somewhat overshadowed in the hierarchy, although the good news for buyers is that it also makes it the most affordable of the breed”***

on the body should sound alarm bells, with the potential for an electrolytic reaction occurring with the steel underneath. It's likely to be much worse under the surface. Such issues usually strike around the rear valance and door bottoms. Look out for filler as well, which will show up as rough areas or patches of paint in a slightly different shade. Aston Martin never used filler, unlike certain other exotic supercar manufacturers; if do come across some, it shouldn't be there and natural body flexing may eventually cause it to crack or even fall out.

If you're looking at a Volante, don't forget to have a close look at the condition of the hood. If water has got in, whether through leaks or unexpected showers, it may try to escape by attacking the attacking the floorpan. The rear section of the cabin is the most likely spot for this to occur.

#### INTERIOR ISSUES

Don't expect a tired interior to be cheap to rectify; putting right flaws with the Connolly leather interior will cost many thousands, although it does wear well when properly cared for. Some patina can be a welcome sight, like a well-established traditional gentleman's club.

If fitted, try the air conditioning, along with all the switches. While they're not that prone to wearing out, some of them can be difficult to source.

Make sure you try the electric windows as well, as they're not known for their reliability. If they go up and down only slowly, it suggests that the motors are failing.

As previously mentioned, you should also have a look around the driver's pedal cluster for signs of rust setting in.





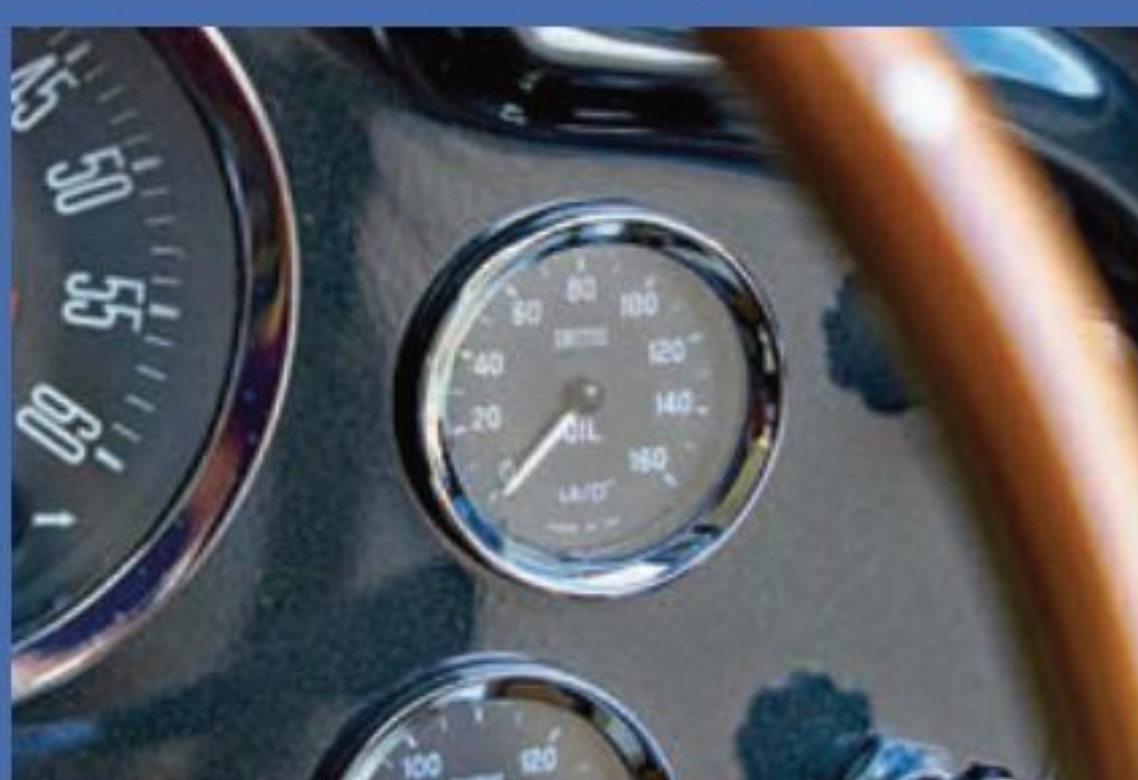
Anyone contemplating the restoration of a DB6 will need extremely deep pockets



Rebuilding any Aston Martin engine is expensive, so a good service history is crucial



Original Connolly leather with just the right degree of patination can add to a DB6's interior



It's vital that any DB6 you're thinking of buying shows healthy oil pressure once warm



Don't forget to check the condition of the boot, as water can leak in and lead to rust

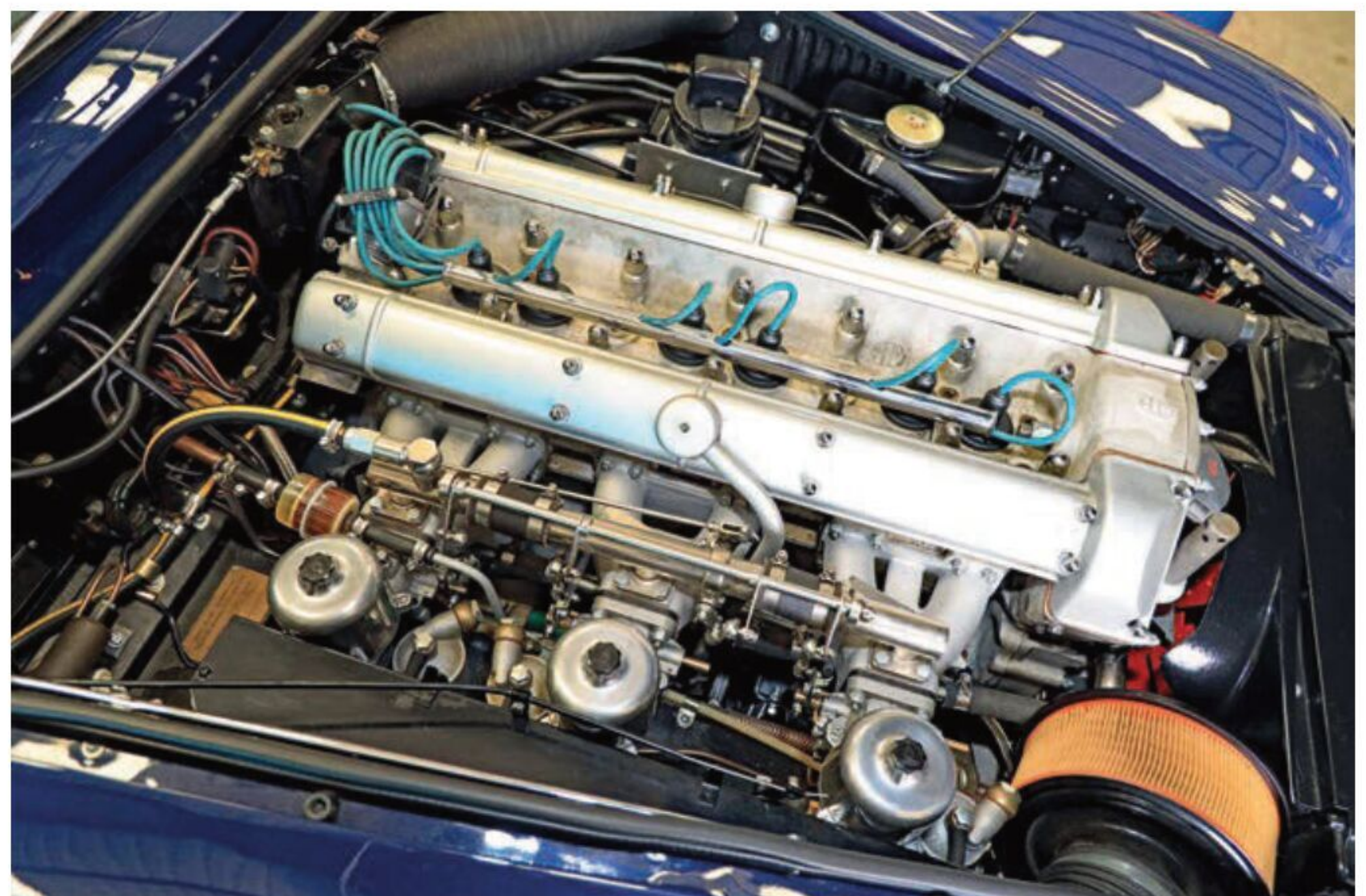
Specifications	Aston Martin DB6	Aston Martin DB6 Vantage
<b>Year</b>	<b>1965-1970</b>	<b>1965-1970</b>
<b>Engine</b>	3995cc/6-cyl/DOHC/triple SU carburetors (AE Brico electronic fuel-injection on MkII)	3995cc/6-cyl/DOHC/triple Weber carburetors
<b>Power</b>	282bhp @ 5500rpm	325bhp @ 5750rpm
<b>Torque</b>	273lb.ft. @ 4500rpm	290lb.ft. @ 4500rpm
<b>Top speed</b>	140mph	148mph
<b>0-60mph</b>	8.4secs	6.0 secs
<b>Gearbox</b>	5-sp manual / 3-sp auto	5-sp manual
<b>Fuel consumption</b>	13mpg	12.6mpg
<b>Suspension</b>	Front: Independent by transverse wishbones, anti-roll bar, ball-jointed kingpins, Armstrong telescopic dampers.	
	Rear: Live axle, trailing arms, Watt linkage, Armstrong lever arm dampers	

### ENGINE PROBLEMS

Rebuilding an Aston Martin engine will cost a fortune, so a good service history is crucial. Oil changes every 2500 miles are advisable, with timing chain replacement every 60,000 miles. Any coolant will need to be alloy-engine sympathetic, too. Oil pressure of around 100psi on a warm car under way is a healthy sign; if you're seeing about 50psi and you don't think there's a problem with the gauge, then all is not well under the bonnet. Overheating can occur, thanks to blocked up waterways around the iron cylinder

liners. Silt can collect at the back of the engine, as the water pump is at the front. If the car you're interested in heats up very quickly from cold when idling, this is likely to be the symptom. Another cause of hot-running is coolant escaping through the liner bleed apertures on the right-hand side of the engine, so do have a look at this area. If you also see oil, then the coolant and oil are mixing due to a faulty lower O-ring seal.

While an electric fan is a wise fitment, it can be used to mask issues. One that stays on all the time is trying too hard ▶





## BUYING GUIDE

### ASTON MARTIN DB6

#### PARTS PRICES

All prices from Astonparts.com (part of the Aston Workshop) and include VAT

**Front disc:** £307.81

**Front brake pads:** £69.13

**Master cylinder kit:** £1105.00

**Wing, bonnet and boot badge:** £177.70

**DB6 shield insignia:** £159.11

**Aluminium radiator:** £1020.00

**Water cooling hose kit:** £193.80

**Electronic distributor:** £520.20

**Up-rated starter motor:** £361.02

**Secondary timing chain:** £63.22

**Primary timing chain:** £197.38

**Triple Weber 45DCOE carb upgrade kit:** £4380.00

**Water pump assembly:** £1041.42

**Stainless steel exhaust system:** £1362.31

**Minor service kit:** £82.14

**Front shock absorbers,** £924.00

**Rear suspension bush kit:** £516.62

**Front suspension bush and fitting kit:** £790.14

**Wire wheel, MkII:** £631.03

to keep an engine cool, and should be regarded with suspicion.

You're unlikely to find a DB6 fitted with the AE Brico fuel-injection system, as it was fitted to just 46 MkII cars, and its unreliability meant that many were subsequently converted back to carburettors. If you do come across one, however, and it's running badly or misfiring, it's best to walk away. The carburettor cars – whether with SUs or Vantage-spec Webers – are a much better proposition, although getting all three perfectly balanced can be a fine art. Converting from SUs to Webers is a popular upgrade.

#### THE TRANSMISSION

The DB6's ZF five-speed gearbox is tough (with a heavy clutch) but, eventually, synchromesh cones and bearings will



start to wear – although sorting them out is relatively simple. More of an issue is excessive noise or jumping out of gear, as a rebuild is likely to be required. The gearboxes give their best when fully warmed up; like many classic sports cars, they're baulky when cold.

Automatic transmissions tend to sap power and are slow around mid-range, and so they're not well-liked. That said, they don't have too many reliability issues. If they change up and down smoothly, there's no excess noise and the kickdown functions properly, then all should be well.

Differential wear will show up as

complaining bearings and backlash, requiring reconditioning or replacement. However, some diff whine is likely as par for the course.

#### RUNNING GEAR

The front suspension trailing arms mountings should be checked from underneath, as rust can cause them to detach. Other possible problems are the sockets where the rear arms of the lower front wishbones attach, as well as deteriorated steering rack straps. Its rubber mountings bushes also go; excess movement between the chassis and the





The condition of the spare wheel well is important when you're checking the car for rot



The DB6 was usefully more spacious and more sophisticated than its predecessors



One of the most expensive ways into DB6 ownership is via the highly desirable Volante

*“Wind tunnel testing proved there was considerable scope for improving high-speed stability, the eventual solution being the adoption of a Kamm tail design”*

rack when driving points to this. In general, a DB6's steering should be sharp with little play. Excessive wander is likely to be worn suspension bushes. Dodgy trailing arm bushes will reveal themselves if you reverse the car quickly and the tail lifts. But it could also be that the Watt linkage to the axle is working loose. Either way, further investigation will be necessary.

#### HOW MUCH?

It's an Aston, not an Austin. Therefore, don't expect to buy a DB6 for the sort of money that you might spend on other classics – even ones that, in period,

were similarly priced. That David Brown winged badge guarantees exclusivity and desirability, but also ensures that ownership won't ever come for peanuts.

The good news is that the DB6 is the 'budget' option compared with its DB5 and DB4 predecessors. Expect to pay about £215,000 for a very good DB6 saloon or £300,000 if purchasing from a dealer or buying something that is absolutely concours. The equivalents in DB5 form would be around £550,000 or £690,000, while a DB4 would be approximately £360,000 or £450,000 for the same categories. That gives you an idea of the disparity between the three





## BUYING GUIDE

### ASTON MARTIN DB6

generations. In Aston Martin terms, the DB6 is almost a bargain.

Reasonable DB6s albeit needing work can be found for about £150,000 while even a project will demand up to £110,000. And we're talking about standard cars here. There's naturally a premium for Vantages – £425,000 for a top league or dealer example, £325,000 for something pretty good, £225,000 for an average car and £165,000 for a vehicle requiring a lot of work.

Volantes are, unsurprisingly, worth even more. Considerably more. £600,000 isn't an unreasonable amount for one in A1 condition, a fine car will weigh in at about £500,000, while an average one will dent your wallet to the tune of £400,000. Even 'basket cases' can command in the region of £330,000... and they're not something to be taken on lightly.

## OUR VERDICT

Buy a DB6 and you immediately join a very exclusive club. Ownership of a 1960s' Aston Martin is something that very few people get to enjoy, and it will make you the envy of everybody else. Cars like this never go out of style, never look dated, never look anything less than utterly beautiful. They are among the elite, not just of British classics but of any classics from any country.

The DB6 is more civilised, refined and better-behaved than its predecessors, but it's also just as good looking. Perhaps even more crucially, it's also many thousands of pounds cheaper. While you'll still need to be affluent to afford one, the running and maintenance costs will still be around the same as for a DB4 or DB5. As perverse

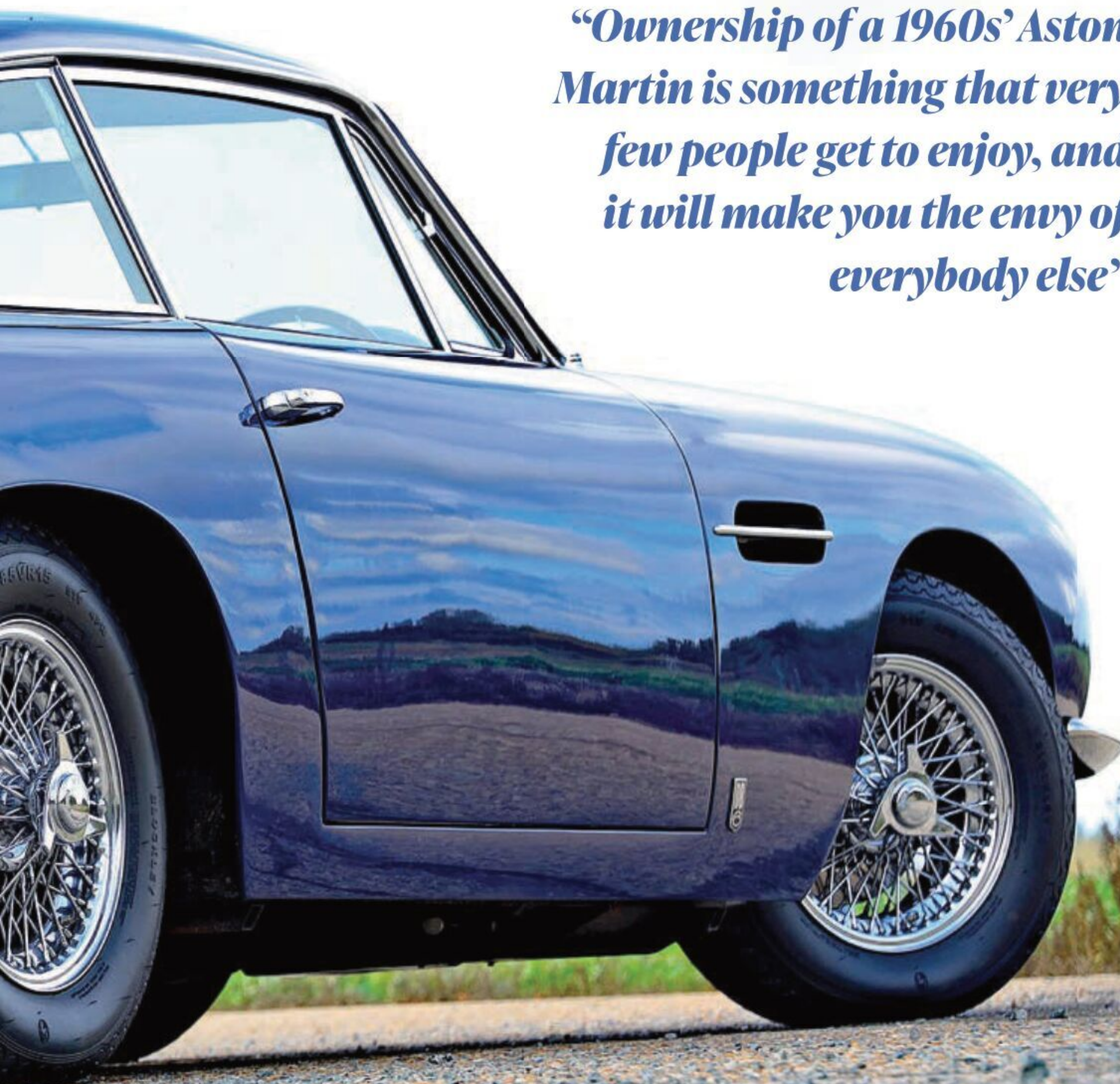
as it may sound, a DB6 is a money-saving option.

However, you still need to go into DB6 ownership with eyes – and wallet – wide open. Buying one is the first major expense; from there, these thoroughbreds will continue to demand care and attention. They can't be run on a budget, and if you start skimping on things, then even bigger bills will soon start to mount up.

For all their needs though, DB6s are still immensely rewarding, hand-built masterpieces that are just as much automotive works of art as they are cossetting and awe-inspiring grand tourers. If you can afford to buy one, why wouldn't you? **AMD**







*“Ownership of a 1960s’ Aston Martin is something that very few people get to enjoy, and it will make you the envy of everybody else”*

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**MARQUE HISTORY**

**DB7 CAREER**







THE LIFE & TIMES OF THE

# DB7

**Ford's acquisition of Aston Martin led to the creation of its bestseller, the DB7 – a car genuinely worthy of the badge and successful enough to safeguard the company's future**

WORDS: PAUL WAGER  
PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE





## MARQUE HISTORY

### DB7 CAREER

**A**ston Martin may be one of the world's blue chip sports car brands, but for much of its history the company itself was on fairly shaky financial ground. Indeed, it's best summed up by ebullient '80s Aston chairman Victor Gauntlett's comment, when asked how to make a small fortune out of Aston Martin: "Start with a big one."

A period of relative security began when Ford Motor Company took a 75 per cent stake in the firm in 1987 (later to become full ownership by 1991). But with

its tiny volumes, Aston Martin remained a minnow in car manufacturing and lacked the resources to develop all-new models to replace the Lagonda-derived Vantage.

Ford went on to acquire Jaguar by early 1990, with both it and Aston Martin eventually being merged into the new parent company's Premier Automotive Group, together with the Blue Oval's other upmarket brands: Land Rover, Volvo and Lincoln. Economy of scale was the name of the game – as well as the prestige element of these acquisitions – and for Aston Martin the resources of the

Ford Motor Company were to provide it with the best-selling model in the company's history.

### THE CONCEPT

Jaguar was, of course, a much larger player on the global stage than Aston Martin and at the time of the Ford takeover was busy developing a replacement for the XJ-S, a project which had been under development since 1980. The starting point for the new coupe, informally dubbed the F-Type, was the platform of the newly-developed XJ40



*“A period of relative security began when Ford Motor Company took a 75 per cent stake in the firm in 1987 – to become full ownership by 1991”*



saloon, with the front wishbones simply reversed to move the front wheels forward and for more sporting proportions and weight distribution.

In an interview with our sister title Jaguar World Monthly in March 2013, Jaguar designer Keith Helfet recalled an internal competition in which all the stylists in the small Jaguar team were asked to work up a suitable car. Jaguar chairman John Egan and founder Sir William Lyons were asked to judge the results, and the delighted Helfet found Sir William's cane pointing his way.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Following the transfer of the 'Project XX' to Aston Martin, it was jokingly referred to as 'Project Double Cross' within Jaguar.
- Tom Walkinshaw subsequently attempted to extract a royalty charge from Ford for using what he considered a TWR design for the Aston Martin. Ford considered it a Jaguar design and the legal wrangling resulted in such animosity that the TWR/Jaguar joint venture JaguarSport was terminated.
- The XJ41 was the last Jaguar design with which Sir William Lyons was directly involved.
- DB7 interior designer Neil Simpson had previously worked with Callum on the Ford Escort Cosworth.

- Aston Martin chief Walter Hayes revealed that offering the car with a high spec but virtually no options was the key to keeping the price below £80,000.
- Before becoming a TWR project, the XJ41 was worked up to running prototype stage by Karmann in Germany. The prototypes still exist in an anonymous warehouse in Coventry... and we've seen them.
- Among other items, the door mirror switch is a Ford Sierra item, central console switches are Fiesta parts, and the alarm module is shared with the Land Rover Discovery 300 Tdi.
- The special edition of 150 Alfred Dunhill DB7's came with a built in cigar humidor. Hilariously, a 'non-smoking' version was also offered with the humidor replaced by a grooming kit.

Keith's design was given the green light and the project gained the official code names XJ41 (coupe) and XJ42 (convertible). Work continued throughout the '80s with the car eventually gaining an aluminium body and twin-turbo straight-six powerplant. But when Ford top brass arrived at Jaguar's Browns Lane manufacturing base, the story goes that they were so horrified at the age of the production line equipment – indeed, the product quality and production facilities were publicly criticised – that all non-essential development was cancelled, with funds being prioritised for production improvements.

The firm's bread and butter was, of course, saloon cars and so the F-Type project was put on the back burner, with a decision being taken to facelift the XJ-S instead. With talk of an XJ-S facelift, Helfet remembers overlaying the XJ41 body style on the XJ-S drawings and discovering that the two were a remarkably good fit – the XJ41 had, after all, been designed to the XJ-S's wheelbase.

Helfet's idea was shown to Jaguar engineering chief Jim Randle, who then presented it at a board meeting of the TWR/Jaguar joint venture, JaguarSport which manufactured the XJ220 as well as producing the XJR road cars. TWR ▶





## THE V12 ENGINE

It's commonly assumed that the Vantage's V12 engine is simply two Ford V6s joined together. And although it's true that the first cutaway display units were created by hand welding two Ford blocks together, the production version was a fully developed powerplant. A useful cost saving was achieved by sharing the piston and valvetrain assemblies with the 3.0-litre Ford Duratec, but the design used an entirely new block, crankshaft and cylinder heads. Where the Duratec block and heads are made from A319 cast aluminium, the Aston engine is A365-T6 aluminium and runs 3mm larger main bearings, with a 15mm shallower offset between the banks. The heads meanwhile use bespoke combustion chambers, a higher compression ratio at 10.3:1 and different intake ports.

It's also popularly assumed that the engine was developed by Cosworth – a Ford subsidiary at the time. However, in a

magazine interview, the Ford engineer responsible for the project, Anthony Musci, pointed out that Cosworth was merely responsible for assembling the unit. Musci explained that the design was very much created within the Ford Motor Company, initially as an unofficial 'back room' project, and there was some degree of acrimony when Cosworth discovered it hadn't been asked to develop the unit from scratch.

