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‘Brightling’

Despite its 10.95mm height, the Trident C60 Pro 300 ‘Lumiére’ leaps from your wrist. (Just like it jumped off this page.) Its brightness results from proudly protruding indices and the logo they encircle. Featuring facets finely machined to tolerances of 0.03mm, these mini-monoliths are super-legible in daylight. But it’s the Globolight®, the unique luminous ceramic from which they’re hewn, that produces their astounding, super-brilliance at night. And inspired this timepiece’s name. The light show doesn’t end there. Carved from titanium, the 41mm case incorporates a second sapphire crystal displaying its super-accurate movement. But it’s not the back of this beautiful tool watch you’re buying into. Is it?

Do your research

Christopher Ward

christopherward.com

ASTON MARTIN *driver*

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ENJOY THE SIMPLE LIFE

"EVERYTHING SHOULD be made as simple as possible," said the famed theoretical physicist Albert Einstein once, "but not simpler." That certainly should be the case with Aston Martin's often-confusing model history. Not only have there only been a handful of model names used throughout the post-war period but since many of Aston Martin's cars stayed in production for decades at a time, it resulted in several often-complicated updates. Even Einstein would find it difficult to understand their convoluted history.

Take the car that started life in 1967 as the DBS but ended 22 years later as the fifth version of the AMV8. Or how since the Fifties, the Vantage name can either mean a faster version of an existing car or a model in its own right. All of this makes the famous E=mc2 equation easier to follow.

So, from its pre-war cars to the new Valour, the rare 'DB1' to the current DB12 and the 1972 Vantage to the 2020 Vantage (see what I mean?), our 40-page guide in this issue of Aston Martin Driver aims to simplify the history of each production model, explaining their specification, updates and where they fit in the company's history.

Or put another way, it's Aston Martin's long history but made as simple as possible.

Paul Walton
Editor

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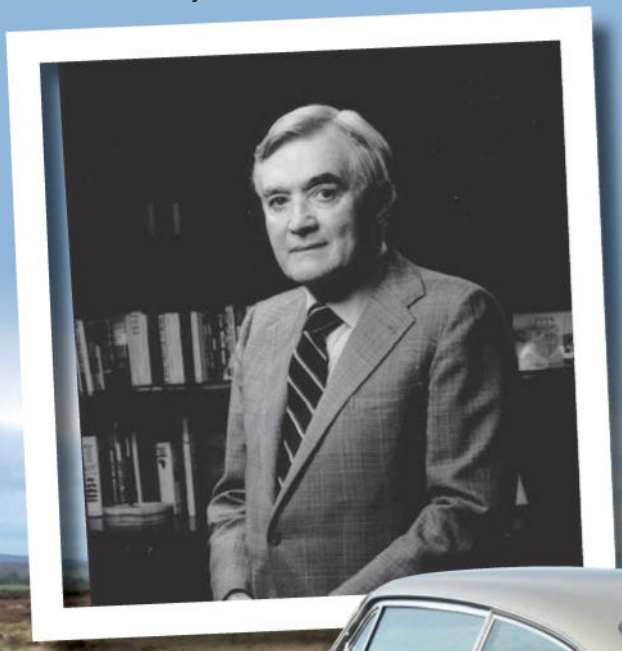

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UP FRONT NEWS

VANQUISH IN VENICE

An apt event to launch the new Vanquish was at the Venice International Film Festival where Bond star Daniel Craig could be found

Amidst the starlit backdrop of the Venice International Film Festival, Aston Martin unveiled its highly anticipated new Vanquish on the waters of the Venetian Lagoon.

In the year that Aston Martin celebrates the 60th anniversary of its iconic association with the James Bond films, stars of cinema in attendance included Bond actor Daniel Craig.

Vanquish completes Aston Martin's portfolio of the next generation of front-engine sports cars, capping one of the most intensive periods of product development in the company's rich 111-year history. It follows on from the successful launches of DB12 in May 2023 (revealed on the eve of the amfAR Gala Cannes) and Vantage in February 2024, launched on the same day as Aston Martin's 2024 Formula One® car, at the home of British motorsport, Silverstone.

Revealed by Aston Martin Aramco Formula One® Team drivers Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso just 24 hours after the chequered flag at the Italian Grand Prix, the Vanquish launch further solidifies Aston Martin's connectivity between road and track, and the brand's ambition to be the leading force in high performance.

Lawrence Stroll, executive chairman of Aston Martin, said, "The arrival of Vanquish is a seminal moment for Aston Martin, completing the newest and strongest portfolio in our segment and reinforcing our ultra-luxury positioning.

"This launch toasts the renaissance of our iconic brand and the unique combination of timeless design, craft mastery and engineering innovation which defines our new generation of sports cars. Our flagship product, Vanquish embodies our commitment to both ultra-luxury and high performance, bringing Aston Martin to a new generation of drivers."

Vanquish will be Aston Martin's highest performance sports car in its core product line-up, and its most exclusive, with production limited to no greater than 1,000 examples per year. Unique in this portfolio, Vanquish is the sole model to feature a bespoke Aston Martin-developed 5.2 litre V12 twin-turbocharged engine that will produce 824bhp at the flywheel with 1,000Nm of torque resulting in a 0-60mph time of 3.2 seconds and a top speed of 214mph.

The bodywork consists of an extruded bonded aluminium body structure with carbon fibre and composite panels. The suspension follows a proven formula, with wishbones, coil springs and an anti-rollbar at the front, and a multi-link set up at the rear, also with coil springs and an anti-rollbar. Bilstein DTX adaptive dampers are fitted all round. The power-assisted steering (electric and variable) offers 2.27 turns lock to lock. Five selectable driving modes (wet, sport, sports plus, track and individual) tweak the steering, dampers and the drivetrain (a rear-mounted eight speed automatic gearbox with an electronic differential).

Revived for the first time since 2018, this will be the third generation of the Vanquish.

Fernando Alonso (left) and Lance Stroll (right) attended the launch of the all-new Vanquish straight after the Italian Grand Prix

NEWEY'S RACE

Adrian Newey will officially take up his new position at Aston Martin in March 2025

New Aston Martin technical partner Adrian Newey, who was confirmed as a recruit to the Silverstone-based team, says he will have to work fast to catch up with rivals on the development of the 2026 machine, reports Matt James.

Formula 1's rules will undergo a significant overhaul in two years' time and the precise format of the new regulations will not be made available until January 2025. Newey, who will also become a shareholder of the Aston F1 team, is on gardening leave from Red Bull and will not take up his new position until March.

Newey has joined on what is reported to be a £30million deal with the Lawrence Stroll-owned team. He visited the team's new headquarters, the AMR Technology Campus, earlier this year and is said to have been impressed with what he saw. However, the timescale of his move means he will have at least eight weeks less than rival designers to work out the 2026 regulations.