The full story is a fascinating one, but it's worth noting that the engineering team's brief required them only to use a Ford parts-bin component when a useful cost saving could be achieved and when it didn't compromise the project. The engine was also designed specifically to be tolerant of long periods of inactivity, typical of the life the Aston would lead. The unit was also designed with extra reserves of power in mind and to continue the Ford tradition of beating Ferrari at Le Mans

boss Tom Walkinshaw liked the idea sufficiently to propose that his firm build the car in limited numbers to replace the XJ220. Agreement from Jaguar was duly received and the project was given the title 'Project XX.'

The result was that TWR worked with Jaguar engineers to develop the car for production on the XJ-S chassis, the TWR team being headed by Ian Callum, later to become Jaguar's design chief. Changes made at this stage included losing the wraparound windscreen treatment and smooth rear end in favour of a conventional bumper and windscreen, while the famous upside-down Mazda 323 tail lights were also added and the glass area and windscreen position were both altered.

The next development in the convoluted development story saw new Ford management deciding to pursue a simpler design that would be cheaper and more efficient to build, eventually seeing the light of day as the XK8.

According to Helfet, meanwhile, Walkinshaw approached Ford management and suggested that the new car could be built as an Aston Martin with very little change. At the time, Aston lacked the resources to develop its own car from the ground up and chairman Walter Hayes was keen to introduce a smaller, lighter and more modern car than its Virage – an idea that had first been touted by his predecessor, Victor

## DB7 SPECIAL EDITIONS



### GTS

First off the blocks in the special-edition DB7 race was the GTS, which was produced for Aston Martin Sales of Mayfair in 1996. Based on the straight-six DB7, it featured a vented Zagato-style double-bulge bonnet, black grille with yellow surround, scuttle panel and window frames, Speedline split rim wheels, sports exhaust and different interior trim. The GTS became the GTSII in 1998, with round-lens Vantage-style rear lights and 'GTS' badging on the wheels. Some GTS models were also produced based on the V12 cars.

### ALFRED DUNHILL

The Dunhill edition remains one of the rarest of the special DB7s and was produced in coupe and Volante form in 1998-99. Finished in a special Dunhill

Silver, the cars were trimmed in charcoal leather with grey piping and the interior featured brushed aluminium trims, a Dunhill clock and white dials.

### DRIVING DYNAMICS

Not so much a special edition but a factory upgrade, the Driving Dynamics package was a collection of upgrades fitted to cars by Aston Martin Works Service at Newport Pagnell. The package included uprated brakes, stiffer suspension, sports exhaust and a traction control system. Cars with the Driving Dynamics package were identified by the modified front spoiler, deep sill covers, extended rear valance and boot spoiler. A larger intercooler was also offered, allowing the supercharger to run more boost and produce an additional 50bhp. The





Driving Dynamics package was offered from 1997 to '99, being discontinued with the six-cylinder cars.

### BEVERLY HILLS

Produced as you might expect for the LA Aston Martin dealer, this limited edition was a purely visual creation, featuring Midnight Blue paintwork and matching blue roof on Volante models, together with specially painted wheels, two-tone blue and parchment leather, burr maple trim panels and fitted luggage. Only six were made.

### NEIMAN MARCUS

Offered only in Volante form and solely in the USA, this special edition was created for the upmarket department store's famous Christmas catalogue in 1998. It featured special black paintwork with light grey leather and carbon interior trims. Each example was delivered with a set of special luggage and a car cover.

### STRATSTONE

The dealer for Mayfair, Stratstone commissioned this run of DB7s from the factory and a total of 19 were built, all for the UK market. The cars

featured special black paintwork, light grey interior, mesh grilles, specially painted wheels and carbon fibre interior trim. Each one also had its own special plaque.

### KESWICK

Produced for dealer group Lancaster, the Keswick was similar to other special editions, featuring special black paintwork, mesh grilles, embossed logos on the seats and 19-inch rims.

### JUBILEE

To mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, Stratstone commissioned another special edition featuring bespoke Jubilee Blue paintwork, magnolia leather with a blue dash top, alcantara headlining and special interior trim.

### ANNIVERSARY

Marking a decade of DB7 production and also the end of the model, the Anniversary was announced as a run of 100 examples although the exact production figure is unknown. The cars were all finished in a special shade of Slate Blue with a two-tone blue interior and a package of options as standard.

Gauntlett, under the name DP1999. He had scouted around the Ford empire and ended up at TWR, which at the time had been creating prototypes and one-off models for Jaguar, but recollected that neither the Jaguar F-Type nor anything at TWR was quite what he had in mind. The potentially surplus TWR assembly facilities at Bloxham were, however, of interest... if only Hayes could find a suitable product to build there.

Interviewed in 1993, Hayes explained why the entry-level car that Aston Martin needed couldn't be created at sensible cost at the firm's traditional Newport Pagnell base: it cost £19,000 to build each engine for the Virage, with the entire car taking 56 hours to assemble, swallowing up ten entire hides for the trim in the meantime.

The decision was taken and, with little more than a change of front grille, Project XX became Project NPX [standing for Newport Pagnell eXperimental]. And it was Project NPX which went into production at TWR's Bloxham facility as the Aston Martin DB7.

Meanwhile, back at Jaguar the disappointed engineers and stylists were left to mourn the loss of their pet project, although the XJS facelift was an undoubted success and gave the Jaguar coupe a lengthy new lease of life. Ultimately, of course, the new Jaguar sports car would be the very similarly styled XK8 mentioned earlier. ►



## MARQUE HISTORY

### DB7 CAREER

## IN PRODUCTION

As a result of its origins as a TWR/JaguarSport project, the DB7 was produced not at the firm's iconic Newport Pagnell base but at the TWR facility in Bloxham, Oxfordshire (which had produced the XJ220), formally known as Aston Martin Oxford. The premises were extended between the end of XJ220 production and the start of the DB7 in order to cope.

In its Aston Martin incarnation, the DB7 lost the originally-planned twin-turbo engine and four-wheel drive set-up, in favour of an Eaton M90 supercharged development of the Jaguar AJ6 straight-six engine and a rear-drive layout. This was partly at the insistence of Walter Hayes, who felt that a straight-six engine would provide a more distinct link to DB-series Astons of the past. The project had initially been developed to use the Jaguar V12 and using the taller AJ6 engine required developing a new front subframe holding the engine 30mm lower to clear the bonnet.

Intriguingly, the smaller 3.2-litre version of the Jaguar engine was chosen for the Aston Martin, instead of the 4.0-litre, apparently in order to create a higher-revving unit with more sporting appeal. The DB7 ran 40 per cent more supercharger boost than Jaguar's own forced-induction engine, but with 335bhp the DB7 was down on power compared to Jaguar's supercharged versions of the 4.0-litre engine. It was still a quick car, though: driving through a Getrag five-speed 'box, 0-60 came up in 5.8 seconds with a top speed of 165mph.

The DB7 was unique for Aston Martin in that it was a steel-panelled car with composite wings, bonnet, nosecone, sills and boot lid, where its predecessors had been largely alloy-panelled. It was also the firm's first monocoque car, with all the previous models relying on a separate chassis.

This also had an important bearing on production costs and enabled the firm to market it at £78,500, when the Virage had kicked off at £133,000. Still an expensive car but much more accessible than previous models and something that contributed to its relatively high sales. The steel bodyshells were constructed

## THE ZAGATO AND AR1



Aston Martin DB7 Zagato

Italian carrozzeria Zagato had enjoyed a long association with Aston Martin from the days of the classic DB cars – and in 2001, a chance meeting between then Aston CEO Ulrich Bez and Andrea Zagato resulted in an agreement to renew that association. Less than a year later, a prototype Zagato-bodied DB7 was displayed at Gieves and Hawkes in Savile Row, with the intention being to produce the car if sufficient orders were received. In the end demand was so high that production was limited to 99 customer cars, with Aston Martin retaining the 100th.

Modified DB7 Vantage chassis were shipped from Bloxham to Turin, where the outer panels were added by Zagato and the cars shipped back to the UK. The Zagato cars were noticeably shorter than the regular

DB7, losing the rear seat and with a smaller boot too, while the roofline featured the trademark Zagato 'double-bubble'. The Zagato cars ran a 440bhp version of the V12 engine with the six-speed manual Tremec 'box.

Even more niche was the AR1, a special edition produced solely for the USA in 2003-04. Aimed at the sunshine states of California and Florida, the car was essentially a DB7 Volante but in a 'speedster' style, without a roof of any kind. The car was styled again by Zagato and remains a very rare model: all but eight were exported to the USA and, like the 'regular' Zagato, production was limited to 100 cars. The AR1 is the only DB7 to be built at Aston's current Gaydon site, as the production run was finished shortly after the closure of the Bloxham facility.



Aston Martin DB7 AR1





***“The DB7 was unique for Aston Martin in that it was a steel-panelled car with composite wings, bonnet, nosecone, sills and boot lid”***

at Motor Panels in Coventry and then transported by road to Bloxham, where they were joined by the composite panels supplied from TWR's Draycott facility and the seats provided by Aston Martin itself in Newport Pagnell.

### **THE EVOLUTION**

After receiving approval from David Brown himself, the DB7 name was made official and the six-cylinder DB7 was unveiled at the 1993 Geneva Motor Show, with production beginning in September '94. The DB7 was available initially as a 2+2 coupe, with the Volante convertible being unveiled in January 1996 at the Detroit show.

In 1999, critics of the Jaguar-derived drivetrain were largely silenced by the introduction of the DB7 Vantage, running a 5.9-litre V12 engine. Not to be confused with the long-serving Jaguar V12, the 48-valve unit was unique to Aston Martin, although development was largely performed by Ford's powertrain engineering department and Cosworth. An all-alloy 60-degree V12 with twin camshafts per bank and controlled by a





## MARQUE HISTORY

### DB7 CAREER



Ford/Visteon management system, the engine was designed to spin to 7000rpm, producing 420bhp and 400lb.ft. of torque.

Such power lifted the Vantage's top speed to an impressive 186 mph in six-speed manual form. And despite its £94,500 price tag, the newcomer proved so successful that sales of the Jaguar-powered car were hit hard. Ultimately, mid-1999 saw production of the straight-six DB7 discontinued entirely.

The installation of the V12 unit prompted some styling changes to the original DB7 shape. Most notable amongst these was the enlarged grille which met the greater demand for cooling and intake air from the bigger engine.

This in turn required revisions to the lights and the appearance was generally made more aggressive with a chunkier sill treatment. The Citroën CX wing mirrors disappeared, too. Underneath, the suspension was also revised.

In 2000, the V12 was made available with an optional ZF automatic gearbox. Marketed as Touchtronic by Aston Martin, this was the same unit used by BMW in its 5-Series models. The Touchtronic was a 'manual' mode, similar to the Bavarian firm's Steptronic.

Up-rated GT (manual) and GTA (automatic) versions of the V12 were launched in October 2002, good for 435bhp with the manual 'box and 420bhp in automatic form.

A total of 190 GTs and 112 GTAs were made. Sitting on up-rated suspension

that was 20% stiffer and featuring bigger Brembo brakes, the GT models are identified by mesh grilles, bonnet vents, boot spoiler and their 18-inch wheels, as well as special aerodynamic undertrays. The GTs also received a bigger-bore exhaust but with an internal valve to retain a civilised note when not under full throttle, while the transmission received a twin-plate clutch and a quick-shift linkage.

In January 2003, the limited-edition Zagato-styled car was unveiled, and in 2004 production was discontinued, at which point the DB7 was replaced by the Gaydon-built DB9.

### GOOD REACTION

Magazine road testers tend by definition to be car geeks, and initial road tests of the DB7 all mentioned the very obvious Ford parts bin componentry on the inside. 'A Jaguar has much nicer switchgear and interior componentry,' commented Car magazine in 1994, pointing out quite rightly that Aston was still using the XJ40 seat switches that Jaguar had already ditched





## PROJECT XJ41

Proposals for an XJ-S replacement had been circulating at Jaguar since the start of the '80s, with in-house designer Keith Helfet eventually winning an internal competition in which all the stylists in the small Jaguar team were asked to work up a suitable car. Jaguar chairman John Egan and founder Sir William Lyons were asked to judge the results, eventually choosing Helfet's proposal.

The design was given the green light and the project gained the official code names XJ41 (coupe) and XJ42 (convertible). Work continued throughout the '80s, with the car eventually gaining an aluminium body and twin-turbo straight-six powerplant. The subsequent takeover by Ford, however, saw all non-essential development – including XJ41/ XJ42 – cancelled.



by then in its own cars, and noting the Ford ignition key.

Despite this, the DB7 was generally well-received by both the press and buyers, with *Car* praising the supercharged engine's progressive torque delivery and the refined pace of the Aston.

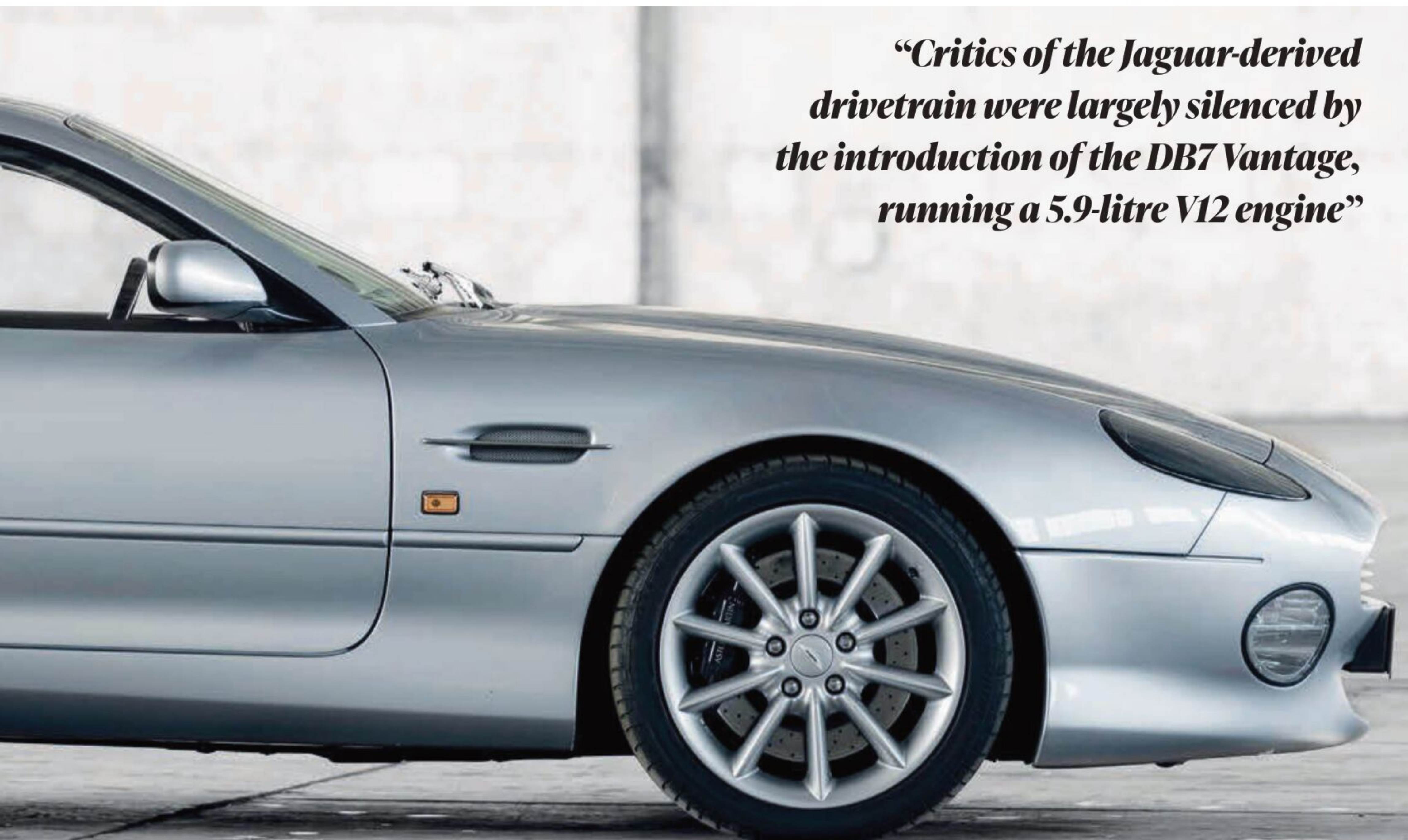
"The DB7 rarely feels supercar fast, even though it is," they commented in a

comparison test with the similarly priced Ferrari F355. "A more discreet car to go fast in," they concluded, which in a nutshell summed up the DB7's appeal.

By the time production ended, the DB7 had become the most successful Aston Martin model in terms of sales to that point. Aston Martin's own figures put the total number of DB7 variants built at 9138, a figure that comprised 2461 six-cylinder

DB7s, 4431 Vantage coupes, 2046 Vantage Volantes and 200 Zagato cars. To put that in perspective, up until the DB7 the most successful model had been the V8, which had taken 17 years to shift 2360 units. Yes, critics do have a point when they comment that the DB7 diluted the exclusivity of the famous brand; but on the other hand, the company simply wouldn't have survived without it. **AMD**

***“Critics of the Jaguar-derived drivetrain were largely silenced by the introduction of the DB7 Vantage, running a 5.9-litre V12 engine”***





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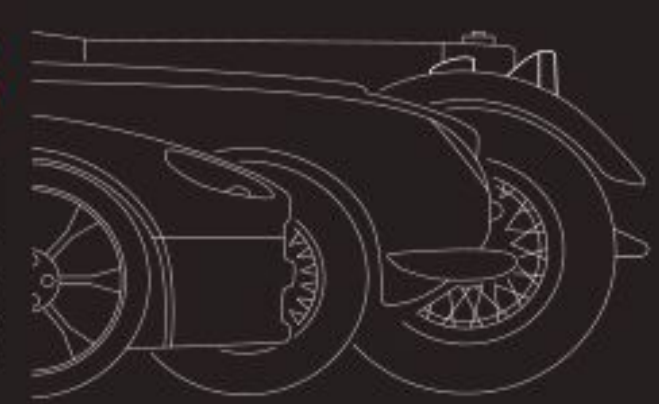
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# BUILDING A LEGEND



ASTON MARTIN

ASTON MARTIN LA





Newport Pagnell may be the heart and soul of Aston Martin, but many of its cars have been built elsewhere. Here, we revisit the past and present plants that helped make the marque a true great

WORDS: RICHARD GUNN

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD GUNN, KELSEY ARCHIVE, ASTON MARTIN HERITAGE TRUST





## MARQUE HISTORY

### THE FACTORIES



Company founders Lionel Martin (who provided his surname for the marque's moniker) and Robert Bamford, who left the company in 1920

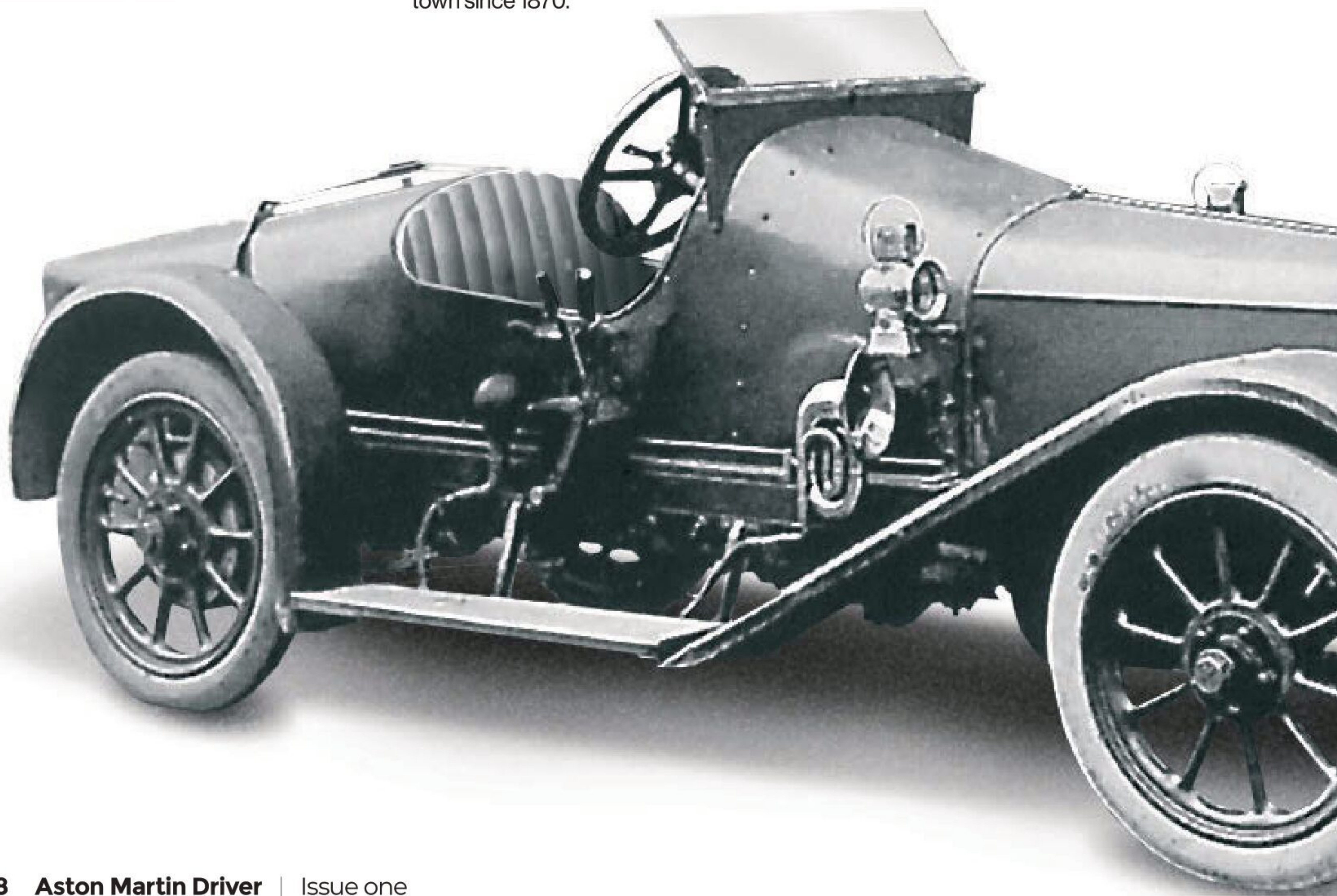


**T**he small but attractive market town of Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire has three claims to fame. In 1959, it lent its name to the first services to open on Britain's fledgling motorway network, albeit sharing that honour with Watford Gap a little further up the newborn M1. It's also the home of Britain's last remaining vellum manufacturer, William Cowley, which has been family-run in the town since 1870.

But eclipsing even the concrete glamour of a Fortes dinner by the M1 or traditional parchment production is the main reason why Newport Pagnell has become internationally renowned. Because, between 1958 and 2007, a somewhat motley collection of buildings of various vintages on the town's Tickford Street turned out some of the most beautiful and desirable Aston Martins ever, from the DB4 to original Vanquish. And although current Astons are now built elsewhere – recent continuation DB4 GTs and *Goldfinger* DB5s aside – Newport Pagnell remains the marque's spiritual home. Road signs on the town's approaches continue to proclaim Aston Martin's presence, for the Tickford Street site remains as a dealership, service centre and heritage facility.

But just as this Maranello of the home counties is no longer Aston Martin's HQ, neither was it the original location for the cars originated by Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford. The company's origins were in central London, before a move a few miles west to Feltham in Middlesex. The relocation to Newport Pagnell came

The 1914 'Coal Scuttle', the very first Aston Martin to be built at Henniker Mews; it's not been seen since 1928







had met and become friends through their membership of the exclusive Bath Road Club for those keen on two-wheeled, pedal-powered sports. The two sold Singers from Callow Street in Chelsea, London, and also serviced GWK and Calthorpe vehicles. For their workshop, they took over the former depot of marine, motor and general engineers Hesse and Savory in Henniker Mews, a row of old stables, carriage houses and servant's quarters behind Callow Street. It was here, at number 16, that Bamford and Martin Ltd was officially incorporated on 15th January 1913. The premises were tiny – you'd have trouble squeezing one of today's DBXs into the garage that doubled as the working facilities – but they were adequate enough for the smaller machines of the day.