Speaking at the announcement of his new role last week, Newey said, "It will be a case of getting myself up to speed as quickly as possible, and just as importantly getting to know everyone here as quickly as possible, and how we get the best out of each other. They [the new rules] are an opportunity. Whether we will be able to capitalise on that, we just don't know. I don't spend too long fretting on these things. Just get on and do the best we can."

Newey has traditionally helped teams hit the ground running as the rules are reworked. He said that the infrastructure that has been put in place by Lawrence Stroll has given him the confidence that the team will be a frontrunner in the future. Aston performed strongly in 2023 with Fernando Alonso finishing fourth in the drivers' standings and the team wrapping up fifth in the constructors' chase, but the squad has struggled with the AMR24 this term.

Newey said, "I have been hugely inspired and impressed by the passion and commitment that Lawrence brings to everything he is involved with. Lawrence is determined to create a world-beating team. He is the only majority team owner who is actively engaged in the sport. His commitment is demonstrated in the development of the new AMR Technology Campus and wind tunnel at Silverstone, which are not only state of the art but have a layout that creates a great environment to work in.

"[They] have all the key pieces of infrastructure needed to make Aston Martin a world championship-winning team and I am very much looking forward to helping reach that goal."

Team owner Stroll said that the financial outlay for Newey was value-for-money compared to the benefits the chassis, which will be powered by a factory Honda powerplant from 2026, can gain.

The Canadian said, "[Signing Newey] is the biggest story since the Aston Martin name returned to the sport and another demonstration of our ambition to build a Formula 1 team capable of fighting for world championships. As soon as Adrian became available, we knew we had to make it happen. Our initial conversations confirmed that there was a shared desire to collaborate in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Adrian is a racer and one of the most competitive people I have ever met. When he saw what we have built at Silverstone – our incredible AMR Technology Campus, the talented group of people we have assembled and the latest wind tunnel in the sport – he quickly understood what we are trying to achieve. We mean business – and so does he."

SUSTAINABLE ALUMINIUM AWARD

Aston Martin's ambition to continually improve the sustainability of its supply chain has been boosted by the award of £6million of UK government funding for an innovative project supporting the development of lightweight, sustainable aluminium castings for Aston Martin vehicles of the future.

Awarded through the Advanced Propulsion Centre UK (APC) following a competitive process, the government grant will support Project PIVOT, a collaborative five-partner research and development project led by Coventry-based aluminium supplier Sarginsons. Supported by Aston Martin, the project seeks to revolutionise the global casting industry through overhauling the design, weight, carbon emissions and production of cast aluminium, allowing the adoption of 100 percent recycled content.

This is another positive step in Aston Martin's sustainability strategy 'Racing. Green.' which incorporates efforts to improve the environmental impact of the company's supply chain. In August this year, Aston Martin formally joined Drive Sustainability, a partnership of 16 automotive manufacturers working together to improve the social, ethical, and environmental performance of automotive supply chains, facilitated by CSR Europe. Aston Martin is developing alternatives to the internal combustion engine as part of its blended powertrain approach that will see the introduction of plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles, the first of which, Valhalla, is targeted to enter full production later this year before commencing delivery in 2025.

SPY OCTANE: THE VEHICLES OF JAMES BOND

17th September 2024 marked the 60th anniversary of the premiere of Goldfinger, the most iconic James Bond film of all time. Celebrating this landmark moment, Porter Press International has announced its forthcoming book: Spy Octane: The Vehicles of James Bond.

The gadget-laden Aston Martin DB5 became the film's iconic four-wheeled star. Yet this, the first of three volumes, reveals that it was one of more than 100 vehicles to feature in the James Bond movies produced by EON Productions, the longest-running film franchise in cinema history. Every one of these vehicles, which has propelled not just 007 but his allies and foes through the air, land and sea, will be explored in fascinating detail.

A must for Bond fans and followers worldwide, Spy Octane, written by acclaimed Bond historians Matthew Field and Ajay Chowdhury, presents for the first time the definitive, in-depth captivating story of each and every one of these vehicles – and much more besides.

This unofficial but authoritative companion draws upon hundreds of exclusive interviews with the filmmakers, actors, stunt drivers, motor industry executives, museum curators and private vehicle owners, as well as countless motoring and entertainment periodicals, books, magazines and unpublished material. Volume one covers the first golden era of James when Sean Connery's portrayal of Ian Fleming's super spy became a global phenomenon.

Lavishly illustrated with over 1,000 period photographs and more, the 432-page hardback, Spy Octane: The Vehicles of James Bond – Volume 1, will be available in early November at the RRP of £99.00.

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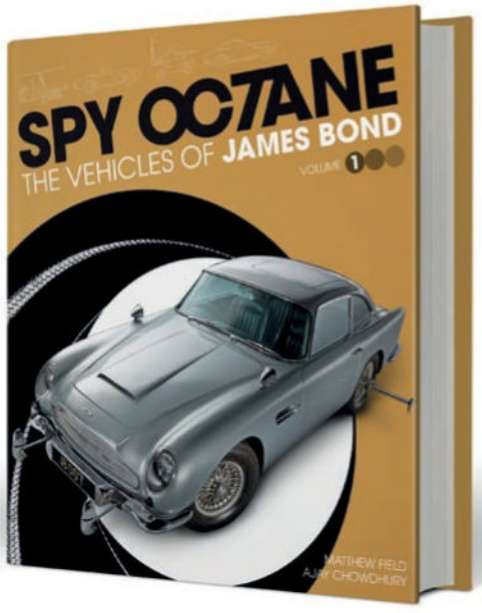

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DIAGNOSTICS FOR MODERN ASTONS

Independent Aston Martin specialist, McGurk Performance, now has the official diagnostic equipment that caters for all of the latest models from 2018 onwards, which is known as AMDS2 (Aston Martin Diagnostic System).

So, whether it's a full service requiring the resetting of a service light, diagnosing why the engine management light has appeared on the dashboard display, or recalibrating driver aids (eg. lane assist) on a new or nearly new Aston Martin, McGurk Performance can now deal with this type of dealer-level work on models including the 4.0 Vantage, DB11, DBS Superleggera, DBX and DB12.

For further details, call McGurk Performance on 01926 691000 or visit their website at mcgurk.com.

MULTIPURPOSE FINGER RATCHETS

New from Laser Tools is this multi-head ratchet spanner set (part number 8872), which includes a flexible-headed spanner handle and 12 interchangeable 72-tooth ratchet ring spanner heads ranging from 8mm to 19mm.

Each bi-hex (12-point) ratchet ring can handle a maximum torque load of 150Nm (110lb.ft), and the spanner handle is manufactured from heat-treated chrome vanadium (50BV30) with a chrome-plated finish for longevity. Supplied in a mounting tray that can be hung on a workshop wall, placed in a toolbox tray, or secured to a workbench. Expect to pay around £60.

Contact: The Tool Academy
Tel: 01623 555512
Web: www.thetoolacademy.com

THE FORGOTTEN PROJECT RACERS

Whilst the DBR1 is best-known for the David Brown era of Aston Martin's successful racing career, less has been said about four GT-styled race cars that were built between 1962 and 1963 (a DP212, two DP214s and a DP215). Derived from the DB4 and developed into ever more lightweight and pure-bred racing cars, they competed with mixed success in only eight major events. They gained a notable victory in Monza in 1963, winning the Coppa Inter-Europa, and beating Ferrari's iconic GTO on its home ground.

Although they were few in number, they played a crucial role in spurring the progress of GT cars globally, not least at Ferrari which was quick to recognise them as a threat and responded accordingly.

Despite these achievements, and their impact on the development of motorsport, these project cars, the last of the David Brown racing team, have been significantly under-represented in motor racing literature. Until now with this new book, *The Aston Martin Project GT Racing Cars*, which brings these truly great cars out from the shadows to acknowledge and celebrate their influence and legacy.

Aston Martin historian, Stephen Archer, and motor sport writer, David Tremayne, explore in-depth this seminal period of motor sport history, which includes Aston's final racing years. Featuring over 400 pages and containing over 400 images, there's a foreword by Peter Sutcliffe, driver of DP214 at Le Mans in 1964. Available in various hardback limited editions, with prices starting at £750.

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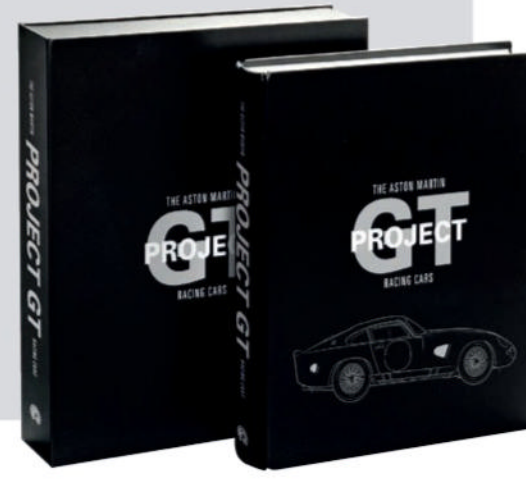

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GARRY TAYLOR

NEW FORD CAPRI – VANQUISHED

YOU HAVE not picked up by mistake Ford Driver. I may be presumptuous, but I am guessing you may have read about the new Ford Capri being an electric crossover SUV. I think I can say with confidence it has nothing whatsoever in common to the original Ford Capri, that two-door coupe with questionable dynamics, which looked the business. The Capri name still has an emotional connection even if it is rose-tinted.

So, bolting on a Capri moniker on the SUV rear hatch was never going to go down well, but it worked previously for Ford with the Mustang SUV, so what could go wrong? A lot it seems. Social media and elsewhere were ablaze with negative comments mainly from those remembering the original Capri and criticising Ford for plundering its heritage for a cynical marketing exercise. No matter, Ford are attracting the modern buyer and not those of a certain vintage, but surely those high up in Dearborn cannot be totally sold on bad publicity is better than none. I cannot ever recall such a negative reception for a new car.

Car names are clearly sensitive to some and resurrecting one from the past must be done with a delicate touch. Around the same period as the Capri announcement, another name from the past returned, this time from Aston Martin, namely, the Vanquish.

The original production Vanquish was shown at the 2001 Geneva Salon. This was a flagship car, the king of the hill, if you like. A staggering car with a no-nonsense nameplate. Aston do not often use names for their models, and at first, the Vanquish name did raise some eyebrows, but the dictionary definition is 'defeat thoroughly'. The car proved its purpose and the Vanquish name was accepted and revered ever since.

Production ceased in 2007, but the name lived on again from 2012 as a flagship of what was a resculpting of the DB9 and DBS. A very fine car with a lot of re-engineering on the VH platform and engine, but there was a feeling that was it really worthy of a Vanquish badge? A slight whiff of marauding a respected name for marketing purposes.

The original production Vanquish was shown at the 2001 Geneva Salon. This was a flagship car

That car eventually ceased production and the Vanquish name was parked to one side, until the 2019 Geneva Salon where former Aston Martin CEO Dr Andy Palmer announced the Vanquish name would return as a core production mid-engine supercar, with a 3-litre twin turbo hybrid. A Vanquish Vision Concept was shown. That car now will not see the light of day, and no matter whether it would have been sensational or not, there was a general unease of using Vanquish again on a mid-engine V6 when the much-loved ancestor was a front-engine V12. Again, a slight aroma.

Comfort is now restored with the announcement of the new Vanquish V12 and the word on the street is that it is truly ballistic and clearly will again defeat all thoroughly with its presence and energy. A name is back where it should be. Ford take note.

As well as being a lifelong advocate of the brand, Garry is currently a trustee of the Aston Martin Heritage Trust (www.amht.org.uk)

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RUPERT KEYZAR

BOND DB5 FOR SALE

LEGENDS ALWAYS have to start from somewhere. To replace his ageing Bentley in Goldfinger, a new car was assigned to James Bond – an Aston Martin DB5 with various, non-factory options fitted. To say it caught the attention of the public is an understatement and a half. Ejector seat? Machine guns? Tyre scythes? You must be joking.

Thus, the DB5 became 'the Bond car'. After Goldfinger and Thunderball, it went on various promotional tours until it was returned to Aston Martin to be sold as a standard DB5.

It was now 1968 and my father, Gavin Keyzar, really wanted a DB5. He contacted Fred Hartley at Newport Pagnell after looking at a few others, including one that belonged to famed photographer David Bailey. As it happens, they did have one that might be in his budget. One that had also been in the recent James Bond films. So, the next day he went up to Newport Pagnell to see it, made an offer of £1,800 and bought it on the spot. And on a fine summer's evening, he collected it from Aston Martin's London showroom in Piccadilly.

Because of its life as the Bond car, there were quite a few imperfections and so it was cheaper than the other DB5s for sale then. In fact, he had to take it back to Newport Pagnell under warranty twice. The car was delivered with the now famous BMT 216A numberplate, even though it had already been pre-sold to Anthony Bamford of JCB. Bamford then registered it to one of the two promotional DB5s he was buying. But, for a few months, BMT 216A was seen roaming the streets, schools and shops around Chislehurst in Kent. Eventually, it was replaced with 6633 PP.

It is still believed the interior was in black leather. It wasn't. It was in a medium to dark grey. I'm afraid all those DB5s that have been restored to 'Bond' specification are wrong, so trimmers may now have a sudden surge in work. Another interesting feature is that this car – chassis number DP/216 – was the only DB5 made (that I know of) to have front wing repeaters.

So, the next day he went up to Newport Pagnell to see it, made an offer of £1,800 and bought it on the spot

When one of the promotional cars went up for sale in 1970, it was being advertised as THE James Bond car. So, knowing he had the original, my father decided to have the gadgets remade. With the help of some respected engineering and coach-building firms in Kent, along with his electrical engineer brother Mike, the James Bond magic was restored.