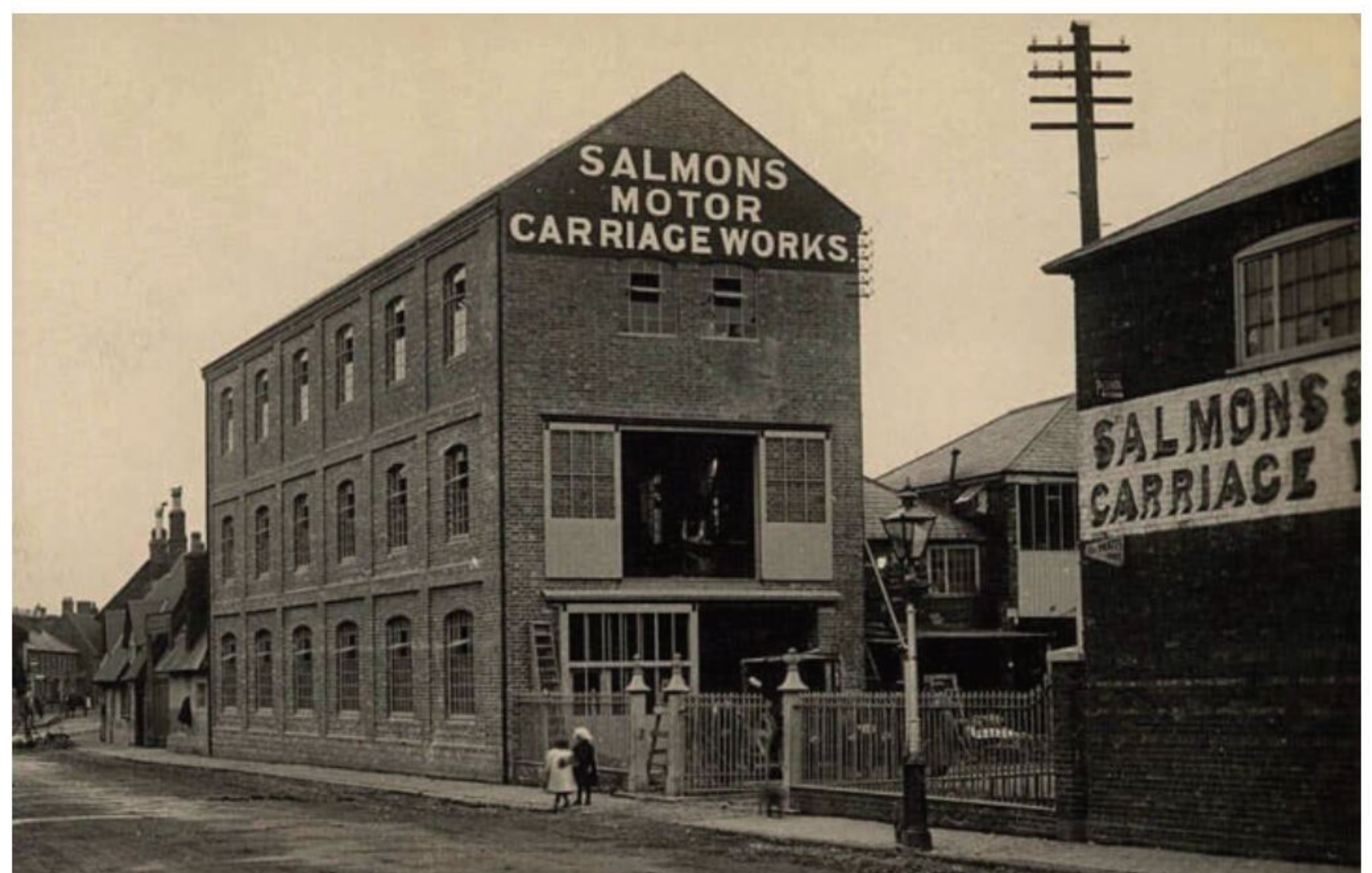
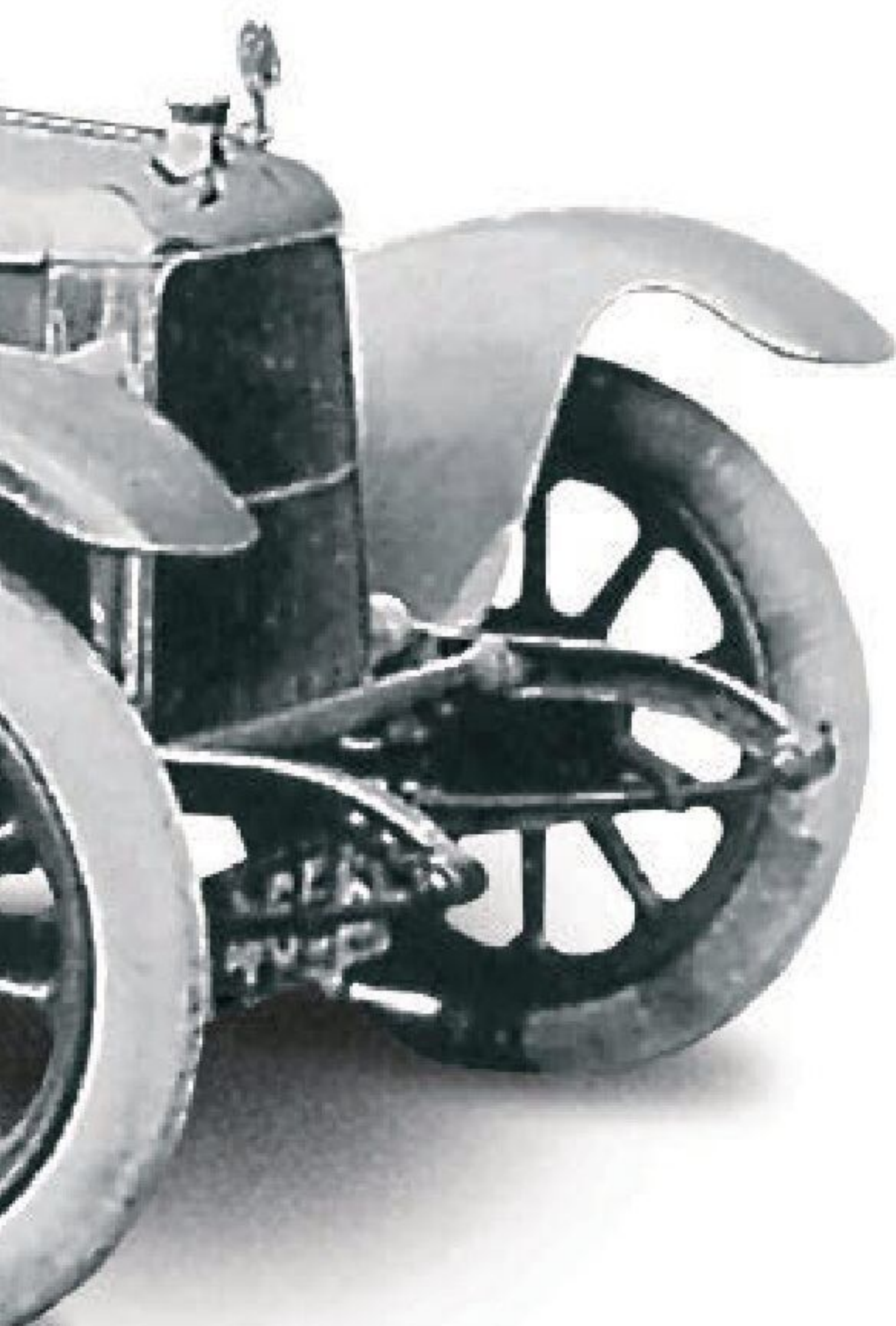


**The Henniker Mews 'factory' built the first Aston Martin in 1915, and its significance was celebrated during the centenary celebrations – including a visit from A3, the world's oldest surviving Aston dating from 1921**

over forty years after the firm's founding. It was in 1912 that Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford went into partnership together, albeit selling cars rather than building them. Both were enthusiastic cyclists, and

It was in the mews that the two modified Martin's 1912 Singer Ten, managing to extract 70mph from its 1096cc sidevalve engine. It was demonstrated at motorsport events throughout 1914, with Martin at the wheel. One place where it particularly shone was at the hillclimb on Lord Rothschild's Aston Clinton estate in Buckinghamshire. ▶

***“Just as this Maranello of the home counties is no longer Aston Martin's HQ, neither was it the original location for the cars originated by Martin and Bamford”***

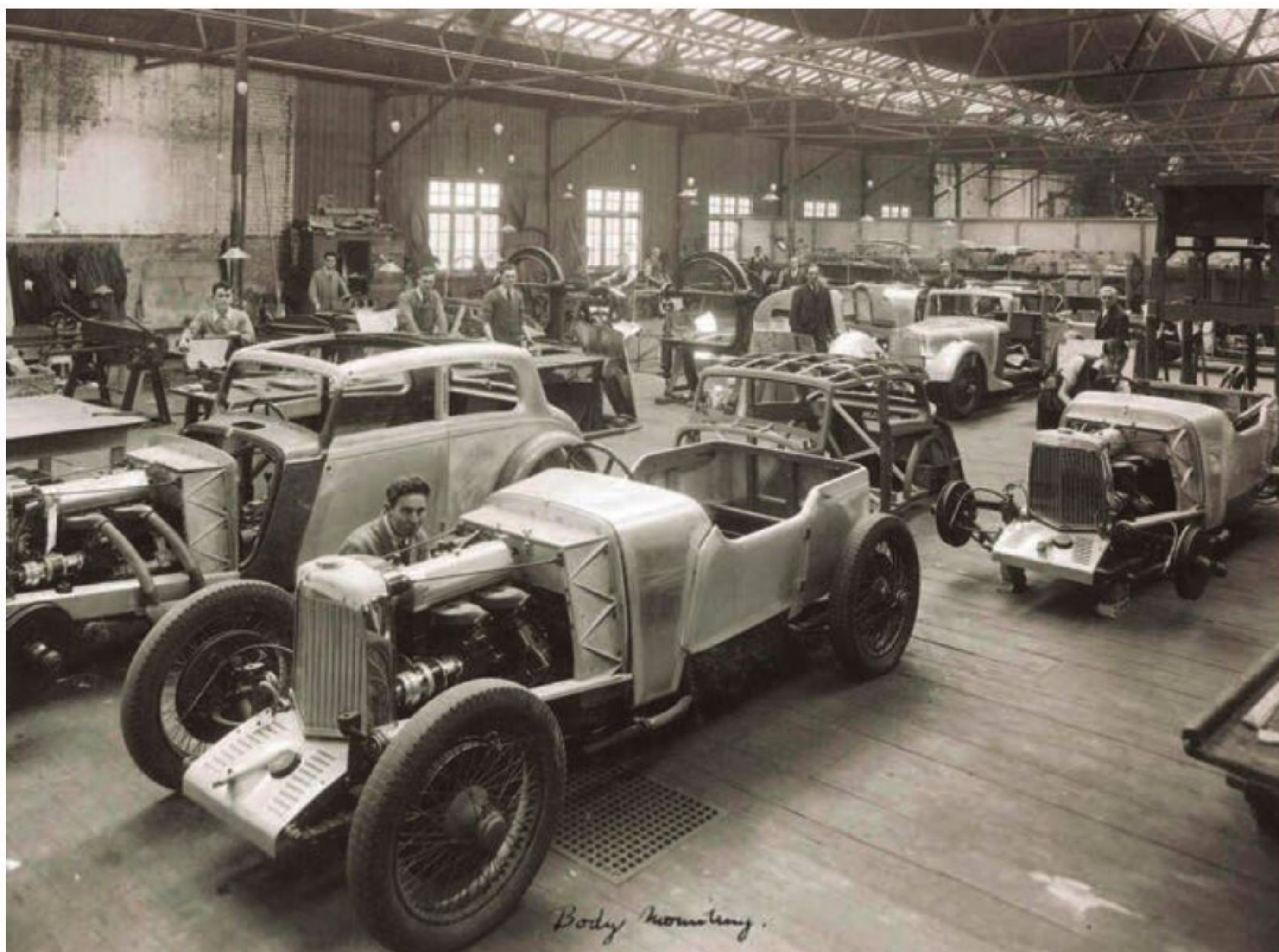


**The Salmons & Sons carriage works in 1920, later to be bought by David Brown and become the factory for Aston Martin Lagonda; the three-storey building still exists but is no longer involved with the auto industry**



## MARQUE HISTORY

### THE FACTORIES



Pre-World War Two Aston Martin production under way at Victoria Road in Feltham

### THE COAL SCUTTLE

After this, the pair decided to go the whole hog and build their own car. Actually, 'own' is something of a misnomer, for Bamford and Martin's first machine was largely created using stock parts from other manufacturers, including a 1398cc sidevalve engine from Coventry-Simplex and a 1908 Ettore Bugatti-designed Isotta-Fraschini chassis. However, the stylish light car body was new, with its distinctive angular coachwork and pronounced slope from the bonnet doors to the windscreen resulting in the nickname of the Coal Scuttle. Formally though, the car that emerged from a Chelsea alleyway in March 1915 was given the chassis number A1, registered AM4656 and christened Aston-Martin in reference to the Aston Clinton hillclimb where Lionel Martin had enjoyed such success the previous year. His wife, Kate, was also partially responsible for the name beginning with an 'A' because she reasoned it would place the company near the top of alphabetic lists and catalogues.

The Coal Scuttle's birth didn't transform Henniker Mews into a hive of manufacturing activity, however. There was the small but inconvenient matter of World War One for starters. Bamford joined the Army Service Corps while Martin became a Royal Automobile Club

chauffeur ferrying military VIPs around, before moving to the Admiralty. And all of the equipment at Henniker Mews was sold to the Sopwith Aviation Company in aid of the war effort.

It was a full five years before the second Aston-Martin appeared, by which point Robert Bamford had departed the business during 1920. There had also been a move to bigger premises; from the same year, Bamford and Martin's new address was 53 Abingdon Road, Kensington. The Georgian building at the junction with Cope Place was still hardly ideal for car production, but it did have a handy courtyard through its large archway. The first car to emerge from beyond that was known as the AM 270 – a better-handling development of the Coal Scuttle with a shorter and more rigid chassis.

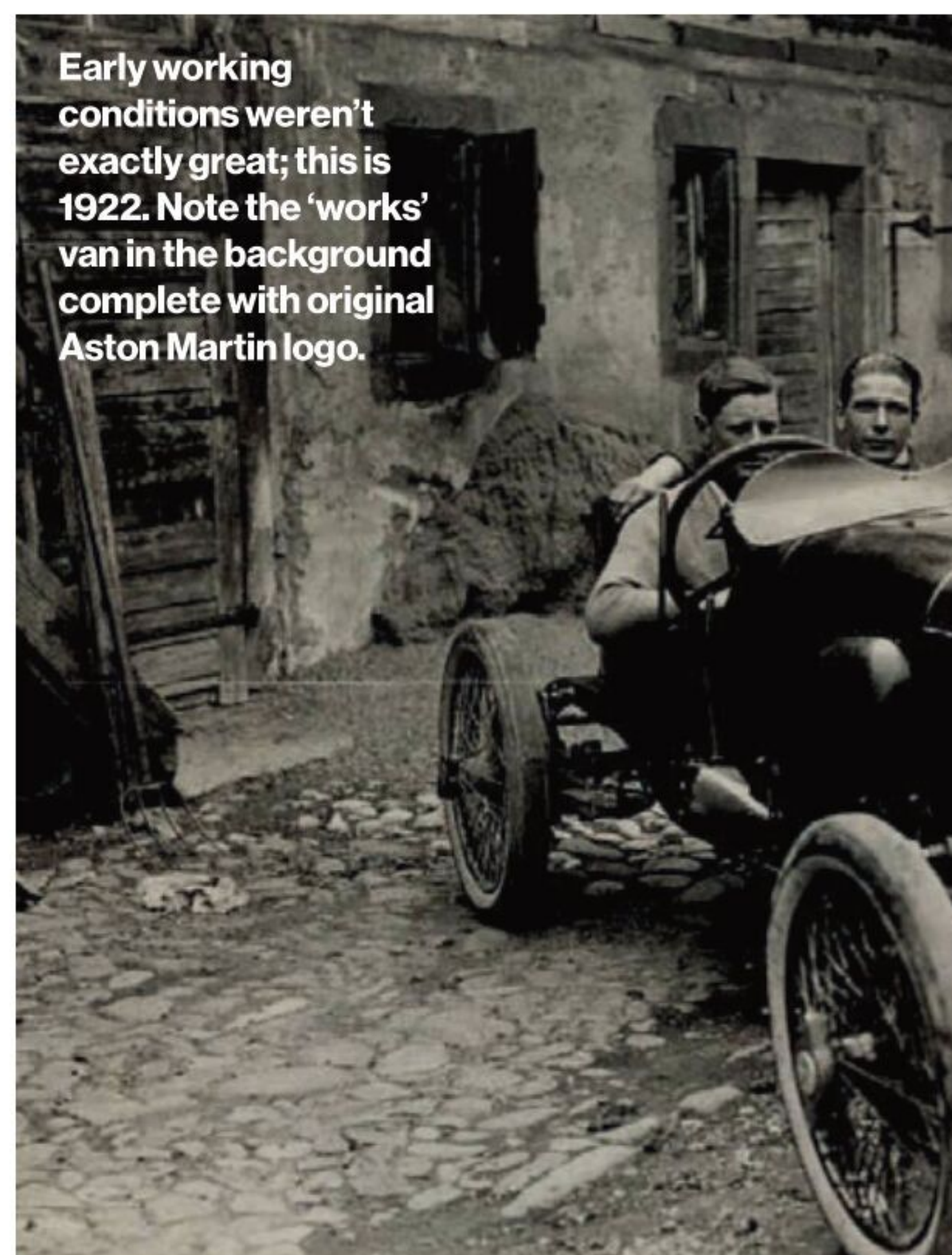
The AM 270, also dubbed 'Bunny' by Kate Martin, was taken racing at Brooklands and elsewhere. It did well and got its maker noticed, generating enough interest to prompt serial production. But numbers were still low and despite the publicity from Aston-Martin's motorsport antics, the company was always cash-strapped – a constant state of affairs for decades to come. It was only injections of money from affluent aristocrats such as Count Louis Zborowski (of Chitty-Bang-Bang fame) and Lady Charnwood that



A 1932 advert for Aston Martin's International Sports Four-Seater. Just call Feltham 218 or 219...



A gathering of DB2s outside Sunnyside at Newport Pagnell, once the main administration building where Sir David Brown had his office.



Early working conditions weren't exactly great; this is 1922. Note the 'works' van in the background complete with original Aston Martin logo.



kept it afloat. Over the next five years, Abingdon Road built just 63 cars (eight of which were works racers) before finances got so dire that bankruptcy was the only option in 1925.

Lady Charnwood was one of those who took over control, and she was soon joined by businessmen and motor engineers Bill Renwick and Augustus 'Bert' Bertelli. Lionel Martin wasn't legally permitted to return, and Bamford and Martin became Aston Martin Motors Limited instead, with no hyphen. A more major change was its 1926 relocation to Feltham, occupying the former Whitehead Aircraft Works. While a place that once built aeroplanes should have been more than adequate for car manufacture, Bertelli described the dilapidated Victoria Road premises as "little more than a mews garage with a lathe, a milling machine and a power drill". Nevertheless, Aston Martin settled in, with the advent of a new 1.5-litre overhead-cam engine giving fresh impetus. For a while, things seemed almost rosy for the reborn company.

## TO THE RESCUE

But this was Aston Martin, where things can turn at the flip of a coin. Which they did, in 1929, with the Wall Street Crash and resultant worldwide economic depression. The appetite for expensive sports cars evaporated and as the losses



## WHAT REMAINS?

**Henniker Mews, Chelsea:** Aston Martin's original premises survive, with a green commemorative plaque affixed to the wall of number 16. This was unveiled in 2013 for the centenary of Bamford and Martin. Henniker Mews has gated entrances though, so general public access isn't possible.

**Abingdon Road, Kensington:** While white-washing has removed the original 'Bamford and Martin, Engineers' painted signage that once decorated number 53, the original buildings remain. A small extension to the frontage, there during Lionel Martin's day, now houses a sales and letting office. Behind number 53, a small (but very expensive) housing development accessed through the original archway has fittingly been called Vantage Place.

**Feltham:** Nothing remains of either Aston Martin's Victoria Road or Hanworth Park factories, although the latter area is now a public park with some reminders of its aviation past apparent.

**Tickford Street, Newport Pagnell:** As Aston Martin Lagonda's heritage arm, much remains at Newport Pagnell, even if a new modern stone frontage sadly replaced the main building's old facade in 2012 when a new dealership area opened. On the north side of Tickford Street, a lot has disappeared under the Salmons Yard housing development. Sunnyside, fortunately, has been left intact.

**Wykham Mill, Bloxham:** The home of the DB7 is now part of the Vantage Business Park. And there are no prizes for guessing just why it was christened that.

**Gaydon and St Athan:** As busy, working factories, Gaydon and St Athan are usually out of bounds to the public. However, if you're an Aston Martin owner, you can get a behind-the-scenes tour of Gaydon for free. For all others, the cost is £350. It's almost worth buying a Cygnet

*“During 1963 and '64, the factory helped prepare the Goldfinger DB5s that would bring the marque such international fame”*



**Aston Martin's Tickford Street environs in Newport Pagnell were distinguished by some fascinating buildings of various vintages and states of repair**

mounted, production at Feltham was slashed, workers were sacked and Lady Charnwood and Bill Renwick all left the business. Even the cars built as Le Mans Works entries had to be sold to raise money. When sales did eventually start to revive, during the early 1930s, there weren't enough employees left to fulfil orders.



**An Aston Martin DB4 convertible outside Sunnyside in Newport Pagnell; the DB4 was the first Aston Martin model to be built solely in Buckinghamshire**

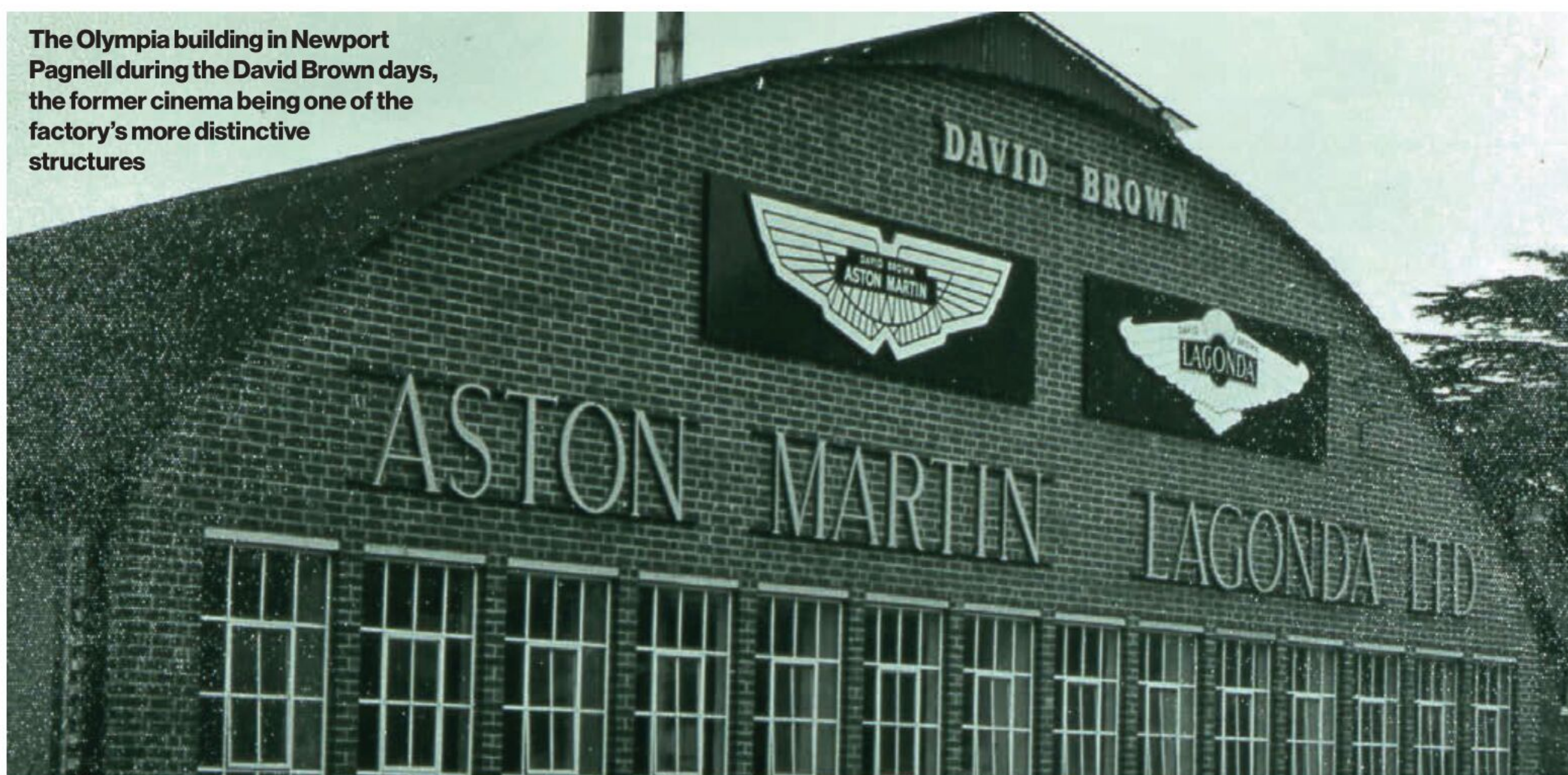
This was when shipping magnate Sir Arthur Sutherland came to the rescue. He acquired Aston Martin in 1932 and, thanks to his maritime business acumen, was able to reorganise Victoria Road along far more efficient lines. Before long, there was an adequate supply of workers and sales had doubled. Bertelli, however, was less than happy being joint managing director



## MARQUE HISTORY

### THE FACTORIES

The Olympia building in Newport Pagnell during the David Brown days, the former cinema being one of the factory's more distinctive structures



***“In order to make Ford’s investment work, a higher-volume Aston Martin was needed, which would be beyond the capabilities of Newport Pagnell”***

alongside Sutherland’s son, Gordon, and resigned in 1938, upset at his fellow MD’s decision to withdraw from racing and concentrate on road cars.