For two years, the car was on the market, but amazingly with not much interest. Even what is now the Beaulieu Motor Museum said it wasn't for them, replying, "there wouldn't be sufficient interest in it by the public to warrant its purchase." Funny how times change. However, in 1972, the car was finally sold to Utah-based jeweller Richard Losee and then to Anthony Pugliese III of Florida, from whom it was later stolen. Where did it end up? Well, who knows...

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2007 Aston Martin DB9 Stock#17138

This 2007 Aston Martin DB9 featured with 75,686 miles on the odometer and finished in Meteorite Silver beautifully complemented with a Red interior. This exquisite supercar is a true embodiment of luxury and performance, boasting a sleek and timeless design that is sure to turn heads wherever it goes. Equipped with a paddle-shifted automatic transmission, 6.0-liter V12 engine, power steering, brake calipers with “Aston Martin” script, dual exhaust outlet, steering wheel with mounted controls, “DB9” badging, 19-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels, and Michelin tires. Notably, this particular model features unique hood vents and fender vents, adding a touch of sportiness to its already captivating appearance. Additional convenience features include air conditioning, power-adjustable exterior mirrors, electrically adjustable front seats, power windows, cruise control, navigation system, drink holders, a glove box, courtesy lights, AM/FM radio, and sun visors with vanity mirrors. The clean CARFAX report shows a history in the dry desert state of Nevada and sunny California, further adding to the desirability of this vehicle. British sports cars are constantly rising in value and this is an excellent opportunity to acquire this hand-built Aston Martin DB9 that is mechanically sound. For $34,750

1969 Aston Martin DBS Left-Hand-Drive #17138

Introducing this 1969 Aston Martin DBS Left-Hand-Drive featured with matching numbers. Finished in White complemented by its chrome trim and blue interior. Embodying the epitome of British automotive craftsmanship and style. Powered by a 3,995cc inline-six cylinder engine and a 3-speed automatic transmission. Equipped with power steering, triple carburetors, factory air conditioning, Webasto sunroof, 4-wheel disc brakes, dual exhaust outlets, Smiths instrumentation, Lucas branded fog lights, quad headlamps, chrome bumpers, three-spoke steering wheel, rocker switches, 15-inch wire wheels, Firestone tires, and a full-size spare tire fitted in the trunk. Step inside the cabin, you?ll bee greeted with comfortable bucket seating with headrests, and Sparksomatic radio. Featured amenities include dual-side rearview mirrors for maximum visibility, glove compartment with map light, sun visors, analog clock, and a fender-mounted antenna. While this British classic has been in long-term dry storage as part of a private collection, it is currently not running and will require mechanical recommissioning. This presents a unique opportunity for the discerning buyer to revive this classic beauty to its former glory and experience the thrill of driving a true automotive legend. For $59,950

2000 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage V12 #17138

Introducing this 2000 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage V12 featured with 45,654 miles on the odometer. Finished in Black complemented with a Grey and Black interior. Equipped with an automatic transmission, V12 engine, 4-wheel disc brakes, brake calipers with “Aston Martin” script, dual exhaust outlet, “DB7 Vantage” badging, Bridgestone Potenza tires, and 18-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels. Convenience features include air conditioning, power-adjustable exterior mirrors, Alpine radio, 4-spoke steering wheel, center console, and sun visors with a vanity mirror on the passenger side. This particular example of the DB7 Vantage comes with an owner’s manual, receipt copies, and a clean CARFAX report, providing peace of mind to prospective buyers. British sports cars are constantly rising in value and this is an excellent opportunity to acquire this well-equipped Aston Martin DB7 V12 that is mechanically sound. For $24,750

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ROB HAWKINS
FOUR-DOOR ASTONS

WHILST ASTON Martin has a reputation for producing some of the world's finest sports cars, it has occasionally dabbled in models with four doors. Who can forget the wedgy-looking William Towns-designed four-door Lagonda, which was launched in 1976, with deliveries commencing in 1979 and production ending in 1990. A mere 645 sales over 11 years doesn't sound like much, but each one took a colossal 2,200 hours to assemble, and when you consider that Aston's entire sales amounted to 1,855 between 1982 and 1992, the four-door Lagonda made quite an impact.

The Rapide, which was produced between 2010 and 2020, revived the old Lagonda name from the Thirties and Sixties. This V12-powered four-door sports saloon topped over 3,000 sales in its various guises (base model, S and AMR), demonstrating that customers were out there who wanted a high-performance luxury vehicle that could accommodate a family.

So perhaps there is the market for a four-door sports saloon from Aston Martin, but is there the need to have a sports utility vehicle (SUV) or something that takes its styling from the 4x4 market?

The current trend towards SUVs certainly makes sense for Aston Martin to make one of these, but as a luxury high-performance model? It seems to have worked for Porsche with their Macan and Cayenne.

I think the finger can be pointed at the Range Rover as to why SUVs have become so popular. This model and the subsequent Evoque and Velar (and even the new Defender and Discovery) have helped to make the desire for a Chelsea tractor acceptable. The Range Rover was once the choice of vehicle for the landed gentry, offering luxury motoring with impeccable off-road capability. Mercedes came close with its G-Wagon and then everyone followed suit, with less emphasis on the off-road capability.

So is Aston Martin's DBX pitched at the right market? As far as SUVs are concerned, it certainly has the right image for a luxury model from Aston Martin. The styling retains the familiar cavernous Aston front grille, whereas from the rear it looks like a typical SUV. Only the familiar Aston Martin badge and lettering give the game away. And neat touches such as the curvaceous rear light lenses that blend into the waistline spoiler add a touch of class to a vehicle that could otherwise be easily mistaken for a larger Vauxhall Mokka.

Most manufacturers wouldn't entertain the idea of making a supercar, but Aston Martin has succeeded

That's my main problem with SUVs and their association with Aston Martin. Almost every car manufacturer offers some form of SUV, so why join in? And Garry Taylor's column on page 13 outlines how it can go horribly wrong.

Most car manufacturers wouldn't entertain the idea of making a supercar, but Aston Martin has succeeded in this field, so why not stick to what you are good at?

I think I can be proven wrong on many counts, and I have to simply accept that times are changing. SUVs are fast becoming the new family cars, so the need to have an ultra-luxury, high-performance brand is inevitable, and Aston Martin is one manufacturer that can fulfil this. Had they instead stuck with a four-door saloon, then that could have easily been more disastrous than simply following the fashion.

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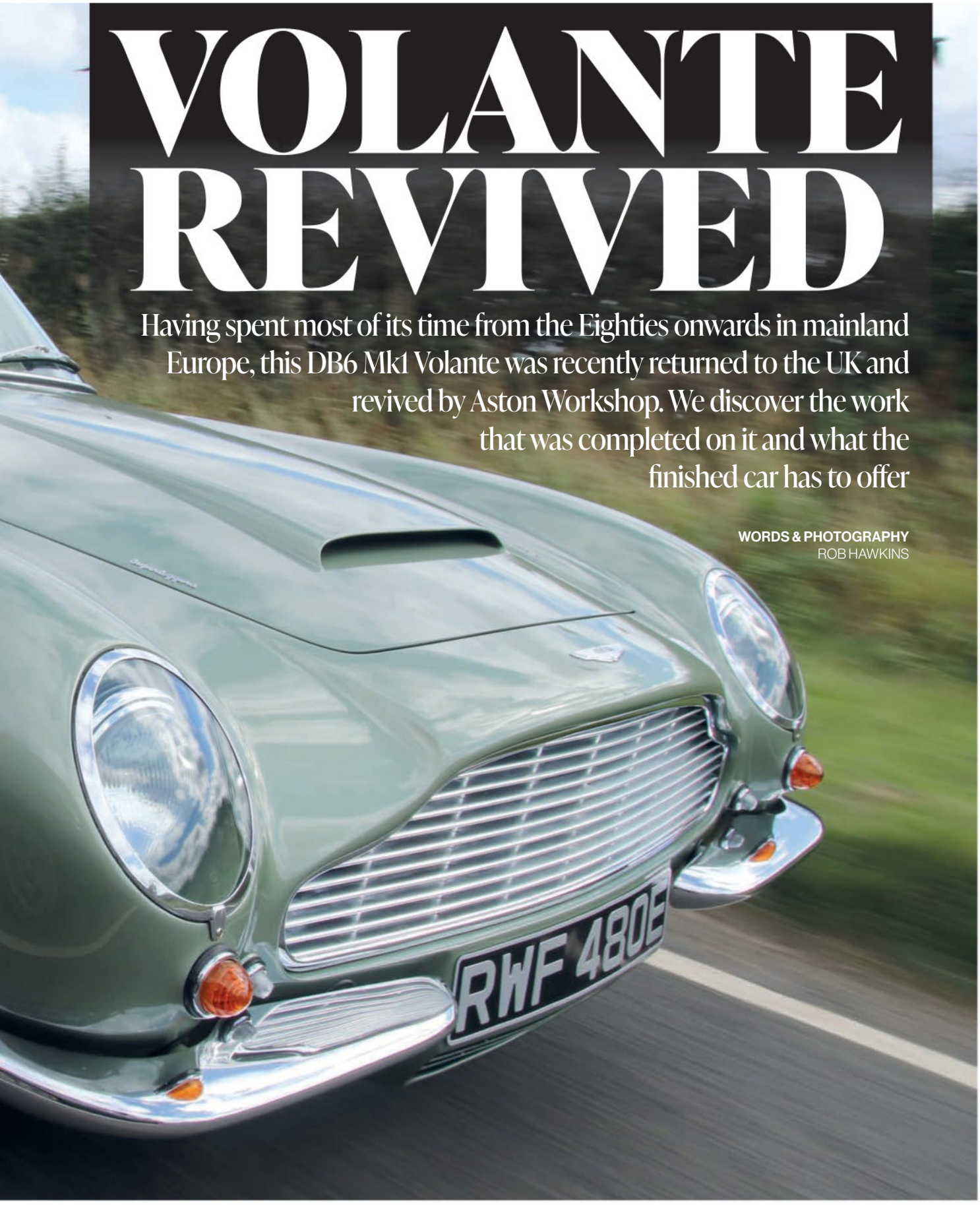
VOLANTE REVIVED

Having spent most of its time from the Eighties onwards in mainland Europe, this DB6 Mk1 Volante was recently returned to the UK and revived by Aston Workshop. We discover the work that was completed on it and what the finished car has to offer

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
ROB HAWKINS



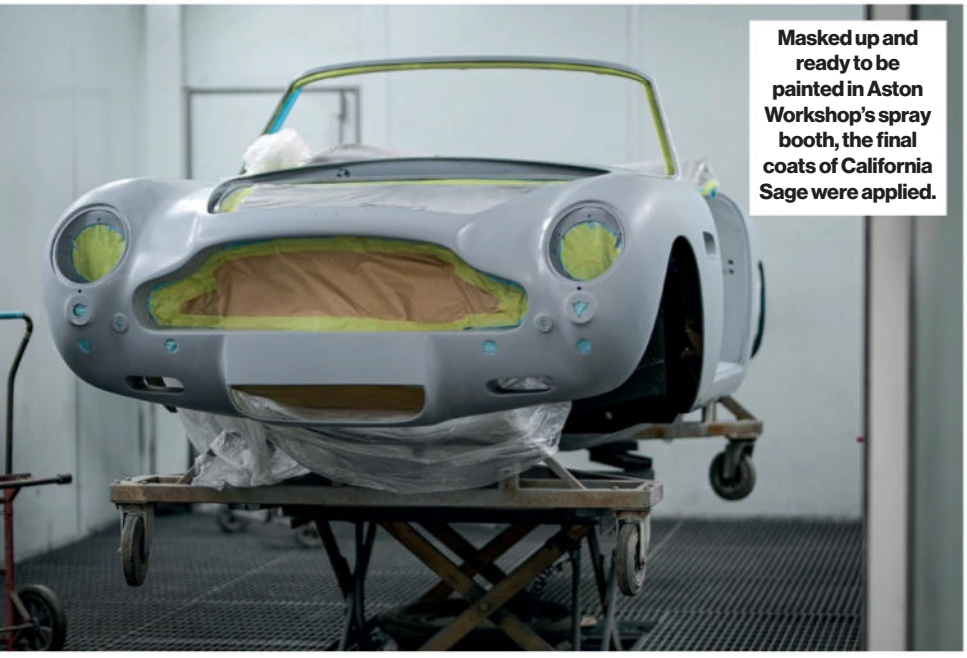
AS WE head along the country lanes surrounding Aston Workshop in County Durham, sitting comfortably in the DB6 Mk1 Volante seen here, it's easy to forget that this car is 57 years old. Its suspension soaks up the undulations in the tarmac to the point that there's a noticeable lack of scuttle-shake, and just as impressive is the performance from the 3,995cc straight-six twin-cam engine that's fed by three Weber carburettors. A small degree of mechanical sympathy is required to operate the five-speed manual gearbox, but it has synchromesh in all gears, so it's only in the interests of preservation that you don't select first gear when moving. The brakes and steering are both power assisted, but of course they are not to the same level as a modern vehicle.

This is arguably a usable classic, albeit limited to anyone who can spare £599,950 to buy one of these rare, iconic Astons.

There are more surprises in store when we return to Aston Workshop to close the hood. It's electro-mechanically operated with only the three catches along the top of the windscreen that need to be manually locked (or unlocked when folding the hood down).