However, it was also Sutherland Jr who commissioned the Atom, a technically advanced prototype. Design got underway in Feltham in 1939, and by 1940 it was the only Aston Martin being constructed at the factory, as the outbreak of World War Two saw Victoria Road dedicate itself (appropriately enough, given the site’s previous use) to aircraft components instead. The Atom survived the war intact but the plant was less lucky; it received minor damage during the 1940 blitz, but in 1944 was hit by a flying bomb and extensively damaged.

Immediately post-war, Aston Martin was struggling again; those austere times were less than ideal to be a premium sports car manufacturer. Until World War Two, between 600 and 700 cars were being built at Victoria Road, but afterwards very few appeared. The Sutherlands put the business up for sale in late 1946, and one of those who saw the advert in The Times newspaper for the £30,000 “high class motor business” was Yorkshire gear, tool and tractor industrialist David Brown.

When Brown visited Feltham, he could



**Her Majesty the Queen visited the Newport Pagnell factory in 1966 and was given a tour by David Brown**

hardly have been impressed by the shattered factory, but the Atom prototype he test-drove helped convince him to take the plunge. He snapped up Aston Martin for £20,500 in February 1947. He later added the bankrupt Lagonda to his portfolio, paying over twice what Aston Martin had cost him (£52,500), primarily to get his hands on Lagonda’s W.O. Bentley-designed 2.6-litre six-cylinder LB6 engine for his future Astons.

Lagonda’s plant in Staines had already been sold by the liquidator, while Aston Martin’s Feltham factory was still bomb-ravaged. So, Brown leased some former hangars at an airfield just over half a mile away at Hanworth Park. This became Aston Martin Lagonda’s main base during the second half of 1947.

The first Astons to emerge from there were 2-Litres, retrospectively given the title of DB1s. There were only 14 of them,



The facade of the main building at Newport Pagnell during the early part of the 21st century, not long after it was 'improved' by Ford



Georgian era, Aston Martin Lagonda's new premises were a disparate range of buildings of various styles and eras. The main administration offices on the north side of the road were in a half-timbered villa called Sunnyside, while on the south side was the distinctive arched-roof Olympia building that served as the trim shop and press demonstrator garage (and, in more modern times, the heritage restoration centre and classic Aston showroom). It had started life as a cinema, however.

Aston Martin manufacture didn't move straight away to Newport Pagnell. It was only with the DB4 of 1958 that full relocation and integration began, with the office, engineering, production, servicing, repair, experimental and motorsport facilities all centred in Buckinghamshire. An undoubted bonus was the nearby completion of the first section of the M1 motorway (from Watford to Rugby) in 1959. As well as providing excellent transport links, it also made an ideal test track in the years before the 70mph speed limit was introduced.

It was Newport Pagnell that turned out the most iconic Astons (and Lagondas – let's not forget William Towns' 'Wedge' of 1976-90) up until the DB7. During 1963 and '64, the factory helped prepare the *Goldfinger* DB5s that would bring the marque such international fame, including repainting the press demonstrator DB5 (registration number BMT 216A) from Dubonnet Red to Silver Birch in February 1964. And it hosted the rich and famous, including Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip in April 1966, when David Brown (who'd be knighted two years later) gave them a tour of the premises.

Less regal visitors may fondly recall the slightly down-at-heel feel to the place well into the 21st century, which somehow added to the charm and melded with Aston Martin's 'against all odds' image. This was a place that produced some of the most stunning and seductive automotive masterpieces, yet whenever it rained, buckets had to be deployed for the roof leaks. Despite increasing technology, so much at the perma-broke Aston Martin remained traditional and low-tech, even several owners after Sir David Brown had sold it for a mere £101 in 1972. That decade ►



The final car to be built at Newport Pagnell (at least until the recent classic continuations) was a V12 Vanquish S, completed in July 2007

but it was a start. The DB2 of May 1950, complete with its 2.6-litre LB6 engine, saw David Brown's new division begin to find its feet. A total of 409 DB2s were built up until April 1953, with 565 DB2/4s – a larger-engined 2+2 variant with a tailgate – following up until October 1955, albeit with the bodies for the cars from Feltham supplied by Mulliner of Birmingham and Tickford Limited of Newport Pagnell. Maximum production capacity peaked at a mere twelve machines per week.

**TICKFORD TAKEOVER**

December 1954 saw David Brown taking the decisive step of buying Tickford, thus allowing greater control of body supply. The old-established firm, founded in the early 19th century as Salmons and Sons, had extensive facilities along both sides of Tickford Street in Newport Pagnell. Having expanded piecemeal since the



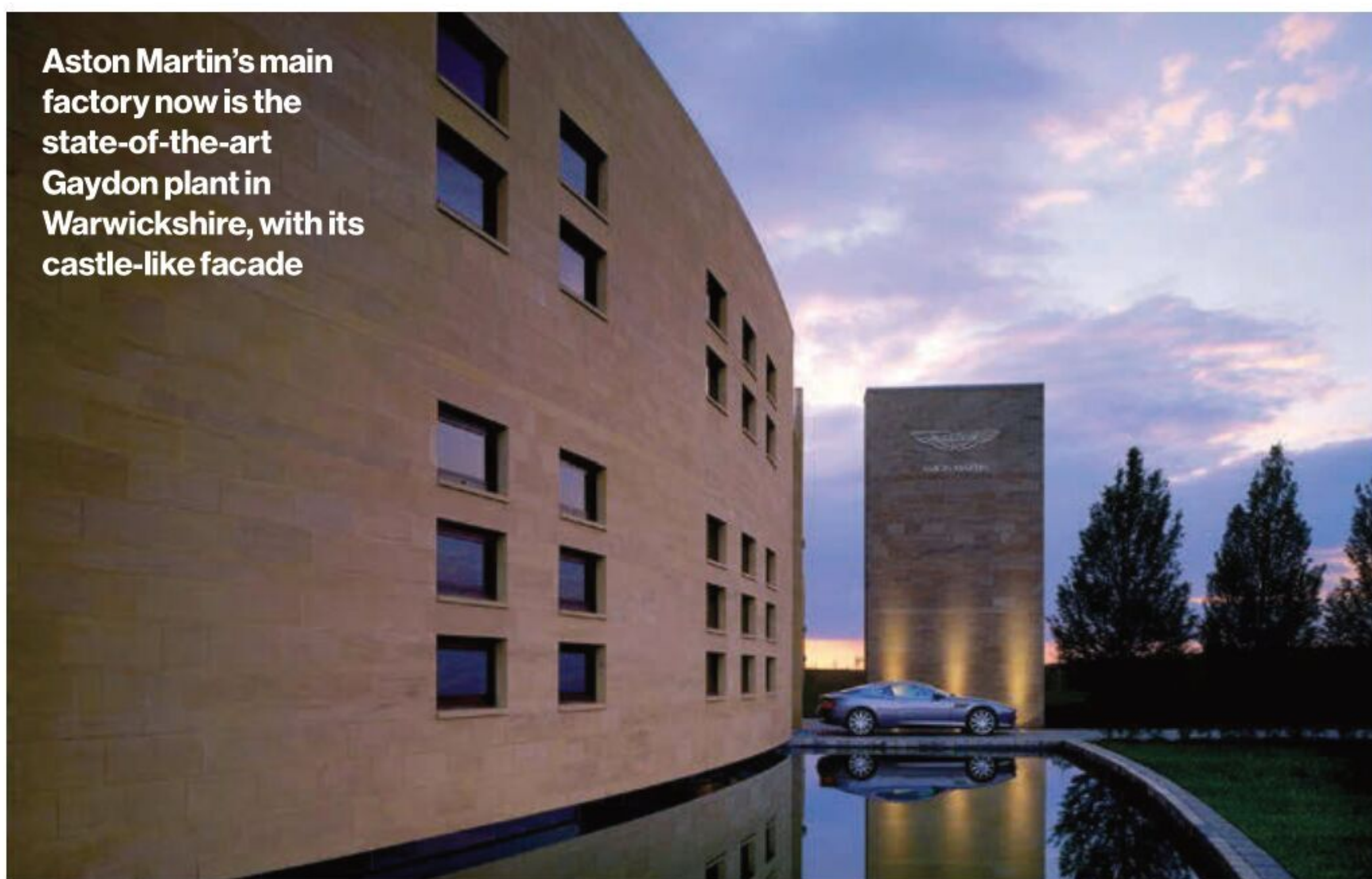
The distinctive Olympia building at Newport Pagnell, a former cinema that's now used as a classic vehicle showroom



## MARQUE HISTORY

### THE FACTORIES

Aston Martin's main factory now is the state-of-the-art Gaydon plant in Warwickshire, with its castle-like facade



was a difficult one for Newport Pagnell; from December 1974 to September '75, it shut down completely, and when it re-opened it had a mere 100 employees. No more than seven cars a week were put together until the early 1980s.

**A DB2/4 at Hanworth Park, the aviation centre in Feltham where David Brown leased hangars for production after he purchased Aston Martin and Lagonda in 1947**

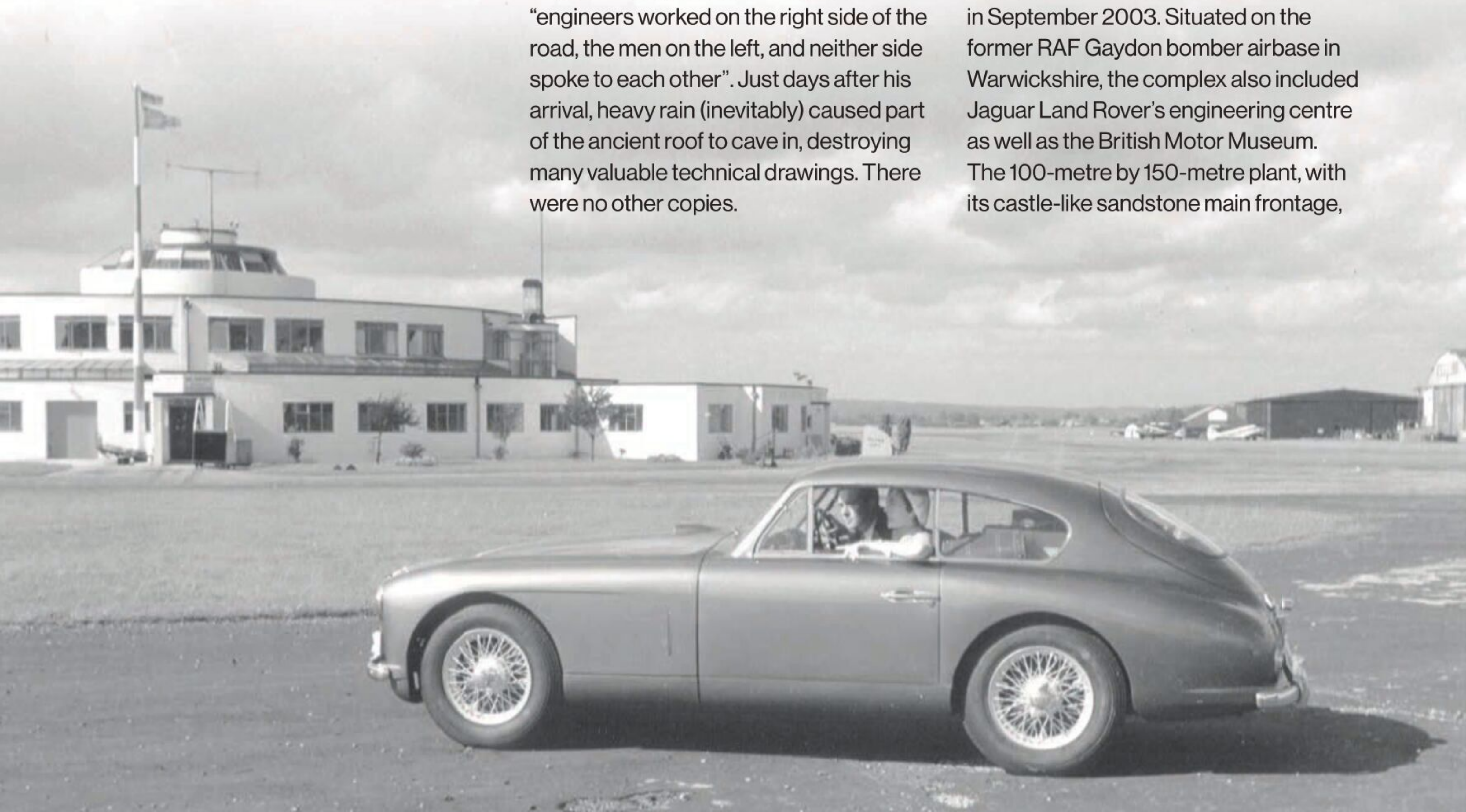
It was only with the involvement of Ford that Aston Martin Lagonda finally got the decent resources it needed. The 'Blue Oval' acquired a 75 per cent stake in 1987, and took over completely in 1991. In order to make its investment work, a higher-volume Aston Martin was needed, which would be beyond the capabilities of Newport Pagnell. One Ford product manager transferred there while it was still building the Virage described it as "the biggest mess you could imagine", where "engineers worked on the right side of the road, the men on the left, and neither side spoke to each other". Just days after his arrival, heavy rain (inevitably) caused part of the ancient roof to cave in, destroying many valuable technical drawings. There were no other copies.

### BLOXHAM FOR DB7

Fortunately, Ford had a spare plant at Wykham Mill in Bloxham, Oxfordshire. What had been a semi-derelict mill in the 1980s had become the TWR JaguarSport factory, building the XJ220 supercar. But when production of that ceased, Bloxham switched to the Aston Martin DB7 from 1994 to 2004, albeit with the bodies built by Motor Panels in Coventry and painted by Rolls-Royce in Crewe (until Bloxham gained its own paint plant in 1998). The six-cylinder engines came from TWR nearby, while Cosworth supplied the later V12s. Such was the DB7's appeal that the factory achieved an output of 15 cars a week during the V12 era. In total, 7091 DB7s appeared from Bloxham before it closed at the end of 2004.

Newport Pagnell did continue as a production facility for the more exclusive V12 Vanquish. Because this involved more hand assembly and crafting than the DB7, it was more suited to Buckinghamshire's relaxed pace and traditional techniques. However, in 2007, the Vanquish's demise meant new-car manufacture in Newport Pagnell finally ceased.

Aston Martin's new home was the purpose-built Gaydon factory, opened in September 2003. Situated on the former RAF Gaydon bomber airbase in Warwickshire, the complex also included Jaguar Land Rover's engineering centre as well as the British Motor Museum. The 100-metre by 150-metre plant, with its castle-like sandstone main frontage,





ASTON MARTIN DB11  
Start of production 2016



**Production of the eagerly-awaited Aston Martin DB11 commencing at Gaydon in 2016**

was four times the size of Bloxham with 8000 square metres dedicated to offices, meeting rooms and customer reception, and 35,000 square metres given over to car construction. It was capable of 7500 of those per annum. Ford's massive multi-million investment also kitted it out with state-of-the-art equipment, and there was also a new dedicated engine plant (AMEP) at Ford's Cologne factory in Germany from October 2004. Yet, just three years after construction of the DB9 got underway at Gaydon (in January 2004), Ford sold Aston Martin for £475 million.



**The newest Aston Martin factory at St Athan is solely responsible for building the DBX SUV, Aston Martin's current bestseller**

Gaydon remains Aston Martin's HQ and primary manufacturing centre, with a 2014 investment of £20 million adding an extra 10,000 square metres, including a new chassis and pilot-build facility, offices and additional storage areas. However, the 21st century's second decade also saw Astons being built abroad, with a partnership with Magna Steyr to manufacture 2000 cars annually in Graz, Austria. This arrangement – for the Rapide – only lasted from May 2010 to mid-2012, six years earlier than planned, after which the four-door GT was taken under Gaydon's wing.

Most recently, Aston Martin has expanded its property portfolio via St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales. It took over three super-hangars from

the Ministry of Defence at the former RAF airfield – echoes of Feltham there – in 2016 and officially opened the Aston Martin Lagonda Production & Technology Centre St Athan in December 2019. Construction of the marque's new SUV, the DBX, began there in July 2020.

Aston Martin faces uncertain times, with a commitment to build electric vehicles from 2025 amid difficult economic conditions. However, with two cutting-edge factories at its command, it's better-placed than ever before to meet future challenges. And who knows, maybe more continuation classics will also roll out of Newport Pagnell. As always with anything and everything Aston Martin, don't bet against it. **AMD**



**In recent times, production has returned to Newport Pagnell in the form of 'continuations' of classic models, including the DB4 GT Zagato**



**The most recent 'new' vehicles to emerge from Newport Pagnell have been the 'continuation' Goldfinger DB5s, equipped with many of the gadgets from the film**



ON TEST  
DB11 VOLANTE

# THROUGH

We reacquaint ourselves with the DB11 Volante the model that successfully continued the open-top Aston Martin line, as well as offering useful upgrades over its predecessor

## DB11 VOLANTE

WORDS: TIM PITT

PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORING RESEARCH





# THE ROOF

**T**he Aston Martin DB11 Volante is a car that makes you feel like an A-list movie star. The drop-top sister to the DB11 coupe must, of course, be driven everywhere roof-down, with sunglasses on, and as a result you'll be even more aware of all the people stopping and staring at you. Don't bother with years of acting classes; simply get one of these instead.

That's the Aston Martin effect. Some sneer at Ferraris, Lamborghinis can be loutish and Porsches are ten-a-penny

in places. An Aston Martin is still the supercar that people love – and this DB11 Volante convertible is one of the most attention-grabbing models of recent times. It also comes, of course, with the Mercedes-AMG V8 engine, a unit that Aston Martin considered ideal, enabling it to pitch the Volante's list price below that of its Italian arch-rival – the Ferrari Portofino M.

The soft-top version's launch was inevitable. As there was a DB9 Volante, there had to be a DB11 Volante, to satisfy all those for whom only an open car will do. And there's a good number of such people. Maybe even more than ever,

if Aston Martin could make a drop-top as driver-pleasing and complete as a coupe... which, of course, is exactly what happened via the 2018 launch of the soft-top DB11.

The delectable DB11 Volante is all about elegance. Like the coupe, it's a refined design. It doesn't shout about itself, isn't packed full of extreme angles and OTT graphics. But it still stands apart thanks to its sumptuous lines. This is also a big car, a wide car, whose shark nose commands a lot of presence.

The talking point is the roof. Close work with the supplier enabled Aston Martin to create more form in its shape



To prove the effectiveness of the Volante's hood, Aston Martin claims it was tested in both the Arctic Circle and Death Valley



## ON TEST

### DB11 VOLANTE

– there are more metal supports, so it's smoother and less tent-like. The fabric is tidier too, with seamless joins and a flush-fit glass rear window. It lowers in 14 seconds and raises in 16, at speeds of up to 31mph (we tried it – operating the roof just below 30mph is an impressive moving spectacle).

The company is proud of how compactly the roof folds flat into the rear deck, enabling it to be nice and low, and giving the back end a clean look. There's no 'hump back', like you get in some cabrios. In profile, it's slim and lithe, despite its size. Roof down, it's long and lean, an effect aided by a bold undercut to the doors and those oh-so-muscular rear wheelarches.

Unlike the coupe, there's no inbuilt 'air curtain' duct at the rear. The shape of the roof alters the aero, so it's not needed, say the designers. It's also a cabrio in which you can reach the top speed of 187mph with the roof down as well as up. That's what designing it alongside the coupe from the start (rather than as a follow-on project) does for you.



## RAISING THE ROOF

Forget simply keeping out the rain: Aston Martin demanded much more from the DB11's fabric roof when creating the Volante. The firm says it tested how weatherproof the hood is in both the Arctic Circle and Death Valley, and adds that the K-fold mechanism is now so compact, boot space is 20 per cent greater than in the old DB9 Volante. The interior is bigger as well – and it was the first open-top Aston to have a heated steering wheel (ideal for roof-down winter trips if you forget the driving gloves).

Roof-up noise levels are kept in check by what was then the latest acoustic and insulation materials, which were among the eight layers making up the hood's construction. Aston Martin loyalists, many of whom have owned several generations of Volante, were delighted with all the advances offered by the 'most complete open-top Aston Martin ever built'.

As well as working via the remote control, Aston boasted that the roof could be operated on the move, even with a hefty 31mph headwind. To make sure it all proved reliable despite these extremes, the test team subjected the roof to 100,000 cycles in special weather chambers – compressing a decade of use into a one-month test.

Creating it wasn't as straightforward as making the DB11 coupe, said chief technical officer Max Sz waj. It's all about retaining structural and dynamic integrity without adding mass: "To protect the former, you need strength and rigidity, but to preserve the latter, you need to keep weight to the minimum".

Cue the DB11 Volante, a car 26kg lighter and five per cent stiffer than the old DB9 version. The end result was a 'truly magnificent car', one that Aston Martin claimed at launch 'combines greater performance and agility with increased comfort, refinement and interior space for occupants and their luggage'. We wouldn't disagree.





Reacquainting ourselves with the DB11 Volante in the South of France proved to be a memorable experience



## INTERIOR TREATMENT

Inside, it's the same as the coupe, albeit darker with the roof up (rear visibility is restricted) and immeasurably brighter and airier with it down. It's nice to drop down so low into the seats, a treat to face such an advanced and interesting dashboard, although the complexity of it can be a little overpowering at first. Both the Mercedes-Benz media system's controls and Aston's own touch-sensitive buttons take some learning.

The digital instrument binnacle is neat, and reconfigures itself as you scroll from standard to Sport and Sport+ modes via the button on the steering wheel. A button on the other side lets you stiffen the dampers, should you want sportier handling without the associated engine drama. It's complemented by an older Mercedes infotainment system, controlled by a rotary dial that's just a little too fiddly. Touchscreen functionality would help, but isn't available.

In the rear, there are two seats, but they're less spacious than in the coupe. Aston has bought the rear bulkhead forwards to house the roof, which means they're absolutely not for adults. They're okay for kids, though – and equipped with Isofix mountings, offering enough space to mount a couple of child seats. Parents, take note: this soft-top's able to take the twins.

***“An Aston Martin is still the supercar that people love – and this DB11 Volante convertible is one of the most attention-grabbing models of recent times”***



The digital instrument binnacle is neat, and reconfigures itself as you scroll from standard to Sport and Sport+ modes via the button on the steering wheel



## ON TEST

### DB11 VOLANTE

Behind, there's a 206-litre boot (20 per cent bigger than before), with an opening carved out to be as useful as possible. It's not as practical as the coupe (which holds 260 litres), but it's pretty decent for a svelte cabrio. If you want to lower the roof, however, you need to pull down a beautifully-trimmed divider panel that reduces space to 160 litres.

Aston Martin introduced some new trims to the Volante, including veneers for the backs of the front seats. They look rather smart, giving it a bit of a race-bred look, but only in the best possible taste. Expose them while you stand and chat with friends, thanks to the remote roof operation via the key fob. Just make sure that divider's down in the boot, or the roof won't operate...

### DRIVER'S CAR

Before setting off, it's essential to lower the roof... of course. The DB11 mechanism works smoothly and efficiently; it's much quieter than before, with hushed operation and little of the cheap-sounding whirr of older models. Hold the button on the centre console down while you buckle up, and you're ready to go almost straight away.

V8 richness dominates any first impressions. This gorgeous engine (surely Mercedes-AMG makes the best V8s in the world right now?) is even more fully exposed in the Volante, treating occupants to its creamy exhaust flutters as well as its upfront mechanical hum. Mercedes-AMGs favour loud, thunderous, howling and popping exhausts; Aston's gone for the classier option, less vocal and more polite. It's heavenly as a result.

At slow speed, this is a lovely car to drive. The turbo V8 serves up effortless torque, the eight-speed gearbox is impeccable and steering is nicely weighted and accurate. Good job: it's a big car, feeling very wide (it's the best part of two metres even without door mirrors – 2060mm including them), and threading it through tight, winding French roads (where else to drive it than the South of France?) was occasionally precarious. But so calming is the classic V8 hum, really, it's fine.

Finally, we were free. Speeds could rise as big paddle-shifters were flicked down and up. Time for those two key cabriolet



tests. One: body shimmer, caused by a loss of rigidity through chopping the roof. Box ticked here. You'll barely notice it, and only sense a few slight flutters when looking for them. It doesn't feel like the world's ending when you clatter through a pothole, and there's no vibration-induced buzz through the rear-view mirror.

Second: cabin wind blast. Again, a surprise; the DB11 Volante is a car you can use roof-down even at motorway speeds, without hairdos getting ruined or bodies being chilled to frozen. Although, proviso time, only with the wind deflector installed and raised, which takes the rear seats out of action. Do the same four-up and it'll be the children acting as your wind deflector. Social services might have something to say about that.