Delivered to its first owner in Kensington Palace Gardens, London on the 11 February 1967, this DB6 Mk1 Volante originally had a Sierra Blue exterior paint finish, a grey interior with a matching grey hood and was equipped with an automatic gearbox, power steering, an electric-operated aerial, chrome wire wheels and a limited-slip differential with a 3.54:1 final drive ratio.

Getting to the stage of a primer'd bodyshell took several weeks, then to the final paint and reassembly took just as long.



Masked up and ready to be painted in Aston Workshop's spray booth, the final coats of California Sage were applied.

From what Aston Workshop has discovered, it appears that its first owner kept the car until May 1980 when he sold it to a gentleman based in Lyon, France. "The third owner was also French but it seems he moved to Switzerland at some point during his ownership of the DB6," they explain. "The fourth owner was also based in Switzerland, having purchased the car on the 14 January 2002. There is a further invoice from 2006 from a 'Sammy Garage', a restoration company based in Geneva, prior to the car being exported from Switzerland." At some point during this time, it's assumed its Borg-Warner gearbox was changed for the current ZF five-speed manual transmission.

During the past 10 years, this Aston was housed in various private collections, before arriving at Aston Workshop. "Soon after its arrival to the North East

From what Aston Workshop has discovered, it appears that its first owner kept the car until May 1980

[of England] the decision was made to carry out an extensive restoration to the car, starting with a full strip and assessment of its condition," explains Jack Noble at Aston Workshop. "The body was stripped back to bare metal to allow for a colour change to California Sage."

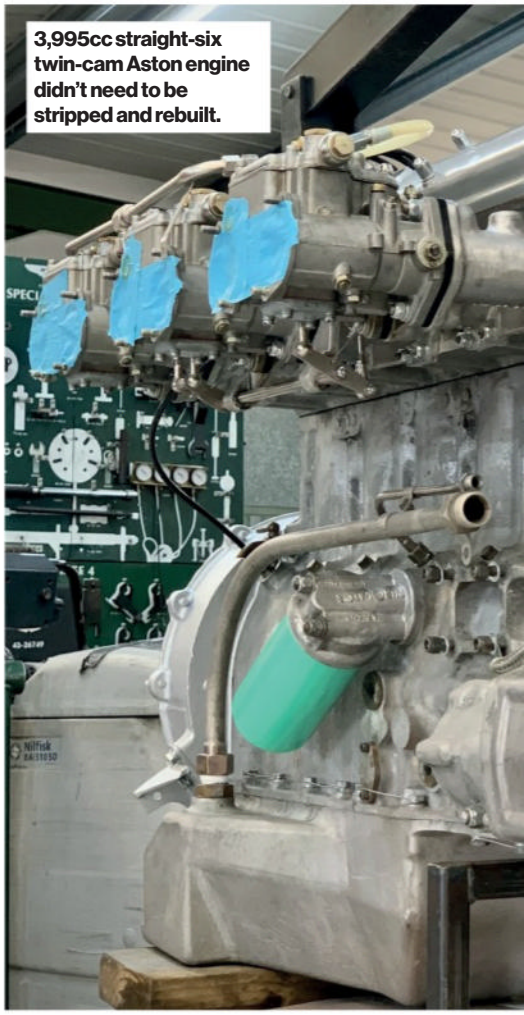
The DB6's bodywork consists of three major components. There's an outer skin of aluminium, which is largely non-structural, apart from the outer sills. Under this aluminium outer layer, there's a steel framework, which became famous during the Sixties, when it was introduced, for its semi-spaceframe structure (known as Superleggera, which is Italian for superlight). And the final component is a substantial steel chassis, which incorporates the inner sills, floors and bulkheads.

So, when Aston Workshop recalls having stripped the bodywork back to bare metal, all of the mechanical components were also removed from it, enabling an assessment of the steel and aluminium. Typical rot spots on the DB6 include the jacking points, outriggers, floors (including the boot floor) and sills (steel inner sills and the aforementioned aluminium outer sills). There's plenty of hidden steel as well, such as inside the aluminium clad doors, where there's a steel framework.

Some repairs to the steel chassis are possible in most cases without the need to remove all of the aluminium outer bodywork, such as replacing the steel inner sills and fitting replacement floor panels. The aluminium bodywork is pretty much wrapped around the chassis and Superleggera framework, so it's not as straightforward as it sounds to remove it. Cutting off sections of the bodywork is often the easier approach to repairing parts of the chassis or the framework. This can be as simple as removing an outer door skin to repair the framework inside (the door bottoms are known to corrode), or as complex as removing an entire front end (look out for a DB5 Vantage restoration feature in the next issue of AMD, which shows how this is done).

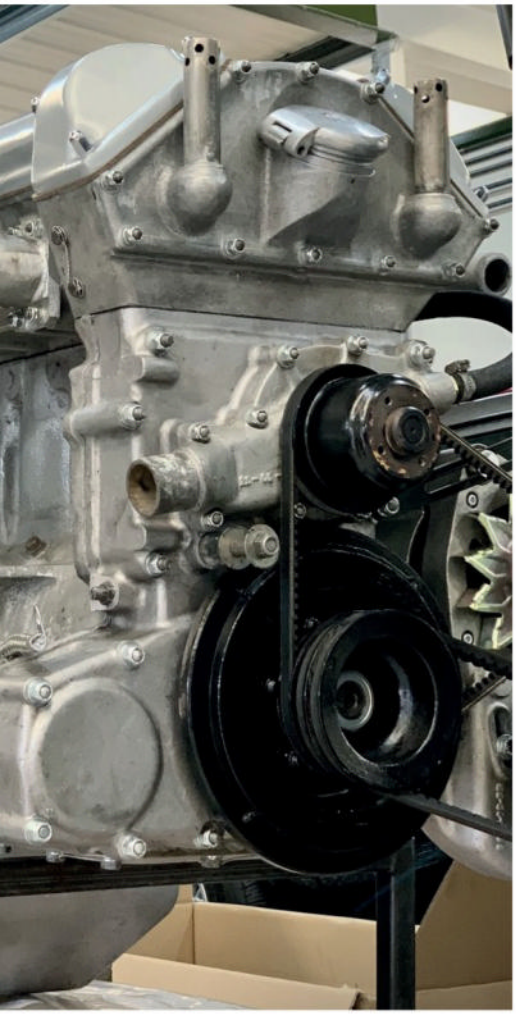
Fortunately, this DB6 Volante didn't have any major corrosion to worry about, so only needed some very minor repair

Electro-mechanically operated hood raises up and down smoothly and only needs three catches across the top of the windscreen to be locked or unlocked.



3,995cc straight-six twin-cam Aston engine didn't need to be stripped and rebuilt.

Meticulous restoration and reassembly of the dashboard was a feat on its own.



work, which as Aston Workshop recalls, "It was mainly a case of tidying up some rough edges."

Once all repairs to the chassis and framework were completed, the chassis, floors, engine bay and underside were painted in a thick and durable black stonechip paint, and cavity wax was injection-sprayed inside the sills and chassis legs.

The DB6's suspension consists of upper and lower wishbones at the front, with coilovers and an anti-roll bar. At the rear, there's a Salisbury 4HA live axle, which is secured with radius arms, a Watt's linkage connected to the differential casing, coil springs and lever arm dampers.

Aston Workshop sells their own brand of adjustable coilovers for the front (height and damper adjustable), so these were fitted, along with their modern telescopic dampers (also adjustable) at the rear. The front anti-roll bar was replaced for one that's 25mm in diameter (a standard anti-roll bar is roughly 18mm in diameter). Fitting a thicker anti-roll bar, along with height-adjustable coilovers at the front and adjustable dampers all round helps to fine-tune the handling and cornering ability of the vehicle.

The drivetrain didn't need much attention, with the engine and gearbox being in satisfactory condition, and the Salisbury live axle only required a new set of wheel bearings.

Aston Workshop can fully overhaul the DB6's 3,995cc straight-six twin-cam engine, and they even manufacture brand-new engine blocks.

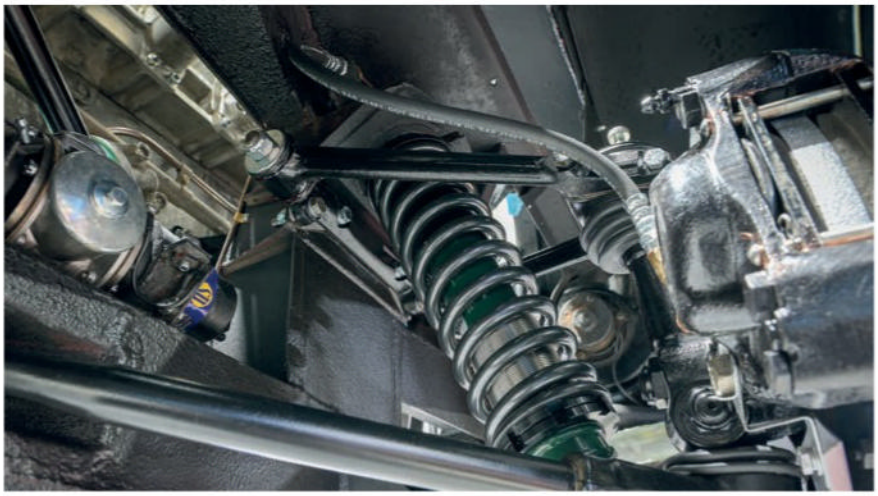
The only engine trouble that was discovered concerned the fuelling, which Jack recalls, "The fuel system, which had been problematic upon arrival at Aston Workshop, was thoroughly overhauled with new fuel lines and rubbers as well as two new aluminium tanks."

Stale petrol is often the cause of fuelling issues, resulting in a sandy residue blocking fuel lines and collecting inside the fuel tanks. Rubber fuel hoses can also deteriorate because of the effects of petrol and time, so it was a wise decision to replace everything. And the icing on the cake for this DB6 has got to be the bank of triple Weber carburettors, which were fitted to the Vantage models. Aston Workshop stresses that this DB6 isn't a Vantage model, but at some point prior to it arriving at their premises, these triple Weber carbs were fitted.

Another wise move during this

restoration was to split the engine and gearbox to replace the clutch. With the two components removed, it was much easier to do it at this stage instead of taking the gamble on the clutch lasting a few more years, only to find it needs to be replaced soon after the car had been reassembled.

One of the major jobs on this DB6 concerned the respray of the bodywork. This is an extremely time-consuming task, even if you are starting with a rot-free and perfectly straight bodyshell. "The paint process takes roughly 300 hours, with our highly skilled paint shop dedicated to producing some of the finest classic Aston Martin finishes," comments Aston



Front suspension retains the standard upper and lower wishbones, but is now equipped with adjustable coilovers and an uprated anti-roll bar.

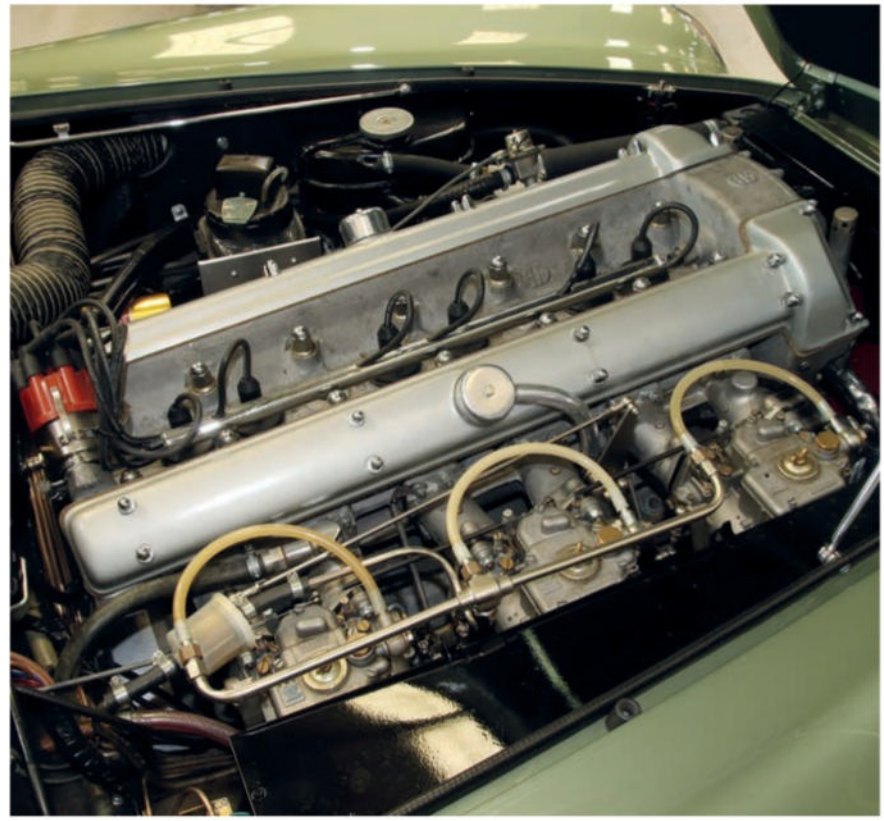
Salisbury 4HA live axle was refitted with new coil springs and modern telescopic adjustable dampers. A Watt's linkage is secured to the centre of the diff casing and there are trailing radius arms at the outer edges of the axle.

Workshop. "Whether a traditional Aston colour such as Silver Birch, California Sage or Cumberland Grey, or more modern shades such as Meteorite Silver and Onyx Black, our paint quality puts the final touch on the iconic design Aston Martin is world famous for."