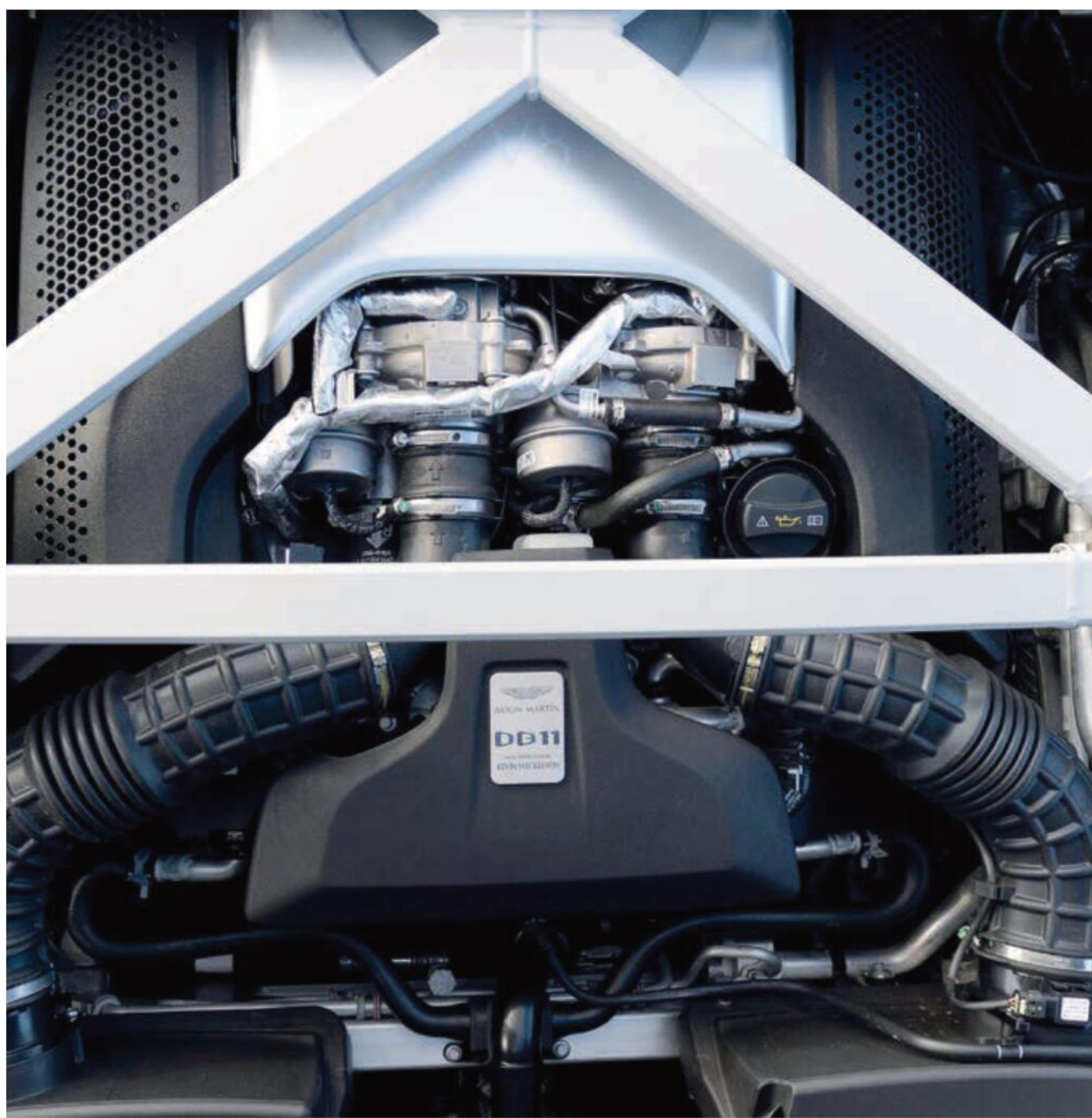
## ON TEST

### DB11 VOLANTE

Dynamically, Aston Martin's objective was to get the Volante to feel as similar as possible to the coupe. Easier said than done. Because they're less rigid, open-top cars often have to be softer than coupes, making them less sharp and incisive. But Aston has achieved its goal with the DB11 Volante. It's a car that's just as confident as the hard-top, and pretty well near as crisp, despite weighing over 100kg more (and the coupe isn't exactly light).

Its tautness encourages you to press on, and its balanced chassis rouses no nasty surprises. Clever damping copes with undulating surfaces without drama, and it soon becomes a GT cabrio you can confidently drive like a sports car (while being mindful of its width and size). On winding French mountain roads, I was soon diving into corners, leaning on the rear upon exit; okay, it's a heavy car so isn't quite sports car-lithe (it's no McLaren 570S Spider, for example), but it can still be much more effervescent than the norm in a big GT car.

Turning up the settings to Sport and Sport+ doesn't destroy the gliding, cushioned ride, but adds useful extra body control. Notably, it still doesn't



**The 4.0-litre V8 produces 510bhp, providing the Volante with a top speed of 187mph and 0-60 in around four seconds**

*“This gorgeous engine is even more fully exposed in the Volante, treating occupants to its creamy exhaust flutters as well as its upfront mechanical hum”*







turn the exhaust note into a cacophony, either. The DB11 Volante always retains its cultured edge. It's so rich and lovely, you really won't miss a V12 engine. And with 60mph delivered in around four seconds, it's not lacking in pace either. This is an effortless, rewarding and rich car to drive – and, yes, one that's hard to split from the coupe unless you're really going for it. For most customers, it's a corruption-free

convertible. Oh, and roof up? As hushed as the coupe, pretty much. The roof is eight layers and does a splendid job of filtering out the exterior hubbub. Add in a cracking sound system and it's a cushy cruiser. But, thanks to a heated steering wheel, heated seats and well-positioned air vents delivering powerful heat, you'll only feel the need to raise the roof when it rains, not to escape from the cold.

We drove it all morning in wintry French conditions, with nary a shiver.

### **OUR VERDICT**

For the first time in memory, I came away from driving this convertible thinking I would take it over the coupe. I'm not particularly a fan of open-top cars, but the DB11 Volante still manages to serve up fresh air and V8 melody with almost none of the associated compromises. It won me over. You get to experience more V8 richness, more driving sensations, with few of the traditional open-top drawbacks. The handling is comparable to a coupe and, visually, it's as classy and uncompromised. For Aston Martin aficionados, it provides an interesting conundrum. **AMD**

**Making the most of all that delicious power with the roof lowered is the finest way to enjoy this soft-top DB11**



### **TECH SPECS**

**Engine:** 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8

**Power:** 510bhp

**Torque:** 513lb.ft.

**0-62mph:** 4.1 seconds

**Top speed:** 187mph

**Fuel economy (combined):** 28.3mpg

**Length:** 4750mm

**Width:** 1950mm

**Height:** 1300mm

**Height:** 1680mm



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

Each issue, we take a look back at some of the finest Aston Martin models via an array of period photographs and brochures

**WORDS:** PAUL GUINNESS  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:** KELSEY ARCHIVES

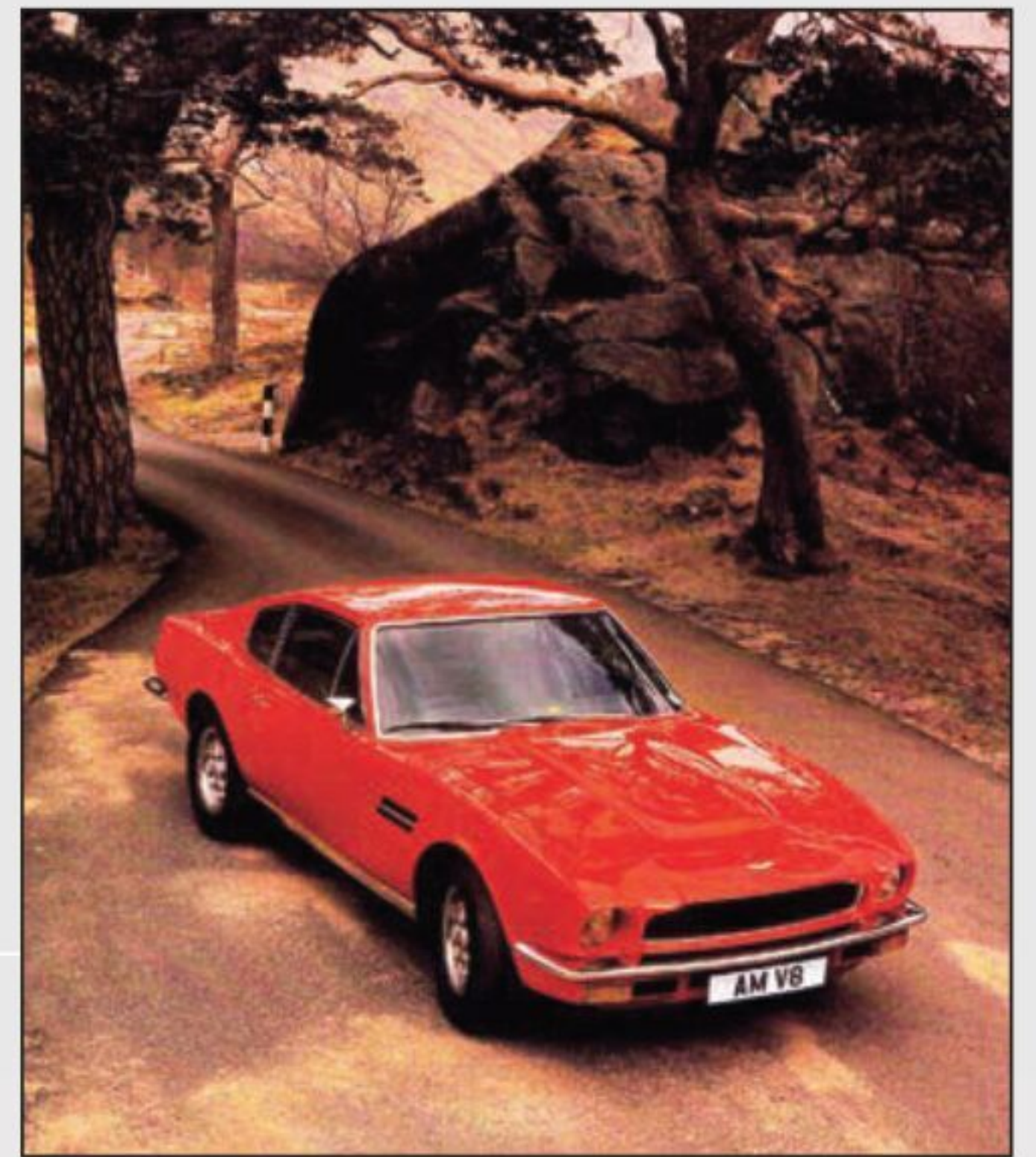
## HAND-CRAFTED CREATION

Issued in the late 1970s was this fold-out brochure dedicated to the Aston Martin V8, the classic coupe that was still hand-crafted at the company's Newport Pagnell headquarters. And it was the hand-built nature of the car that the brochure referenced when it stated: 'Each new Aston Martin has had 175 loving owners'.

The brochure went on to explain that the V8 was built by a 'handful of skilled craftsmen and craftswomen, who care about their work and who take as much

pride in the finished motor car as the fortunate owner'.

There was more to the V8 than its hand-built status, however, as this was very much a driver's car: 'The Aston Martin V8 is built for the driver who wants his motoring to be exhilarating and enjoyable, and who will give his own best in return'. This was, insisted the company, a 'grand tourer in the great tradition'.



   
ASTON MARTIN V8 VOLANTE

## LATEST VOLANTE

Although the original two-seater Volante version of the Virage made its debut at the 1990 British International Motor Show (two years after the coupe derivative), it wasn't until '97 that an extended-wheelbase version was introduced, shown in this original press photograph of the time.

The chassis was lengthened by 200mm compared with the previous model, ensuring the latest V8 Volante offered extra space for those sat in the rear. Production continued through to 2000, by which time just 63 examples had been built – making this one of the rarest of today's modern-classic convertibles.





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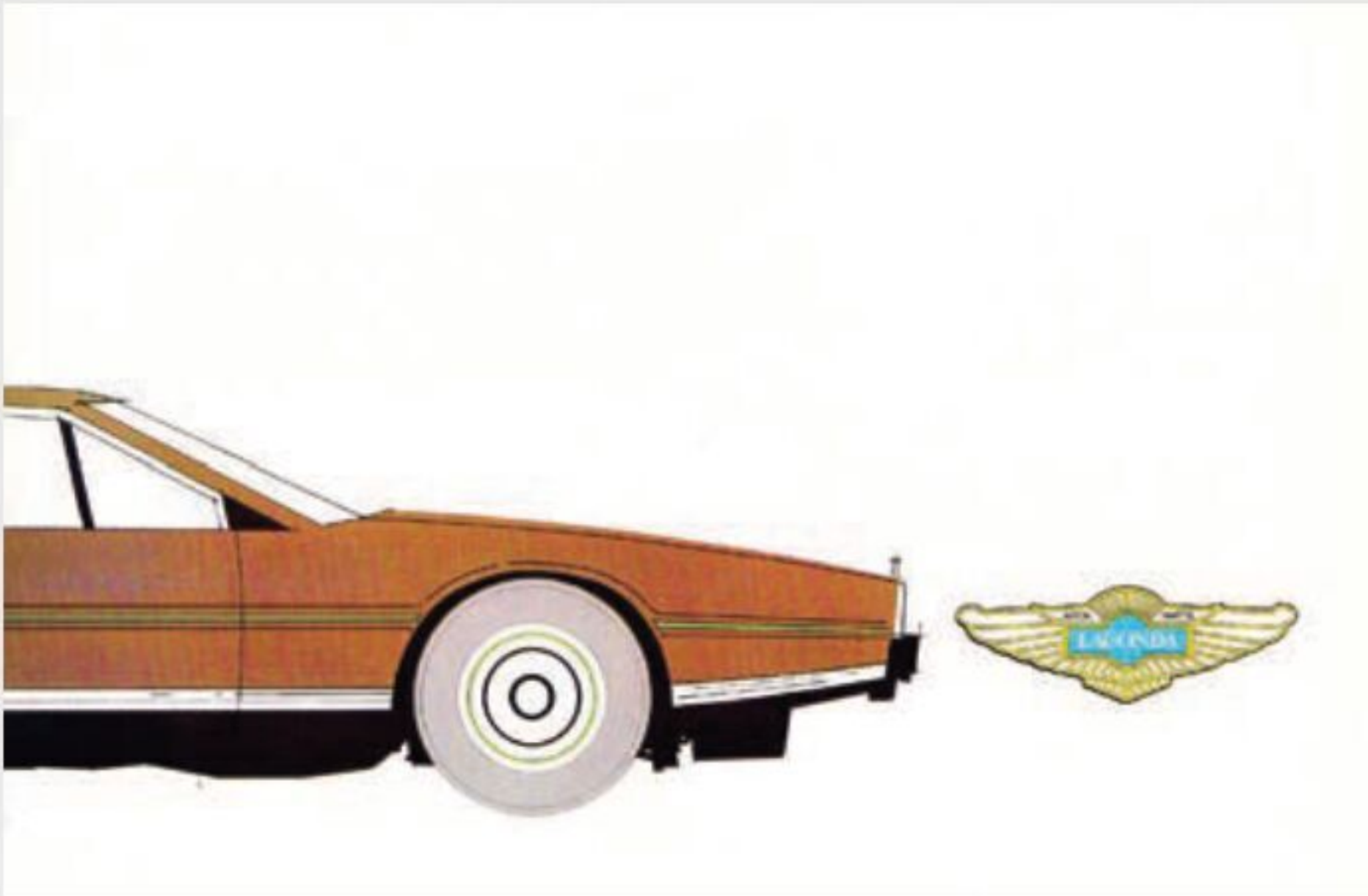
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# THE SECOND COMING

Published in 1979 was this brochure for the Series 2 Lagonda, which finally entered production that year despite making its motor show debut in '76. There were many updates over the original William Towns-designed Lagonda of 1974-on, although early examples of the Series 2 still retained the original's digital dashboard and touch-button controls. Aston Martin made a feature of this, boasting that 'modern technology has had its say with the instrumentation, for the

new Lagonda has no dials or needles'. The idea behind the Lagonda was simple, as this was a car that combined 'the inimitable luxury of the spacious four-seater with the handling and performance of a sporting grand tourer'. But what about the Towns-penned styling, famous for its straight lines and wedge profile? According to Aston Martin, its shape was 'as functional as it is eye-catching, a pleasing blend of elegance and sportiness'.

## RAPIDE PROGRESS

Production of the most recent Aston Martin Rapide began in May 2010, giving the British firm a useful rival to the four-door Porsche Panamera. Sales of the Rapide failed to live up to expectations, although it went on to enjoy a decade-long career and still has its admirers nowadays.

An even rarer Rapide was launched almost forty years earlier, however, as shown in this brochure from that time – although the Aston Martin name was nowhere to be seen. Just 55 examples of the Lagonda Rapide were built between 1961 and '64, making it one of the rarest 'saloons' of its era. The Lagonda name would reappear on another four-door in the following decade, of course, thanks to the launch of the Aston Martin Lagonda, while the Rapide name would remain dormant until finally being resurrected by Aston Martin twelve years ago.

As for the Lagonda Rapide, this was based around the Aston Martin DB4's platform, albeit powered by the 3995cc version of the company's straight-six engine. A tubular steel frame formed the main structure, on which sat all-aluminium body panels. The end result was a rather handsome offering for well-heeled buyers looking for effortless cruising and four-door exclusivity.



**THE DAVID BROWN LAGONDA RAPIDE**

### THE DAVID BROWN LAGONDA RAPIDE SPECIFICATIONS

**Engine:** Six-cylinder twin overhead camshaft. Bore 96 mm (3.78"). Stroke 92 mm (3.62"). Capacity 3995 c.c. (244 cu. ins.). Compression ratio 8.25:1. Power output 236 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m.

**Cylinder Block:** Cast in aluminium alloy, incorporating fully machined hemispherical combustion chambers. Flow tested ports. Large diameter valves inclined at 80° included angle with exhaust valve guides in direct contact with water.

**Valve Operation:** Twin overhead camshafts operate the valves direct through the medium of cyanide-hardened nickel molybdenum steel tappets, eliminating tappet adjustment. Camshafts driven by two-stage Duplex roller chains with manually-adjusted tensioners.

**Pistons:** Die-cast low expansion aluminium alloy. Three compression rings, top parallel faced chrome plated, second and third taper-faced. One twin segment oil control ring. Large diameter gudgeon pin located by circlips.

**Connecting Rods:** Forged in nickel chrome molybdenum steel, weight graded and balanced.

**Lubrication System:** By front mounted chain-driven rotor type oil pump and full flow filter.

**Cooling System:** Cooling by pump and covered fan with by-pass thermostat control. Cross-flow radiator with separate heater tank and radiator blind.

**Carburation:** Two Solex twin choke carburetors with air cleaner and silencer.

**Ignition:** High efficiency coil and distributor incorporating automatic advance and micro timing adjustment.

**Automatic Transmission:** Three forward speeds and reverse with intermediate gear held controlled from steering column. Gear ratios: Low, 18.27:1; intermediate, 11.36:1; direct top, 3.77:1.

(Manually operated gearbox optional) four speeds with synchromesh on all forward gears.

**Floor mounted centre change.** Gear ratios: Reverse, 2.52:1; 1st, 2.92:1; 2nd, 1.95:1; 3rd, 1.25:1; top, 1:1.

**Propeller Shaft:** Needle roller bearing divided propeller shaft with flexibly mounted centre bearing. Shaft dynamically balanced.

**Final Drive:** Frame mounted hypoid unit. Ratio, 3.77:1.

**Front Suspension:** Independent, incorporating parallel trailing links and located transversely by Watt linkage. Transverse torsion bars and large double acting piston type shock absorbers.

**Rear Suspension:** De Dion axle mounted on parallel trailing links and located transversely by Watt linkage. Transverse torsion bars and large double acting piston type shock absorbers.

**Steering:** Rack and pinion steering box and universally jointed column. 17" diameter (43.18 cm.) wood rimmed steering wheel.

**Brakes:** Dunlop disc front and rear, hydraulically operated. Bellows type servo operating directly on the brake pedal. Twin master cylinders providing independent hydraulic systems to front and rear. Floor mounted hand-brake lever operating on rear discs. Brake fluid level warning light on instrument panel.

**Fuel System:** Twin wing mounted petrol tanks with balance pipe for easy filling. Total capacity 161 Imp. galls. (19.8 U.S. galls., 74.9 litres). Electrically operated reserve 3 Imp. galls. (3.6 U.S. galls., 13.6 litres).

Twin S.U. high pressure electric fuel pump. Petrol filler lid electrically operated from interior.

**Exhaust System:** Twin pipe system with six high efficiency silencers.

**Wheels and Tyres:** Ventilated centre-lock disc wheels with 6" (15.24 cm.) wide rims. 7-10 "15" tyres.

**Electrical Equipment:** 12-volt system. 60 amp-hour battery incorporating master switch. Heavy duty high output ventilated dynamo with automatic voltage control. Starter motor, distributor and high efficiency coil. Two-speed wipers and electric windscreen washer operated by single control knob. Twin wind tone horns.

Steering column finger-tip lever for operating self-cancelling flashers, headlamp main and

dipped beams and for flashing headlamps. Four headlamps providing long-range main beam and improved dipped beam. Separate flush-fitting front parking lamps. Separate front flashing lamps. Separate stop-tail, flashing lamps and reflectors, number plate and reversing lamps.

**Body:** 5-seater "Superleggera" construction incorporating magnesium aluminium alloy panels on tubular steel framework in unit with steel platform chassis. Body-chassis unit completely rust proofed, insulated and undersealed.

Luxurious seating for 5 persons. Bucket type reclining front seats fully adjustable. Rear seats incorporating centre arm-rest. Upholstery in finest quality English hide. Lockable glove box. Picnic tables in rear compartment. Pile carpets throughout.

Complete set of instruments including speedometer, electric revolution counter, oil pressure and fuel gauge with reserve warning light, ammeter and water temperature gauge and electric clock. Instrument panel illumination controlled by rheostat switch.

Radio with electrically operated aerial.

Comprehensive heating, demisting and fresh air ventilating system including rear passenger heater and back light demisting. Electrically operated windows to all doors. Interior courtesy lamps and rear passenger reading lamps. Map-reading lamp in glove box. Cigar lighters and ashtrays in front and rear compartments. Sun visors. Coat hooks. Luggage accommodation is provided in an exceptionally capacious boot having a depth of 50". Doors, glove box and luggage boot lid fitted with Yale locks.

**Spare Wheel and Tools:** The spare wheel is carried in a separate waterproof and damp-proof compartment underneath the boot floor. The comprehensive set of tools is contained in a separate tool roll.

**Jacking:** By hydraulically operated jack engaging sockets adjacent to each wheel.

**Principal Dimensions:**

Wheelbase	9' 6"	(2.89 m.)
Front track	4' 6"	(1.37 m.)
Rear track	4' 7"	(1.41 m.)
Overall length	10' 3"	(3.07 m.)
Overall width	5' 9"	(1.77 m.)
Overall height	4' 8"	(1.42 m.)
Ground clearance	6"	(15.2 cm.)
Turning circle	40' 6"	(12.3 m.)
Kerb weight	3760 lb.	(1712 kg.)

### LAGONDA RAPIDE DONNEES TECHNIQUES SOMMAIRES

**Moteur:** Six cylindres. Alésage 96 mm. Course 92 mm. Cylindres 3995 cc.

Calasse et bloc-cylindres en alliage léger. Vilebrequin travaillant sur sept paliers.

Deux arbres à cames en tête. Entraînement par chaînes Duplex deux étages.

Chambres de combustion hémisphériques.

Deux carburateurs Solex avec épurateur d'air et silencieux.

**Graissage:** Pompe à huile entraînée par chaîne, filtre en série.

**Refroidissement:** Pompe à eau à turbine et ventilateur. Radiateur à circulation transversale.

**Rapport volumétrique:** 8,25:1.

**Puissance effective:** 236 HP à 5,000 t/min.

**Boîte de vitesses:** Entièrement automatique 3 vitesses avant, marche arrière (standard). Sur demande, boîte de vitesses manuelle.

**Embrayage:** Double disques à jumeaux diamètre 22,8 cm.

**Poids arrière:** Hypoïde monté sur châssis. Rapport 3,77:1.

**Suspension:** Avant: indépendante; ressorts hélicoïdaux coaxiaux et amortisseurs télescopiques Armstrong.

Arrière: pont De Dion monté sur biellettes parallèles et positionné transversalement par une trianglerie Watt.

**Direction:** Bâtière de direction à crémaillère et colonne à cardan. Volant de direction à jante en bois, diamètre 43,18 cm.

**Freins:** Freins à disques Dunlop sur roues avant et arrière. Servo à dépression.

**Reservoir d'essence:** Capacité 74,9 litres.

**Roues et pneus:** James Dunlop 15,24 cm. montage par clipeau à visser; pneus 7,10 "15".

**Cotes:**

Empattement	2,89 m.
Voie avant	1,37 m.
Voie arrière	1,41 m.
Longueur hors tout	3,07 m.
Hauteur hors tout	1,42 m.
Longueur hors tout	1,42 m.
Quartre au sol	15,2 cm.
Diamètre de troussage	15,3 m.
Poids en ordre de marche	1712 kg.



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**TWIN TEST**

ASTON MARTIN DB MKIII V JAGUAR XK120 FHC

# SPORTING HEROES

Which of these original Goldfinger cars makes for the best classic experience?

WORDS: SAM SKELTON  
PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER SEABROOK









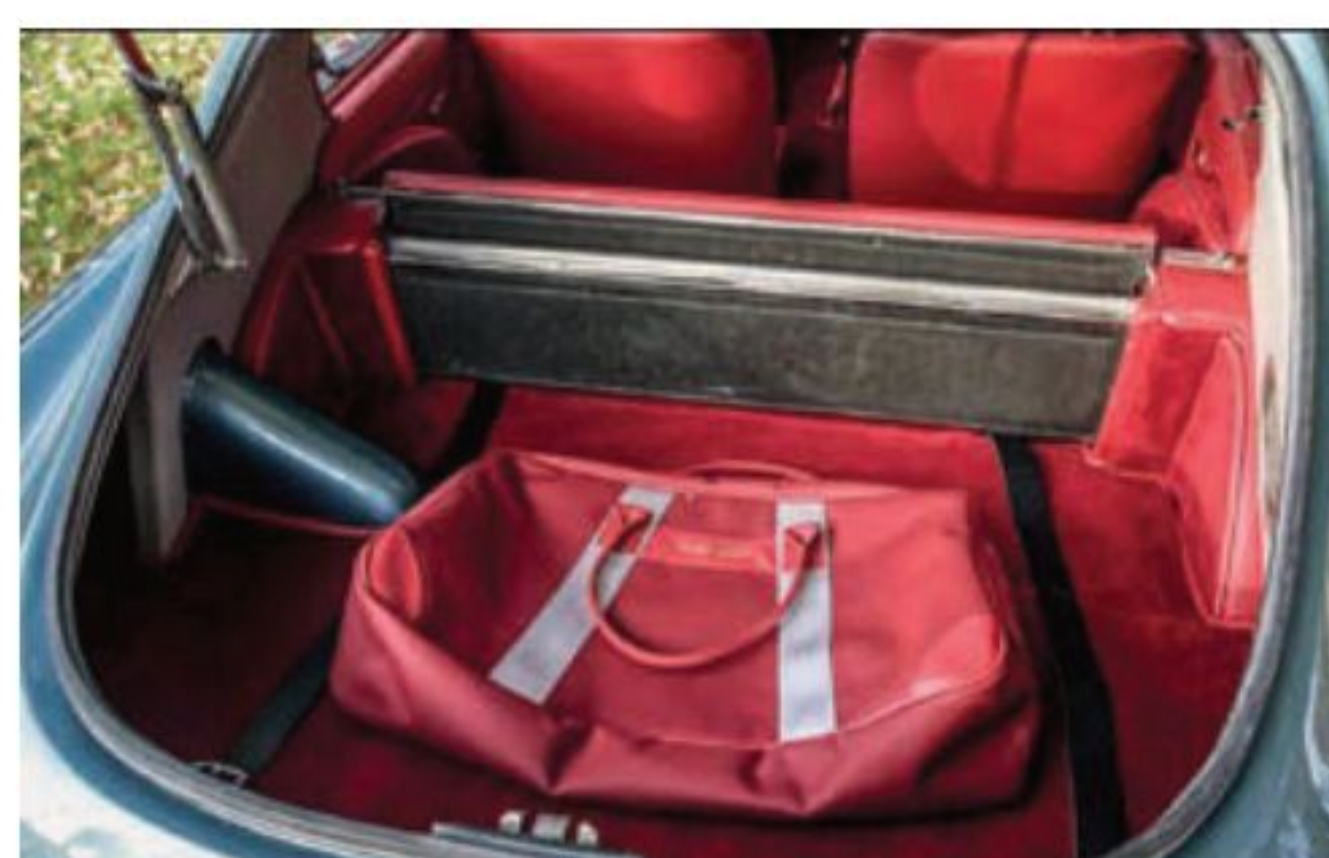
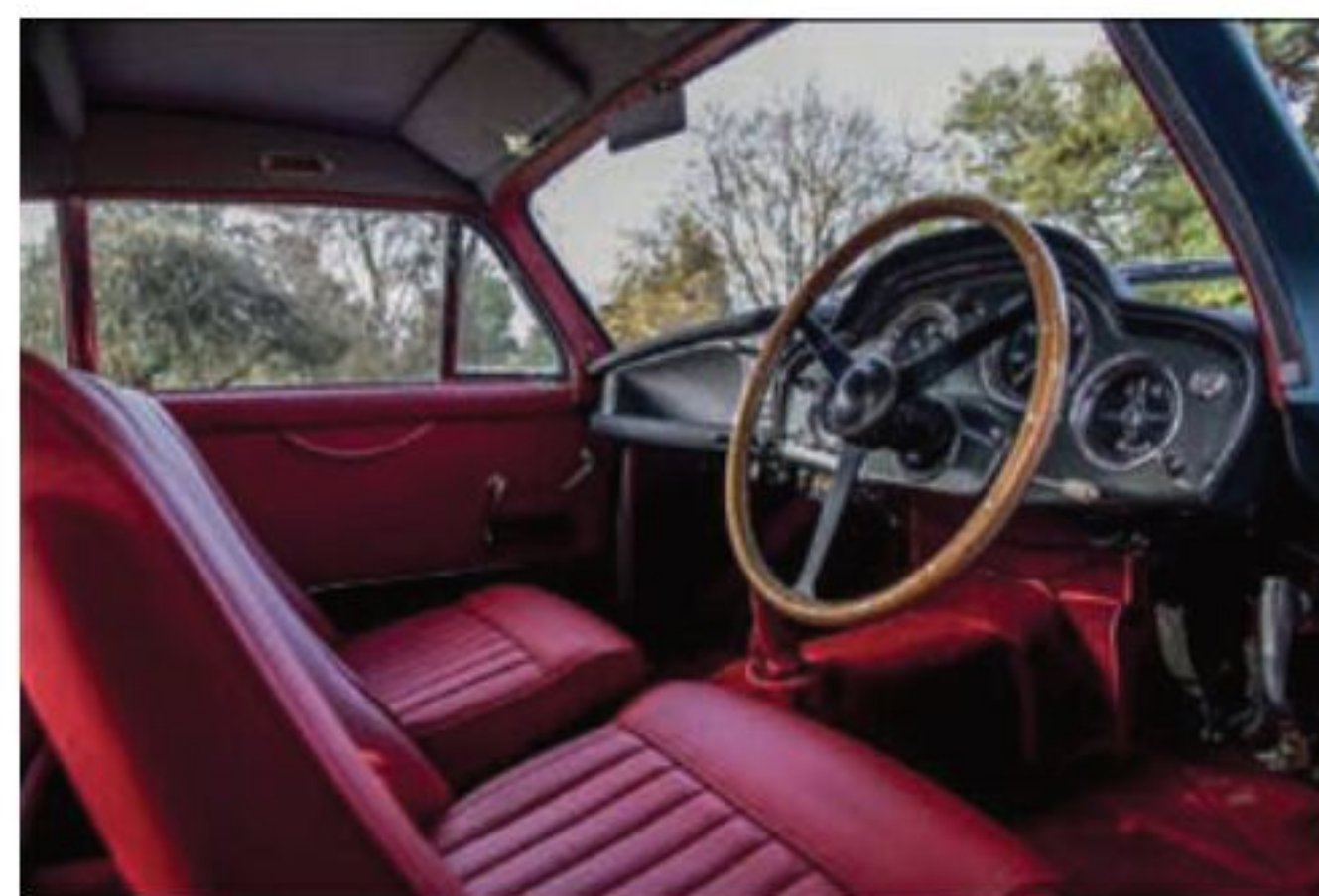
## TWIN TEST

ASTON MARTIN DB MKIII V JAGUAR XK120 FHC

**L**an Fleming wasn't exactly precise when it came to the cars used in the literary Goldfinger. Tilly Masterson's Triumph TR3 was clear enough, as was the evil Auric's Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, replete with canary yellow bodywork and riveted armour plating made of solid white gold. But Bond's own car was different. He was offered a choice of two cars, neither of which is clear by the form noted in print. He eschewed the Jaguar 3.4 from the motor pool for an Aston Martin DB3, complete with minor gadgets including a sonar tracker. But the DB3 didn't exist – at least, not as a production model. And while it would be amusing to think of Bond tearing through Northern France and Switzerland in a DB3S Le Mans car, the truth is that Fleming probably meant the DB MkIII we have in these pages. And while there was a small saloon called a Jaguar 3.4; the retrospectively-named Mk1 precursor to bank robber favourite the Mk2, it's more than possible that Fleming was referring to the 3.4 litre Jaguar XK sports cars which offered Aston Martin performance at a reduced price. And the last of the famed XK120s would have been only four years old at the time of Fleming's book, so it's likely that it was one of these, rather than a staid saloon, that had caught the author's eye as a possible pool car for our hero.

So did 007 make the right decision in plumping for the Aston Martin over the Jag? Which of our two 1950s sports cars would make the best choice for tailing an evil villain across half of Western Europe? There's only one way to find out, and that's to pit them head to head.

The Jaguar came first, and took the world by storm in 1948 in a way that few other cars short of the Citroen DS and Jaguar E-type have ever achieved. Here in austere post-war Britain was a long, low, swoopy sports car that could achieve 120mph with ease and which had an up-to-the-minute engine lurking beneath the silky shape. Jaguar's plan was to use the car as a halo model; to develop the engine in a low volume model before fitting it to the next generation of saloons. Initially launched as a roadster, the XK120 range was expanded with





*“The truth is that Ian Fleming meant Bond to have a DB MkIII as seen here.”*



a fixed head coupe for 1951, and a convertible roadster with winding windows and a folding roof for 1953. Successive iterations in the XK family would follow this three model formula, with a sporting roadster, comfortable coupe and convertible compromise. Only the first 242 were actually capable of the full 120mph experience, courtesy of their aluminium panelling – subsequent cars would be weightier owing to the switch to steel panels.

While the XK120 was the first iteration of its illustrious line, the DB we have on test was the final model in its family before the launch of the all-new DB4. The MkIII was the final fling for a series which had begun in 1948 with the DB1 roadster. The DB2 was to be a very different car to the DB1, which had originally launched as the 2-Litre Sports – it used a Lagonda straight-six that had been designed by W. O. Bentley, fitted to a shortened version of the DB1 chassis and clothed in a lissom body designed by Frank Feeley. From 1953, it was replaced by the DB2/4 – while most believe the newer model to have





## TWIN TEST

### ASTON MARTIN DB MKIII V JAGUAR XK120 FHC

been 2+2 only, it was in fact available with the two seat body as a rare option. By 1957, the DB2/4 MkII was looking a little staid, and it was time for a fresh face. Its successor lost the 2/4 portion of its name to become the DB MkIII. With a new grille designed by 17-year-old John Turner (which would set the tone for all future Aston Martins), the new car looked like a strong evolution – changes which would be bolstered by a new instrument panel, and after the first 100 front disc brakes and a Laycock-de-Normanville overdrive unit would become standard. Rear lights from the Humber Hawk would be fitted after the first few cars, too.

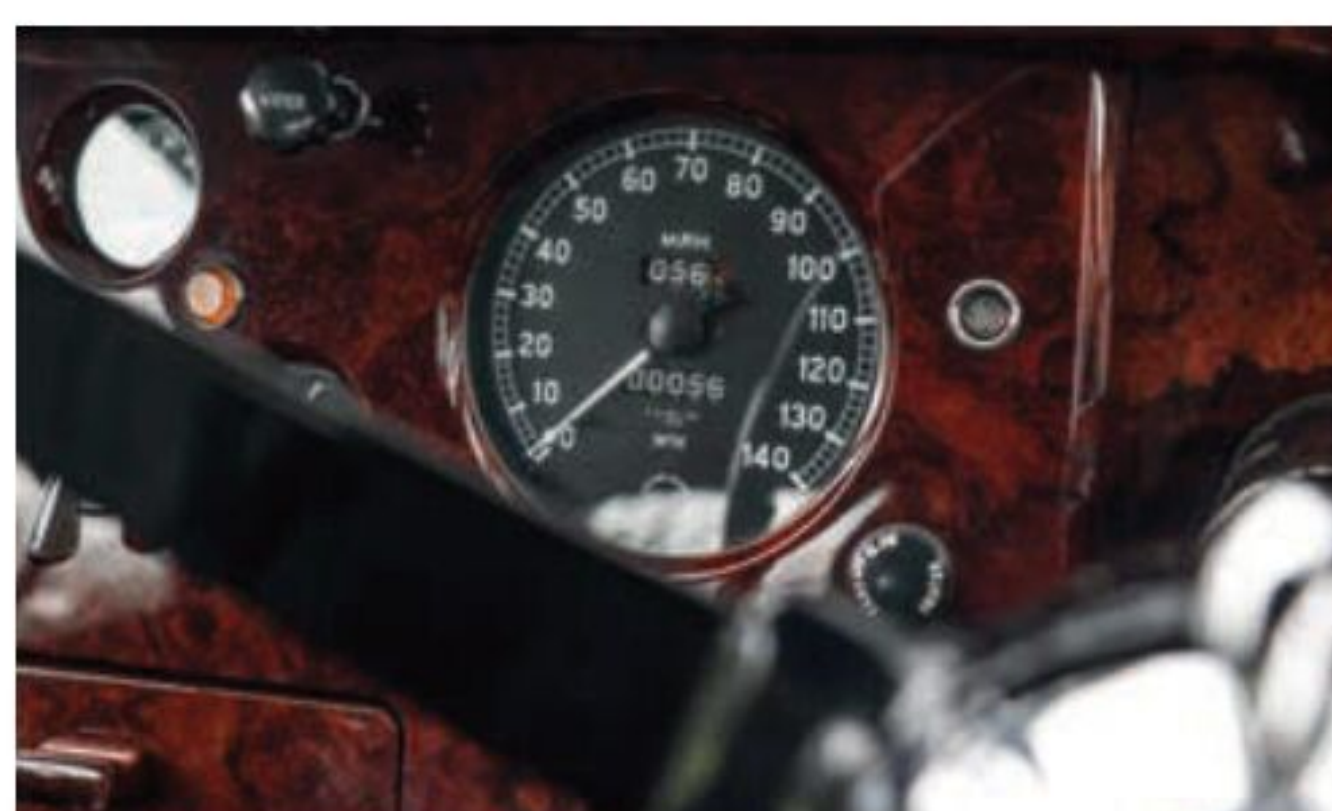
As standard, the DBA engine was fitted, offering 162bhp. However, an optional high output model was offered with the 195bhp DBB unit, fitted with triple Webers, high compression pistons and a revised exhaust. Just ten of these were built, alongside 47 DBD-engined cars with triple SUs and 180bhp. One car was fitted with a DBC competition engine, close in specification to those used in the DB3S, while a second car was subsequently uprated to DBC specification.

But were the Aston Martin's fresh





*“The XK120 has always been a stunning shape for its era, and this car is no exception.”*



face and uprated engine enough of an incentive for 007 to pick one over a Jaguar? That's what we're here to find out, with examples of both; a 1957 DB MkIII and a 1953 XK120 courtesy of Runnymede Motors in Berkshire.

Cosmetically, it's a hard one to call. The XK120 has always been a stunning shape for its era and this car, finished in the non-original shade of Opalescent Silver Blue, is no exception. As the sun glints from the curve above the rear arch, as it falls into the bootline, you see something that owes just as much to one man's eye as it does to aerodynamics. And while it's perhaps a shade heavy from the rear  $\frac{3}{4}$  position by modern tastes, that's compensated for by the sheer beauty of the front  $\frac{3}{4}$  aspect. The XK120 is a timeless piece of design, and its litany of fans will ensure it remains popular. This example is fresh from a bare metal rebuild, and is arguably as close to a brand new XK120 as you will find.

The Aston Martin is rarer, and to a degree overshadowed by the DB4 which followed it. A production run of just two years and 551 examples means that alongside over 12,000 XK120s, the Aston is certainly the rarer sight. But finished in original Elusive Blue, it's a more handsome car even if it's less immediately striking than the Jaguar. The fresh nose suits the shape better than the outgoing DB2/4 front did, while there's almost something of the later DB6 to the windowline. It's less flamboyant and continental than the Touring-designed Aston Martins, but British and tasteful despite that. The interior of our test car; Crimson Red Vaumol leather, only bolsters that effect. While the Jaguar has been the subject of a full restoration, the Aston Martin has undergone more of an evolution; twenty years of continual maintenance at a cost of £80,000 mean that under the recent paint and the retrim sits a very healthy example. Overall, we'd give the nod to the Aston on looks – it's less contentious and more traditional than the Jaguar, as well as hiding extra practicality behind the style.

Settle down inside the Jaguar XK120, and it's a powerful reminder of just how much people have grown over time. Since the early 1950s, the average British male has grown by over two inches, gained a stone in weight, and grown two shoe



## TWIN TEST

ASTON MARTIN DB MKIII V JAGUAR XK120 FHC

### TECH SPECS

**Engine:** 3.442cc I6

**Power:** 160bhp

**Torque:** 195lb ft

**0-60mph:** 10.0secs

**Top speed:** 121mph

**Transmission:** 4-spd man

**Economy:** 17mpg

**Price new:** £1616, 2s, 6d (1953)

**Value now:** £50k-120k



sizes, and for taller and more corpulent drivers the XK120 simply feels tight. The roof is only about an inch above your head and there's little in the way of shoulder room. While it might have offered reasonable space when new, the same can't be said today. The interior is very well-appointed however, with a walnut dashboard in perfect order, seats freshly trimmed in Connolly Vaumol leather and beautiful carpets. It looks brand new – not a surprise when you find that this example has covered fewer than 100 miles since

a bare metal restoration. You sit perhaps a shade closer to the wheel than you might like – a near vertical wheel, with the boss pointing straight to your heart. Dials are central, with an anti-clockwise tachometer on the left and a cluster of auxiliary gauges along the centreline of the car. The sound of the XK engine is one well-known to classic enthusiasts; having powered many of the marque's models from the late 1940s right into the 1990s – and while in this iteration it has just 160bhp to play with it doesn't feel like it's lacking.

It would be unfair of us to comment on the gearshift quality, as this particular car has been fitted with a Tremec five-speed conversion in place of the original Moss unit. We've used Moss boxes before, though, and they're perfectly enjoyable despite the lack of synchromesh on first and no desire to be hurried. It's firm by period standards, but perfectly adequate when considered alongside modern cars – and it's well-damped, too. Nothing about the way this car drives would dissuade you from a trip into Europe, with the



## TECH SPECS

**Engine:** 2,922cc I6**Power:** 162bhp**Torque:** 180lb ft**0-60mph:** 9.3secs**Top speed:** 120mph**Economy:** 16mpg**Transmission:** 4-spd man**Price new:** £3076, 7s 0d (1957)**Value now:** £100k-285k

possible exception of the compromised luggage space. It seems surprising from a car which was once lauded as the fastest production car in the world, but it's perfectly happy to sit in a high gear and burble along on a wave of torque for hours at a time. It might not be as refined nor as smooth as the Aston Martin, but there's certainly nothing wrong with the manners of this car to say the design is over 70 years old. The Aston Martin, however, instantly feels like a more accomplished grand tourer than the Jaguar. Space

inside is greatly improved, with plenty of headroom and shoulder room in the front for two large adults, and even a rear seat which would be adequate for occasional use. The hatchback, an innovative fitment for the time, especially on a sports car, offers far more usable luggage space than the Jaguar, too. And if you don't need the rear seats, you can extend the load bay by folding down the rear seat back - we're almost in 'hot hatch' territory here. The dashboard may not feel as plush as that of the Jaguar with metal and leather taking the place of walnut, but

it does feel more personal; the gauges are clustered ahead of the driver, and there's a useful cubby ahead of the passenger. It feels like a better-considered machine for long distance touring even before you turn the key.

But where the Aston Martin really excels is on the road. It's far more softly sprung than the Jaguar, riding as well as a saloon car with excellent damping characteristics. The steering is both nicely geared and accurate, helped in the case of this car by increased negative camber ▶



## TWIN TEST

ASTON MARTIN DB MKIII V JAGUAR XK120 FHC

to the front wheels. Many examples can be heavy, but set up well and on good tyres there's nothing unpleasant about the way these cars steer. This one pulls better than a standard example, too, courtesy of upgrades performed during an engine rebuild in 2003. The gearbox is precise, with overdrive operating on top to ensure cruise worthy of a cross-Europe blast in chase of Mr Goldfinger's Silver Ghost. Driven against an earlier DB2/4, you really get an idea of the sort of benefit that can come from a combination of racing experience and gradual evolution; this car feels far more polished than its predecessors ever did. Long-legged, yet quick, sporting yet docile, when viewed against the period alternatives this is a hard car to beat.

## CONCLUSION

If I had been a late-1950s government agent in need of a sporting coupe, this choice would have been difficult, and it's easy to see why the optional extras fitted to the Aston Martin were the things which ultimately swayed 007 in favour of the DB MkIII. The Jaguar is equally good, though it would certainly have appealed to a different type of customer when new given that it was a far less expensive car when it was new. When the average manual worker earned under £500 per year a difference of almost three times that figure means that while the Jaguar might just about have been an achievable dream, even a secondhand Aston Martin would have been well beyond the means of the working and middle classes.

Today, the proportional difference hasn't changed, with a good Aston Martin like the car we have on test valued at the equivalent of two Jaguars plus change. But if you have the money to spend on a car like this, the DB MkIII really does offer a more complete package. The Jag is a superlative classic, but when you assess the two alongside each other it becomes apparent that the Aston Martin is a more thoroughly refined product.

We'd understand if the XK120 were to be more to your tastes, but the DB MkIII wins it for us. **AMD**

● *Thanks to: Runnymede Motor Company – the Aston Martin is still for sale, while the Jaguar featured has unfortunately sold.*









# MARKET TRENDS:

WORDS:  
JEFF RUGGLES

## AT SIXES AND SEVENS

One makes for an affordable way into Aston ownership, the other is an established icon. We look at how the DB6 and DB7 are performing on the market, with an eye on the future.

### DB7 (1994-2004)

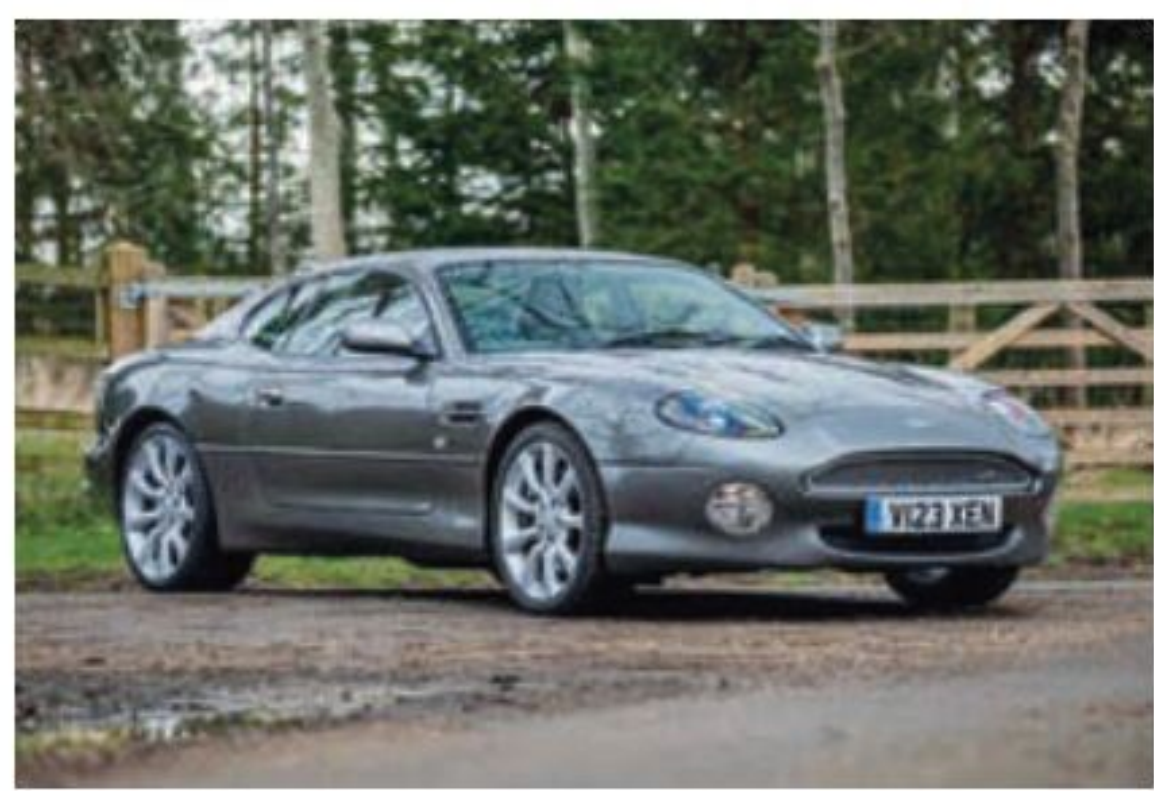
The cachet of having the famous Aston Martin badge on your pride and joy is usually accompanied with a premium price tag, but there is a way to get to get hold of car wearing those famous wings for around the same money as a second-hand Fiesta. It just so happens that it saved the brand from almost certain extinction too – step forward the DB7. Granted, the DB7 was built on a diet of bits from across the portfolio of then-parent company Ford.

#### SEEN AT AUCTION:

##### ■ 2003 DB7 GT

One of only 76 right-hand drive examples of the 435bhp V12 DB7 GT, this 2003 car presented well in Solway Grey Mica and had recently been treated to a thorough recommissioning.

The 73,000-mile example sold at Silverstone Auction's March 2022 season opener for a hammer price of £31,275.



The underpinnings are Jaguar XJS, the rear lights come from a Mazda 323 and the interior makes for a great game of spot the Granada part, but the DB7 belied all that to become one of the most effective parts bin designs of all time. This was manifest in the initial engine choice too; the 3.2-litre AJ6 was of Jaguar stock, but supercharged to develop 335bhp. What's more, it was all wrapped in a package of lavish trim and an attractive monocoque body that still looks the part today.

Following the 1994 launch, the DB7 range expanded with the Volante convertible in 1996 and then the V12 Vantage model in 1999. The six-cylinder cars also saw the end of the line in 1999, with the rare uprated GT (manual) and GTA (automatic) versions of the V12 launched in October 2002. Finally, 99 Zagato-bodied DB7s were made in 2003, but are now mostly in the hands of ardent Aston collectors.

Currently, DB7 values are beginning to rebound after a gradual fall since the middle of the decade and a more significant drop for 2020. Five years ago, a 3.2 coupe automatic hovered at £22,000-£24,000 for a tidy example and £35,000 for the best, with the cheapest cars around £14,000-£16,000 – a modest drop on the £17,000-£18,000 in 2015. However, in 2020 we saw cars as cheap as £11,000 at auction. However, similar cars are now at £15,000, with a good, useable car £20,000 and an

#### SEEN AT AUCTION:

##### ■ 1996 DB7 3.2 manual

This very tidy 1996 3.2 car is a good example of what can be had for under £20,000. A desirable manual in Cheviot Red, it had been subject to much expenditure and had only covered 69,000 miles. It sold on the hammer at SWVA in Poole last October for £18,300.



exceptional one £25,000. Rarer manuals tend to be worth about 15 per cent more.

As for the 3.2 Volante, the pattern is much the same but up to 30 per cent higher. Five years ago a high-miler might have cost you £25,000, but £17,000 was enough two years ago. Now you'll be pushing beyond £20,000, with the best examples at £30,000 and above.

The V12 Vantage similarly experienced a low point in 2020, with more sub £20,000 cars at auction than any other year and none above £40,000. That's in contrast to 2017, when a high-miler was £22,000 and the best examples £45,000. Now, the entry point is back over £20,000 and nicer cars pushing are



# DB6 (1965-1970)

**W**hile it's true to say the DB6 was a predecessor for the DB7, that would be to ignore a gap of 23 years and a whole lot of water under the bridge. And while the DB7 is the cheapest route into Aston ownership, you'll need much deeper pockets if you want a DB6 on your driveway.

Launched in 1965, the DB6 was the first model to be totally engineered at the new works in Newport Pagnell. It carried on the styling traits from its DB4 and DB5 forebears, with the successful 4-litre six-pot engine carried over from the latter, but with a trendy 'Kamm tail' rear end to aid high-speed stability and upset the purists. A longer wheelbase and a higher roofline meant space for four proper seats, and with the options of air-conditioning and an automatic gearbox, the DB6 was much more in the grand tourer mould than previous models. Nevertheless, it outperformed both the DB4 and DB5 in terms of sales, managing almost 1800 before it was discontinued in 1970. The optional Vantage specification saw triple Weber 45DCOE carbs fitted in place of

pushing towards £40,000 again. The V12 Voltante enjoys a premium over the coupe, but at around 15 per cent the difference hasn't been quite as marked as that between the tin-top and open-top V6 cars.

You can add more to the budget again for the 435bhp GT, though we have seen a couple of GTAs for sub-£25,000 at auction. Special editions also command a premium, and as for the rare Zagato, you'll need to find around £250,000 for a good one and over £300,000 for the best.

For the more achievable models, news of a recovery in values bodes well for collectors. And as the poorer cars become uneconomical to repair, a good one could be a shrewd investment. Just be sure to do your homework before buying. **AMD**

## SEEN AT AUCTION:

### ■ 1969 DB6 Mk2

Another rare Mk2 but this time in automatic flavour, this 1969 car sold by Historics in 2020 had been subject to a no expense spared restoration. At £310,000 it was right at the top end of its pre-sale estimate and performed exceptionally well for a non-Vantage car.



the triple SUs and other minor revisions to raise power from 282bhp to 325bhp. A year after launch, the first ever car to wear the Volante name appeared with an open-topped version of the DB6. However, only 140 were built, and of those just 29 were Vantages. A Mk2 version would arrive in late 1969, identifiable by lightly flared wheelarch lips to accommodate wider wheels and tyres, plus standard power steering and the option of electronic fuel injection – a first on a British car. At the turn of the previous decade, a serviceable DB6 coupe was available for around £110,000-£120,000, but nowadays that's only good for a project in need of expensive restoration work. The peak seemed to come during 2015-2017, with immaculate cars pushing £400,000 and one eclipsing £450,000. However, values on the whole are now higher than they were at that time. Over the last seven years cars have been consistently auctioned for £200,000, but the number of cars pushing towards £300,000 was much higher in 2021 than it's ever been, with a peak of £331,875 at Silverstone Auctions last March.

As you may expect, the Vantage commands a premium. Anything over £300,000 at auction in recent years has been a Vantage, with the exception of one immaculate Mk2 and another 1967 car converted to Vantage spec. For a Volante, you can reckon on doubling double the price of any other DB6, though we haven't quite seen the heights of 2014 and 2015 again, when a car sold by Silverstone

Auctions made a whopping £954,000. There's also the option of finding a shooting brake estate model. Six were initially built by Radford, with a further three by FLM Panelcraft. You can expect to pay handsomely if one ever makes it to market.

Investment potential? Well, it doesn't look as if the rises for the DB6 are over just yet, especially as the DB4 and DB5 continue to push on towards seven figures. And with Lunaz converting a limited run of DB6s to electric for in excess of £750,000, the model's exposure – and subsequently demand for it – is likely to increase. **AMD**

## SEEN AT AUCTION:

### ■ 1970 DB6 Vantage

One of only 71 Mk2s in Vantage spec and complete with a factory-fitted manual gearbox, this 1970 car sold by Silverstone Auctions last March represented one of the most desirable DB6 combinations. It was a cherished example with a traceable history, and sold for £331,875.





MOTORSPORT

# How Aston Martin is Strolling to Formula 1 success...



**W**hen it was announced at the start of 2020 that Lawrence Stroll had bought a 25% stake of Aston Martin, the doors to top-level motorsport were flung open wide.

It wasn't the Canadian's first rodeo, after all. His money had come through high-end fashion brands such as Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger, but his life was already dedicated to an automotive

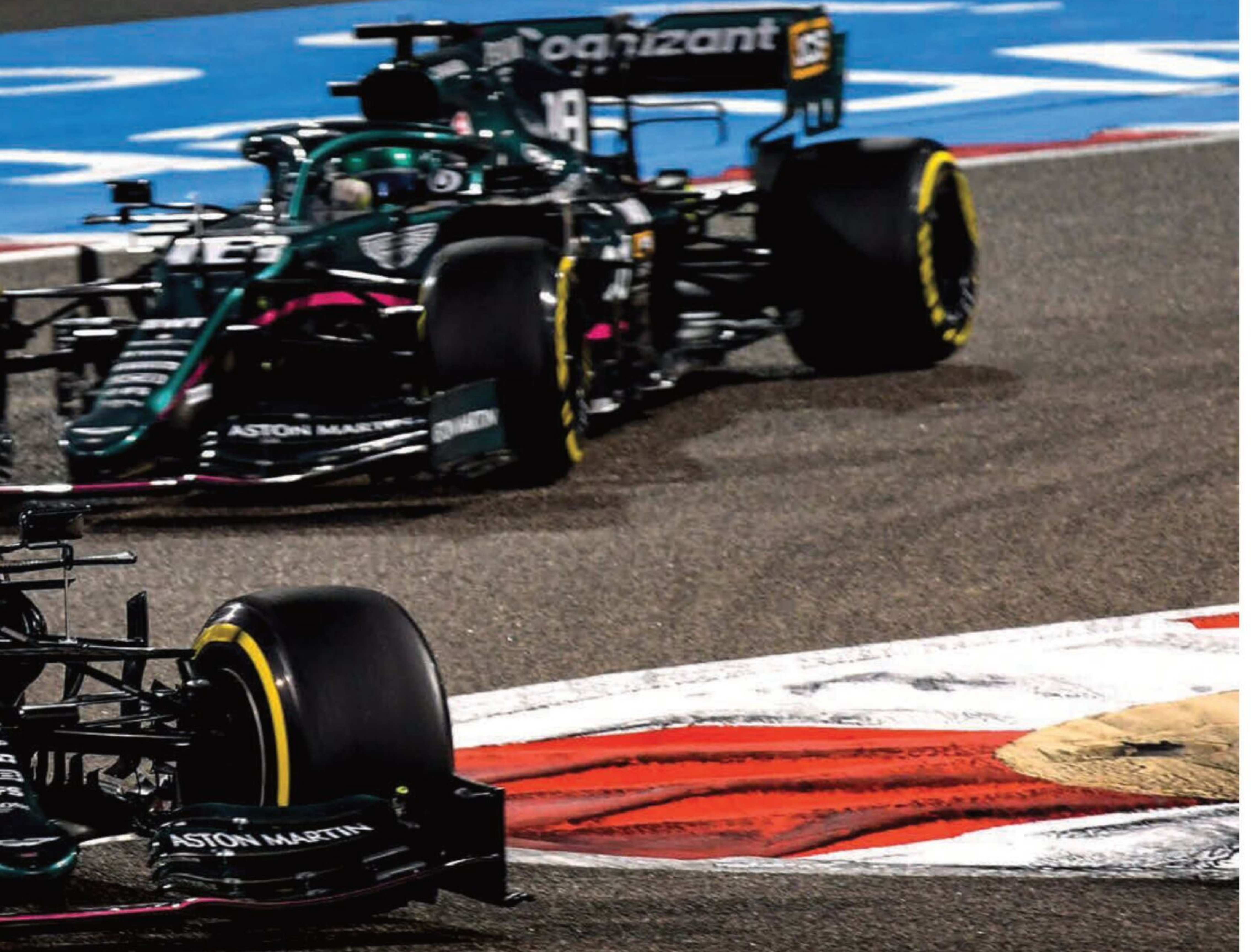
passion which seemed to inflate as much as his billions in the bank. A Ferrari fan, he used to own the main Ferrari dealer in Canada, based in Quebec – the now 62-year-old has a collection of race Italian machines which is reported to be worth up to £140 million. He also owns and operates the challenging Mont Tremblant circuit in his homeland too.

Allied to that existing passion, there was another reason for Stroll to turn his attentions to motorsport, and particularly to Formula 1.

Lawrence's son Lance had begun on the nursery slopes of motorsport in karting when he was 10 years old in 2008. Three successive single-seater championship titles in Italian Formula 4, the Toyota Racing Series and the F3 European Championship – where he beat the likes of Mercedes F1 racer George Russell and new Alfa Romeo grand prix recruit Guanyu Zhou – marked Lance out as a up-and-comer. Formula 1 beckoned, and Stroll Jr inked a deal to join Williams in 2017.



# Matt James looks at the prospects for the classic British name on the grand prix grid



The stars were about to align for the Strolls as Lawrence led a consortium to take over the Force India Formula 1 team in the late summer of 2018. Force India could trace its roots back to the original Jordan Grand Prix team in 1991. It was an underdog, relying on clever brainpower and ingenuity ahead of deep pockets: well, at least until Stroll took the helm and renamed it Racing Point. Stroll Junior joined Sergio Perez on the driving strength. ▶





## MOTORSPORT

### F1

Stroll Sr wasn't done yet and, along with a consortium of investors – including JCB chairman Anthony Bamford and some high-rollers in the fashion world – he had his sights set even higher: Aston Martin. The firm had been through a rough time, but the ship had steadied with Prodrive's David Richards at the helm with some Middle Eastern financial clout.

Share owners have, in recent times, included Ford and Mercedes and even Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff on a personal basis. But when Stroll Sr walked in the door to take over a 16.7% stake valued at £182 million at the start of 2020, he brought with him a cash injection of £318 million to help Aston Martin revamp its line-up.

As well as now giving him road-car building clout, and it also made sense for him to use the famous motorsport name to brand his Formula 1 operation. It was a perfect match: a high-profile name back on the grand prix grid and an ambitious team to uphold its honour.

Sportscar racing had been Aston Martin's playground, with GT class success being the target. Between 2006 and 2020, using the DBR9 and the Vantage GTE, it claimed five divisional successes at Le Mans. Sportscar racing is embracing a new Hypercar era and Aston Martin's Valkyrie model is a perfect fit. After some initial reluctance, it appears that the machine will be seen on the La Sarthe Tarmac in the future.

But the option to move into Formula 1 was unmissable. Lawrence Stroll set out some very clear objectives when the cars, which were refreshed in as-near-to British Racing Green as it could manage, were first revealed. Gaining the signature of four-time World champion Sebastian Vettel to partner Lance in the cockpit was also one of his first statements of intent.

The new team boss, brimming with pride, said: "A brand with the pedigree and history of Aston Martin needs to be competing at the highest level of motorsport. I think it's the most exciting thing that's happened in recent memory in Formula 1 and it's incredibly exciting for all stakeholders in the sport, especially the fans. I can't think of a better name for a Formula 1 team."

And he was also keen to point out that

the impetus of the grand prix team would help the road-car arm too. "Not only does Formula 1 help elevate the brand, it opens up the opportunity for technology crossover," added Stroll Sr. "I'm incredibly excited to see what technology can filter down from the racing programme into the road cars. This will be particularly relevant for the mid-engine road cars that will be launched in the future. There will be a genuine collaboration to ensure that our road cars share the DNA of our success on the track as well.

"Like every other business I own, my goal is to win and winning in Formula 1 means world championships and that is what we are striving for," he said. "Of course, we all know that success in Formula 1 doesn't come overnight. It takes years to have the right people, the right tools and the right processes in place. But we are building and investing in our team with the ambition to move up the grid year-after-year, and the ultimate ambition is to win a World championship. I have not made a significant investment in this company not to be fighting for a title, so we are going to do whatever it takes within the rules. It might take four, five or six years, but we are in a good place."

In truth, any place would have been a good place compared to Aston Martin's first foray into grand prix racing in 1959. Aston Martin had a glorious record of success in sportscars. It had taken an outright win in the World Sportscar Championship in 1957 at the Nurburgring with the DBR1 with Tony Brookes and Noel Cunningham-Reid at the wheel and it repeated the feat a year later in Germany with Stirling Moss and Jack Brabham driving. Long distance racing was the priority and it was all-out attack in 1959 as Roy Salvadori and Carroll Shelby took a victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours and the British firm secured the World Sportscar crown – then run only for manufacturers.

Formula 1 was on Aston Martin's radar and it created the straight-six powered DBR4. It had originally been penned in 1957 but the sportscar distractions meant it didn't enter the Formula 1 World championship until 1959. Already outmoded, Shelby and Salvadori had taken a knife to a gunfight and didn't secure a single point across their eight



Vat, auelum diissili  
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grands prix starts. The DBR4 was quietly retired and that chapter in Aston's motorsport history was left shut.

Things were very different when the brand and its ambitious new owner appeared on the grid for the opening Formula race of 2020 in Bahrain in late-March.

The AMR21 was a direct evolution of its Racing Point predecessor – which, itself, had come under attack from rival teams for being nothing more than a “copy” of

the all-conquering Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas. Design work was led by British technical director Andrew Green at its Silverstone base and the car proved solid and functional rather than ultimately fast, but it was always going to be a season of transition.

There were highlights, such as Vettel's second place finish in the chaotic and crash-strewn Azerbaijan Grand Prix in early June. Seventh place in the F1 Constructors' points chase marked a drop off in performance from where Racing Point had been, but all eyes were already focused on 2022.

Formula 1 has gone through a root-and-branch change in its regulations ahead of this season, meaning even the most successful teams have had to hit to hit the reset button. Downforce levels have been slashed and aero efficiency will mostly now come from underneath the cars rather than the complex and intricate wings. It is a move designed to increase overtaking and ramp up the grand prix show.

The initial signs for Aston Martin, Vettel and Stroll Jr look good with the Mercedes-powered machine. It has taken a novel solution to cooling with a neat engine cover design, a move which was swiftly adopted by rival teams, and it features a prominent raised nose, which is designed to push the airflow under the car and create that all important downforce. It is something that has also been included in the design philosophy of Red Bull of reigning World champion Max Verstappen.

Not only that, there is a new HQ under construction at Silverstone to help push the F1 operation into the winner's circle, and team bosses have recently revealed that the squad is conducting a feasibility study into creating its own bespoke powerplant, rather than relying on Mercedes for motivation. New rules for powerplants come into play in 2026 and it would mark the perfect time for the switch.

These are the building blocks that Lawrence Stroll's deep pockets have begun to put in place, and they are the indicators of a team which is taking its vision to reach the top of Formula 1 very seriously indeed. **AMD**



FROM THE CLUBHOUSE

# AMOC, Old and Stuffy? Anything But!



**READER OFFER**  
AMOC Spring Concours 5th June 2022 Loseley Park, Guildford, Surrey  
Gain half price entry at the Members' advance fee of £10, simply show your copy of the magazine to entry stewards.



Image: Peter Yalden

Is your idea of the Aston Martin Owners Club (AMOC) a bunch of overweight, middle-aged men smoking cigars standing outside a stately home wearing penguin suits? Or is it a family group at a garden barbie in Australia? Or perhaps a field of racing cars from 1934 to Vantage GT4 thrashing around Silverstone? Or maybe some V8's, V12s and straight sixes enjoying the scenery (and the sound) of the Alps?

The reality is that the AMOC is the biggest single-marque car club in the world and one of the oldest. That means it has something for everybody... and you don't have to own an Aston Martin to be a member.

In fact, many members of the AMOC join to find out more about owning an Aston Martin - including the pitfalls! - before they take the plunge to buy one.

One of the beauties of the size, spread and history of the Club is that you can guarantee a member will have an answer for your question.

Which model to buy, the running costs, the upgrades, etc. All the answers will be at hand at local meetings, in the Club's monthly and quarterly publications and on the Club Forum.

## CASE STUDY 1: MARY ANTCLIFF

My husband and I were offered one year's membership of the AMOC when we bought our first Aston Martin in 2008. This was a DB9 LM, a special edition DB9 to celebrate Aston Martin's win at Le Mans in 2007 & 2008. The plan was to build 124 of the LM model to celebrate coming first in the 24-hours race.

The car that won at Le Mans in both years was numbered 009 and our car is numbered 009 of the 124 cars planned. Being a 009 we planned to give the car a special 2009 year.

We entered Concours and won Modern and Elite class and went on track days as far afield as Monza, Italy. We would (and still do) scour the AMOC publications for events going on around the country and if we were able, would attend events from Cornwall to Wales and from Scotland to East Anglia.

Some years later we bought a Pre-War Aston Martin and have since taken part in the AMOC Speed Series which is a great way to safely test the car to its full potential on racetracks.



Image: Paul Williams\*

With all the AMOC events we have attended, it doesn't matter whether you know anyone beforehand, you know you will be mixing with great people from all walks of life who have chosen to spend their money on such great cars.



Image: M. Antcliff



## CASE STUDY 2: FIONA CAVALLI

My late husband and I purchased a DB7 new in May 1996 to be our everyday wheels. I still own and love the DB7.

It was purchase of the car which prompted membership of the AMOC and after the death of my husband, I very much enjoyed the company of the members of Area 23 (Jersey).

Since returning to live in England some three years ago I have attended meetings with Area 20 (Devon & Cornwall) and will be joining other

members on the North Coast 500 Route in April this year with Area 4 (Somerset).

A highlight event for me was at the Wormsley Estate in 2017 to celebrate 25 years of the DB7. Cars from all over the UK and Europe of exceptional standard graced the field and Aston Martin dignitaries graced the stage. Even the weather gods were kind!

Friendships have been forged and happy memories to recall.



Image: F. Cavalli

If you've already taken the plunge, you'll know the joy of driving an Aston Martin. Sharing that joy with like-minded people brings a whole new world of experiences, opportunities and friendships. Not owning an Aston Martin is no barrier to enjoying the social side of the Club.

In recent months, the Club has run a variety of on-line and virtual events to keep the passion burning, despite restrictions imposed (for some reason that escapes me). Thankfully, the 2022 calendar's now filling up with Concours, race meetings, local tours, international tours, track days, stately home picnics... and yes, some black-tie dinners.

If you're still thinking about joining, why not 'try before you buy'? Whether or not you own an Aston Martin, all the worldwide areas will be happy to welcome you to a local social event so that you can meet the people and see what they're like. You'll certainly be made very welcome and, hopefully, that will convince you to stay a

## CASE STUDY 3: ANDREW FAWKES

I'd wanted an Aston Martin since being a small boy. In the late 1960s, the DB6 was the current model and the one that featured as drawings in the back of my schoolwork books when I should have been listening to the teacher!

When my savings started to suggest that the dream could become a reality, I joined the AMOC to find out more about what I was potentially letting myself in for. It was around this time that I discovered, despite the club's name, that you didn't need to own one to be a member of the Aston Martin Owners Club.

Luckily for me, as I joined, a long-standing member was looking to sell the car he bought in 1984... and soon the deal was done. It was reassuring to know the owner and to enjoy his support afterwards, including handing over parts he found in his garage months later.

Since then, our DB6 has starred in AMOC and other publications and some on-line videos. More importantly, it's taken us all over Europe and introduced us to new friends and experiences. That's the true value of these great cars.



## BENEFITS OF JOINING:

- Welcome pack.
- Monthly & quarterly Club publications.
- Enter world-class Concours.
- International Tours.
- Access to AMOC Forum.
- AMOC approved insurance scheme.
- Prestigious Club events & merchandise.

Members are welcome at any local event, anywhere in the world that includes, picnics, displays at stately homes and museums, tours etc.

All members are also supporters of the Aston Martin Heritage Trust which includes access to an amazing archive, artefacts collection and display at the AMHT Museum (free entry) plus their annual journal, 'Aston'.



# MEET THE EXPERTS

We visit Runnymede Motor Company, in Berkshire.

WORDS: Sam Skelton PHOTOGRAPHY: Peter Seabrook



**H**aving trained as a chartered surveyor, Martin Brewer fell into car sales by accident. He bought a Mini Cooper from a friend who was emigrating in 1968, and having made three weeks' wages from that single sale he realised that there was the potential to make money from his passion for cars. Having only traded in premium cars, Martin soon gravitated toward his dream – Aston Martins – with his fourth purchase in 1969; a DB MkIII purchase for £395. "I sold it for £550, spent £600 on a used DB4 and put a hole in the side of the piston," laughs Martin. Subsequently repaired and sold, that DB4 set the tone for a number of premium car sales over the next decade, both to the public and direct into the motor trade. Martin formed the Runnymede Motor Company in 1978, having purchased premises in Staines. When it came to naming his new company, he felt that the historic attraction of the Runnymede Fields might lend some

gravitas to what was rapidly becoming a Aston-Martin centred business.

"The Magna Carta was signed at the Runnymede Fields, and the Kennedy memorial is sited there. We thought that the Runnymede Motor Company sounded better than the Staines Motor Company, and having earned a solid reputation for delivering quality cars we took the name with us when we moved from Staines to Woking in 1984."

Runnymede Motor Company is now based in Burnham Beeches, Berkshire, just south of junction 2 on the M40 and in the centre of a 600 acre Site of Special Scientific Interest. It moved from Woking to Cookham Dene in Berkshire in 1989, and from there to its current location in 1992. Martin will typically have approximately 30 cars in stock, ranging from (at the time of our visit) a 1999 Daimler V8 to a DB2 racer. Customers are guaranteed a warm welcome, not only by Martin but by Enzo the dog.

Martin works with a dedicated team, including salesman Malcolm Gammack. Malcolm joined Runnymede in 1982 from Henlys, where his day to day trade had been in Jaguars. His passion not only for Aston Martin but for the Runnymede Motor Company has seen him move three times alongside the business, and he remains a key part of the company to this day.

There are always a couple of historic racers for sale at Runnymede, giving away one of Martin's other passions. He competes in historic motorsport, usually in a recreation of Aston Martin DP214, a ►







**Enzo the dog ensures a warm welcome to all guests.**



**Martin founded Runnymede in 1978.**





## MEET THE SPECIALIST

### RUNNYMEDE MOTOR COMPANY

Le Mans prototype sports car. Two were built, of which one survives – Martin's car is a replica based upon a 1962 DB4 GT chassis. Prior to this, he raced a DB5 Lightweight racer, and prior to that, several DB4s. "I raced a Mini early on, but from 1980 onwards I began to race Aston Martins. From 1987 I became more involved, and rallied a 1953 DB2/4 in Europe in 1989. I've raced other cars including a Jaguar E-type and an Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider, but I keep coming back to Astons. As well as the toolroom copy of DP214, I have a V8 in which I've competed."

From that first location in Staines Runnymede Motor Company has specialised in Aston Martins, a tradition followed to the present day. Of the 5000 cars Runnymede has sold in its 44 year history, a large proportion have been classic Astons, and clients can range from those new to the marque and seeking a DB7 through to seasoned collectors

in need of a DB2/4 to complete their collections.

"The DB7 market in particular has changed over the last decade," says Martin. "Eight to ten years ago, most DB7 buyers were looking for cars they could use every day, while today they're seen as weekend toys and collectibles. Right now, the six cylinder cars are more desirable and valuable than the V12s, and the interesting thing is that a good early DB7 can now be worth more than many DB9s. The DB7 is still our most popular model, even if the clientele has changed"

Changes in the global economy have also had a wider effect upon Aston Martin pricing, says Martin. "A number of cars were sold to investors in Kuwait during the 1990s and 2000s, and a lot of these cars are starting to return to market through auction houses. This is creating a glut in the market which is driving values down at present, though it's important to

remember that many of these cars will need extensive recommissioning to be usable. They may prove to be cheaper to buy, but more expensive in the long term. That's why we would always advise that buying from a specialist is wiser than buying from an auction, because you know that everything will have been rectified prior to retail and that you'll be buying a car that will work exactly as Aston Martin intended."

Typically Runnymede will have three or four Feltham-built Astons in stock at any time, along with numerous examples of Newport Pagnell cars and a handful of cars from the Gaydon era. Over time, the company has been heavily involved with the DB4, DB5 and DB6 series, and has carried out a number of restorations. This remains an occasional part of its business, though Runnymede is a sales-focused operation and project management of restorations is no longer central to the business model. **AMD**

*'Of the 5000 cars Runnymede has sold in its 44 year history, a large proportion have been classic Astons'...*



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# MODEL HISTORY: DB4

A new Italian suit, and a new British heart – thus beginning a new Grand Touring legacy for Aston Martin

**T**he problem of how to replace the DB2 and its variants had been considered by Aston Martin as long ago as 1952. The DB4 represented a sea change for Aston Martin; the car which replaced the DB Mark III dispensed with Frank Feeley's styling, introduced a new method of body construction and brought a new aluminium-alloy straight-six to the table. Said changes took several years to converge, but coalesced in 1954, when

Aston's chassis designer, Harold Beach, created a new perimeter frame with a Frank Feeley body; known as Design Project (DP) 114/2, its dowdy styling prompted talks with Touring of Milan, which had previously bodied a pair of DB2/4 'Spysders.'

1954 also saw a new chief designer arrive at Feltham – Polish-born Tadek Marek. Having joined Aston Martin from Aston, he was quickly put to work redesigning the Lagonda LB6 engine for use in the DB Mark III and the DBA was

the result; by 1955, the firm's new technical director, John Wyer, wanted a new engine to take the firm into the Sixties.

Upping capacity from the DBA's 2.9-litres was key; the RAC 'fiscal horsepower' era was finally drawing to a close, and Wyer, keen on using the new engine to race as well as power a new range of road cars, suggested an all-alloy 3.0-litre with enough 'stretch' to be enlarged to 3.5-litres, if needed.

Marek's initial design, now at 3.7-litres, used an iron block so large no foundry







DB4 GT Zagato offered revised bodywork.



Period advertising was ebullient.

could cast it. Alterations were hastily made to return the engine back to the aluminium alloy suggested by Wyer; with cast iron liners installed, the new unit, known as DP186, went racing in the DBR2 and showed it could win events punched out to 3.9-litres. Harold Beach, meanwhile, had returned from Touring of Italy with a new proposal; the Italians were prepared to style Aston's new car, but only if licenced Touring's 'Superleggera' construction method, which paired a steel platform chassis to a web of thin alloy tubes to carry the body panels of the car in question.



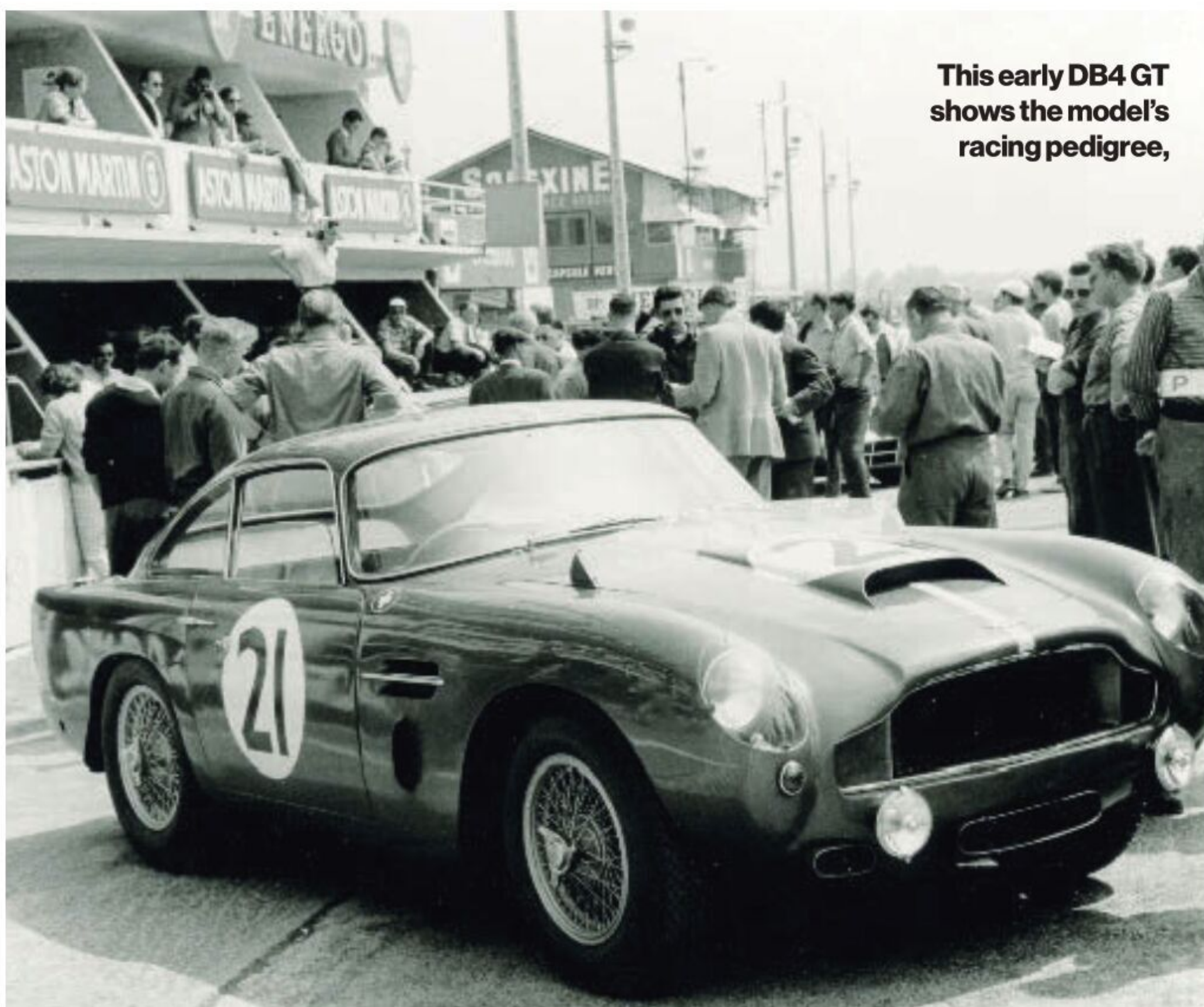
Interior a carry-on from the style of the DB MkIII

The decision was made to build bodies to this method in house at Newport Pagnell – after Beach had designed a platform chassis to take the Superleggera body penned by Touring's Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni and Federico Formenti. Jigs were duly delivered in course, and the first DB4 prototype, DP184, was completed in 1957. Marek's roadgoing six had been kept at 3.7-litres; with twin SU carburettors, the engine reliably generated 240bhp in DB2/4 Mark III test mules.

Following a positive reception from chairman David Brown, who drove the prototype for a week around Europe, the DB4 was nearing production – but overheating issues prompted a hasty redesign of the rear wings to incorporate vents. The bisected, rounded parallelograms, known as 'letter boxes' informally, became an Aston trademark.

Sadly, Harold Beach's beloved De Dion suspension had to go from the prototype; its final drive unit transmitted too much noise into the cabin and was replaced with a live axle located by a Watt's linkage and radius arms.

1958's London Motor Show was the first time in which the DB4 was revealed to the public – and a lengthy series of modifications began to improve the car. It was clear to Wyer that Beach had been cautious when designing the DB4's chassis; as a fast grand tourer, it had a ▶



This early DB4 GT shows the model's racing pedigree,



## MODEL HISTORY

### DB4

considerable margin built in that could be discarded should the only objective be racing. Thus, the DB4GT was born in 1959; production lasted until 1963. Such was its legacy, 'Continuation' cars, constructed by Aston Martin Works in 2017, continued the chassis ledger for a new group of collectors.

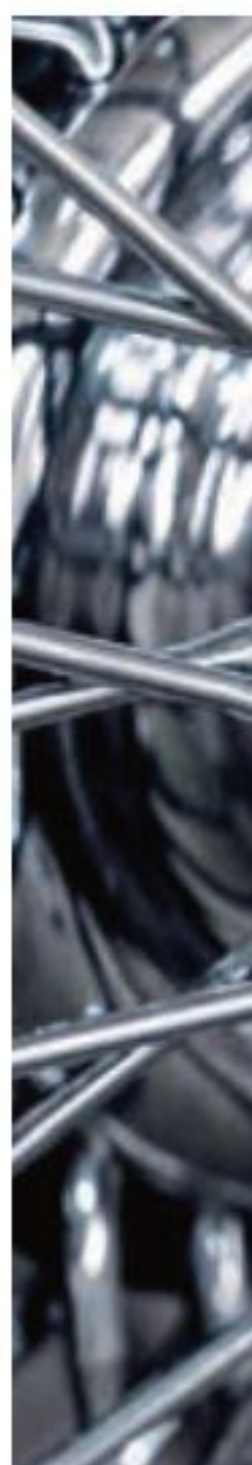
Zagato improved on the DB4GT even further in 1960, when its even lighter, Ercole Spada-penned, DB4GT Zagato stunned the world. Ferociously expensive, with just 19 units built, production was restarted twice with unallocated VINs – once in 1991 with the 'Sanction II' cars, and again in 2019 via Aston Martin Works.

1961 saw the unloved Lagonda Rapide make its debut; chairman, David Brown, keen to revive the Lagonda marque, finally saw a Harold Beach chassis utilise a De Dion rear end with an enlarged 4.0-litre variant of the Marek six. Unhappy Touring Superleggera styling, and the imposition of an automatic gearbox, meant the expensive upstart stood no chance against the Jaguar MkX. Series 3 DB4s got underway, and Bertone bodied a one-off car known as the 'Jet' for crowds at Geneva. Once again, Jaguar stole the show – this time with its E-type.

Convertible production ran between the six months of Series 3 production and the Series 4 cars arriving, which offered a range of higher performance options to customers. Few people took up the offer



Marek-designed six-cylinder.



## TIMELINE

**1958** DB4 Series 1 launched, with a new Tadek Marek straight-six engine, a new Frank Beach-designed chassis and a 'Superleggera' body designed by Touring of Italy.



**1959** DB4GT, a bodily lightened (by 190lb) shorter chassied (by five inches) DB4 intended for GT class racing, is revealed. Marek six fitted with twin plugs per pot and triple Weber carburetors; Stirling Moss takes a GT to Silverstone, where it wins its inaugural race.

**1960** DB4 Series 2 cars, with mechanical and trim improvements, go on sale. DB4GT Zagato unveiled at Earls Court; an even lighter, more powerful variant of the DB4GT, styled by Ercole Spada, its high price was its downfall. 19 were produced in period, but four 'Sanction II' cars, using unallocated chassis numbers, were produced in 1991.

**1961** DB4 Series 3 cars released; built for only six months, improvements were mostly mechanical, but the GT engine was listed as an option for the first time. Bertone produce a specially bodied DB4, the 'Jet'; overshadowed by the launch of the Jaguar E-type at Geneva, it remained a one-off.





of the twin-plug, triple Weber, 300bhp GT engine, but it was an option with the Series 3. Series 4 cars upped the ante again: Special Series and Vantage engines became available, along with special dampers, close ratio gearboxes, and cowled headlamps that caused confusion with the later Series 5 cars (and the DB5 that followed).

DB4 production ended with a slow run down of 134 cars, built between September 1962 and June 1963. Some major changes, many of them previewing the DB5, came in. A lengthened, taller body meant more room for passengers – but it also increased weight, which prompted the installation of Special Series engines as standard. Cowled headlamps were also fitted, setting out the stall for the new DB5 now waiting in the wings. **AMD**



**DB4 convertible let the sun in.**

Lagonda Rapide revives the dormant marque, also incorporated into the David Brown empire. 3.7-litre six taken out to 4.0-litres. Automatic only, and based on a stretched Harold Beech DB4 chassis, the body was styled by Touring but it proved too expensive to provide any challenge to the Jaguar MkX.



Series 4 DB4s begin production in September; performance options increase markedly for the standard DB4; Vantage and Special Series engines are offered for the first time, along with Armstrong Selectaride dampers, a close ratio gearbox and cowled headlamps latterly associated with the DB5. Convertible released spanning Series 3 and Series 4 production; 70 produced in total.

**1962** Lengthened, heavier Series 5 cars launched to provide more interior space; Special Series engines now fitted as standard to overcome the extra bulk. Fewest saloons built of all series at 134.

**1963** DB4GT production ends alongside the DB4 Series 5, which is slowly phased out in favour of the DB5.



Note: All “series” terminology is the work of the AMOC. Factory records do not delineate between early and late models in the same manner,





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# NEXT ISSUE:

ON SALE  
1 JULY 2022

## DRIVEN: ASTONS DBX

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## DBS SUPERLEGGERA

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## ASTON MARTIN DB7



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## ASTON MARTIN LAGONDA



**1988, £105,950.** F Aston Martin Lagonda Series 4. Finished in Coniston Sand (one of only 5 manufactured in this colour), with glass sunroof to the rear and Parchment interior with contrasting Dark Brown piping, Beige carpets and Walnut veneers. Please call 02085 679729, London. (T)

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**2013, 23,000 miles, £74,995.** Petrol, automatic, grey, stunning low mileage. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

## ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE S



**2016, 21,000 miles, £69,995.** V8 Roadster. Petrol, automatic, Casino Royale. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

## ASTON MARTIN DB9



**2006, 33,000, £40,995.** V12, petrol, automatic, onyx black. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)



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### ASTON MARTIN DB& VANTAGE VOLANTE



**2003, 58,999 miles, £34,995.** Petrol, automatic, solent silver. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE V8



**2013, 49,000 miles, £34,995.** Petrol, automatic, grey, stunning low mileage. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

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### ASTON DB9 V12



**2007, 54,500 miles, £34,995.** Petrol, automatic, onyx black. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB7 i6 VOLANTE



**1998, 60,000 miles, £32,995.** Petrol, automatic, Buckingham green. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB7 i6



**1998, 57,500 miles, £29,995.** Petrol, automatic, Pentland green. Please call 01798 874477, Sussex. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB2



**1955, £140,000.** Aston Martin DB 2/4 Mk1 completely restored in original Moonbeam Grey with red leather interior. Period upgrade include 4Litre Vantage engine, 5 speed gear box, disc brakes, etc. In current ownership for past 42 years. Please call 01483 486379, South East. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB4



**1960, £549,995.** An outstanding Series II Aston Martin DB4. The body is exceptional, the paintwork is pristine, chrome work outstanding and the engine bay first class. The interior has a wonderful high-quality yet aged feel to it, everything works correctly and on the road this Aston Martin DB4 Series II is quite simply outstanding. Please call 01944 758000, London. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB6



**1967, £299,995.** DB6 manual coupe. Red with black interior. Good history and low (relative) mileage. Service history will follow but the car is fully serviced by Oselli with 12 month's MoT. Please call 01993 849610, South East. (T)

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### ASTON MARTIN DB7



**£279,000.** The DB7 Zagato was introduced at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in August 2002 and later shown at the Paris Motor Show the following October. Please call 01993 849610, South East. (T)



# VIEWPOINT



Future editor Paul Walton explains his passion for Aston Martin

If you're a regular reader of Kelsey Publishing's other titles, you may recognise my mugshot from Jaguar World, the long-established title about that other great British marque. As my home for the past decade, it might come as a bigger surprise to find me here than if Lance Stroll signs for Ferrari.

Yet I'm just as fanatical about Aston Martin as I am about Jaguar, a 35-year-long passion that stems from seeing a certain celluloid spy driving one, but not the film or the model you'd expect.

As a child of the Seventies, it was Timothy Dalton's V8 Vantage from 1987's *The Living Daylights* rather than the more familiar DB5 from the Sean Connery era that made the biggest impression on me. A rarity everywhere but more so in my native North Yorkshire, I don't think I'd seen one before. But when I watched Bond in that darkened cinema use the grey coupe to steamroller his way across Czechoslovakia and then Austria, I reckoned it was the most stunning car I'd ever seen.

My feelings were validated when I was allowed to sit in the actual Vantage – or at least a good replica – at a motoring event later the same year. As the 14-year old me soaked in the view, noticed all of the interior's wonderful details and inhaled the Connolly leather's rich, aromatic aroma, it was a significant moment for my future vocation.

No matter the title I initially worked for after becoming a motoring journalist in 1999, I always tried to write about the marque as often as possible. A few

highlights from the last 23 years include a night time cruise through London's west end in a rare V8 Zagato (pictured), taking a DB2/4 to Le Mans and driving a DB7 GT to several European racetracks. I also make no apologies for using my editorial powers to occasionally include Aston Martins in Jaguar World, most recently when I compared a DB6 with an E-type Series 14.2 for the Spring 2022 issue. So when I was asked to become editor of *Aston Martin Driver* from issue three it was a genuine honour and the fulfilment of a long held ambition to

write more about this long-respected company and its thrilling cars.

And so from the earliest pre wars models to the current range, from the fabulously decadent William Towns-designed Lagonda to the company's long and distinguished racing career, I'm looking forward to exploring all of Aston Martin's diverse history with you.

And yes, having never managed to drive one in the 20-odd years I've been messing around with cars for a living, you can no doubt expect a V8 Vantage too. **AMD**





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## ASTON MARTIN IN THE THAMES VALLEY



**1952 Aston Martin DB2 Le Mans.** Lightweight finished in Aston Racing green with beautiful original dark green leather and tartan bucket seats. This car is very well known in Aston circles as it is extremely close in specification to the Aston Martin Team cars that competed at Le Mans in the 1950's. It has been extensively raced in recent years at The Le Mans Classic and The Royal Automobile Woodcote Trophy Race and is in the process of being made race ready for the next owner. It is fitted with the correct matching numbers 2600cc engine with a steel crankshaft and rods, breathing through correct triple Webber carburettors. It was carefully rebuilt about 20 years ago with alloy bulkhead and alloy inner wings giving a considerable weight saving and has very recently been the subject of a complete repaint with replacement window frames and new Perspex to all of the relevant windows. It has the benefit of HTP/FIA papers through to the end of 2026, making it eligible for numerous high-profile events. This is an extremely rare opportunity to acquire a very rare and desirable 50's race car that is already accepted by the organisers of numerous prestigious events. It is of course also eligible for the Mille Miglia. **£275,000**



**1958 Aston Martin DB MkIII.** Superbly finished in Original Elusive blue with Crimson Vaumol hide interior and a pale grey headlining. This is a motor car that has been exceptionally well looked after by Steve Farthing of Wren Classics on a "Cost no object" basis. It has matching numbers including its original registration number also has the benefit of numerous recognised mechanical and suspension improvements all carried out during the last 10,000 miles. The engine was completely rebuilt in 2003 using modern forged pistons with new cylinder liners and stainless-steel valve gear and the cylinder head was upgraded to run on unleaded fuel. There is also a noticeable increase in power over a standard car. The gearbox is 4 speed with overdrive and the suspension benefits from Andron aircraft standard components. The spec also includes and electric cooling fan, Aeroquip brake hoses, upgraded steering box, a stainless-steel exhaust and perfect chrome wire wheels. **£275,000**



**1960 Aston Martin DB4.** Professionally upgraded to DB4GT specification using an original Left-Hand Drive DB4 as the donor and now virtually indistinguishable from an original. The car is registered in France, so no duties are payable for European buyers. In 1991 the body of the car was shortened to DB4GT specification by Aston Martin specialists. Bodylines of Olney and the receipt for this work is within the car file. This car has been completely restored over the past 6 years regardless of cost and has included a back to metal repaint, a full engine rebuild to 4.2 litre and the addition of a 12 plug cylinder head by Oselli Engineering and the gear box has been rebuilt by BPA. It has a correct long range fuel tank, Borrani 16" wire wheels, correct GT seats and frameless windows, a full suspension rebuild and the steering and braking systems all fully rebuilt. The interior has been fully re-trimmed using Connelly Vaumol hides and best quality Wilton carpet throughout. Unrepeatable value. **£650,000**



**1966 Aston Martin DB5.** Finished in Deep Navy blue with black hide interior. Just out from a £20,000 cosmetic upgrade with a now perfect paint finish and much of the interior trim having been replaced. It has new Chrome wire wheels with Avon Turbospeed radial tyres and combined with the Harvey Bailey handling kit and a degree of negative camber, the road holding is superb. Owned by the current owner for nearly 30 years and during his ownership, maintenance of the car has been entrusted to Nigel Barker at Davron Engineering with recent paintwork by Mitchells Coachworks. It has not been a cosseted garage queen but has been regularly used and impeccably maintained throughout. This car instantly impresses by the way in which it performs and it becomes immediately obvious that the engine has increased power compared to a standard DB5. It has five speed ZF manual transmission which has a smooth operation and is working perfectly. Not overpriced and well worth viewing. **£595,000**



**1997 Aston Martin Virage (Wide Bodied) Volante.** Finished in Oxford Blue with Cream hide interior piped in blue with best quality Wilton carpet throughout, complimented with high gloss Walnut veneered dash and door cappings. This beautiful two owner motor car has been owned by the second since the car was only one-year old and has covered only 22,000 miles from new. It is fitted with freshly refurbished OZ wide alloy wheels and has a dark blue mohair electric soft top and a cream leather hood cover for use when the hood is lowered. The specification includes heated electric seats, fully adjustable steering column, electric mirrors and an Alpine Hifi system with CD facility. It has a comprehensive service history and all of the service stamps are from officially appointed Aston Martin agents. The car has remained unused since 2017 and was in need of recommissioning, all of which was undertaken by R.S. Williams in January 2021 which amounted to just over £21,000. In addition we have organised the refurbishment of the wheels and supplied 2 new rear tyres at a further cost of around £3,600. Within the history file are detailed invoices that correspond with the service stamps. Only 233 Virage Volante's were ever produced but this car is much rarer with the 6.3 cosmetic upgrade carried out when new by "Works Service". This is a great opportunity to acquire a low mileage, low ownership rare motor car with excellent provenance at what we consider is below market price. Not to be missed. **£79,950**



**1966 Aston Martin DB6.** Finished in a delightful shade of Opalescent silver blue with an improved bespoke interior in a contrasting pale grey with dark blue piping and best quality dark blue Wilton carpet throughout. This is an exceptionally well-kept example that comes with an equally well-kept history file that was assembled by Richard Williams when the car was sold by RSW back in 2000 to the penultimate owner. In October 2014, RSW were also responsible for selling it to the most recent owner after a thorough preparation all of which is recorded in the file. The condition of this car is typical of the RSW standard of finish and within the history file is all of the paperwork that one would expect to accompany a car of this standard. There is also an Aston Martin Factory build sheet describing the specification of the car together with the early servicing carried out by the factory. At only 4234 miles in January 1967 the engine was replaced, presumably free of charge. It has had only 3 previous owners and from the file it is obvious that they have all been incredibly diligent with regular maintenance and improvements. In 1989 it was entrusted to Southern Classics who are also renowned for excellent workmanship for a complete, back to metal repaint and at some point in the 90's it was completely re-trimmed. All of the above has resulted in a beautifully kept Aston that is a delight to drive. Very realistically priced. **£255,000**



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