Before any paint could get close to the bodywork, remains of the old paint and primer were removed. "Depending on the size and material characteristics of the items being stripped, different processes are applied; for example, chassis parts can be media-blasted whereas the softer aluminium body panels will be chemically stripped to protect them," explains Aston Workshop. "After stripping away the old paint and primer the car can be body-filed to fine-tune the shape of the car, with the sharpest possible lines and classic smooth curves. The body is acid-washed to clean it and prepare it for the first layers of epoxy primer to be applied, after which our panel beaters will check it again to ensure the shape is as smooth as possible."

The doors, bonnet and bootlid are worked on separately to the main bodyshell, but as Aston Workshop explains, they "are refitted to ensure the clearances are correct before the car goes back to the paint shop for a layer of polyester spray filler, which gives a final sharpness and smoothness to the body lines."

It's essential to note that whenever a layer of primer or paint is applied to the car, it is then hand-blocked before the next is applied. Aston Workshop applies two layers of primer; an initial isolator followed by an acrylic primer that is then ready for paint. "Three to four layers of water-based



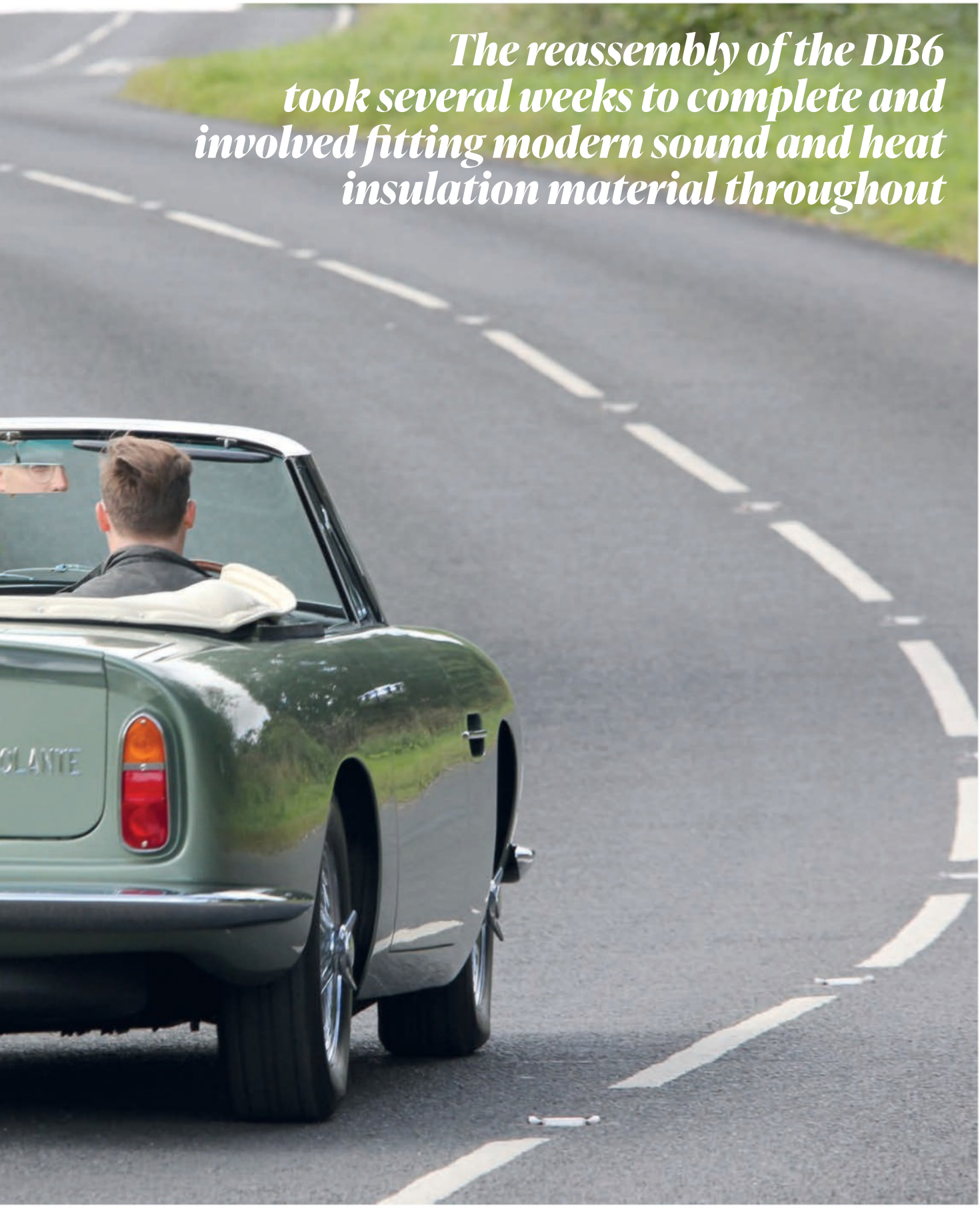
colour coat are generally required to provide the optimum tone and coverage, followed by an acrylic clear coat to give a final deep shine," they say. "This final layer is hand-sanded and then polished, leaving a better-than-factory finish."

The reassembly of the DB6 took several weeks to complete and involved fitting modern sound and heat insulation material throughout in order to combat the high cabin temperatures that 1960s Astons often suffer from.

New Wilton wool carpets complement the interior and behind the scenes, a new wiring loom was fitted. The dashboard with its assortment of Smiths gauges, was looking a little tatty, so it was resprayed. Looking at the work-in-progress photographs, the dashboard alone was quite an undertaking.

Aston Workshop has calculated that what can be classed as a sympathetic overhaul of this DB6 Volante took roughly 18 months from start to finish, which is impressive for the work involved where many jobs have a knock-on effect and at times, it can feel like one step forwards and two back.

Now finished and back on the road, it's difficult to tell what the future holds for this DB6 Volante. Its price tag suggests it will probably be destined for a private collection, or as an investment, which raises the question as to whether this is the last time it will need to undergo such an extensive refurbishment. For anyone who can afford it, this DB6 needs to be driven and appreciated. **AMD**



The reassembly of the DB6 took several weeks to complete and involved fitting modern sound and heat insulation material throughout

A Q
COLL

UESTION OF ECTABILITY

Is now the time to invest in a DB7 and if so, which one? We look into the limited-edition GTA and examine one of two for sale at Hampshire-based Racing Lines

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
ROB HAWKINS

THE DB7 GTA was introduced alongside the GT at the Birmingham Motor Show in 2002. With the DB7 model having been on sale since 1994 (it was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show in 1993), the writing was on the wall at the beginning of the new millennium, so perhaps the GT and GTA could cash in on the back of the high-performance Vantage as a final evolution.

The top-spec DB7 GT with its 435bhp 5,935cc V12 engine and manual gearbox needed an auto option, so hence the GTA badge (A for auto).

A five-speed Touchtronic automatic gearbox was chosen for the GTA, which rumour has it wasn't able to cope with the 435bhp from the GT's engine, so it was de-tuned by 15bhp. Other than the reduced power output and having an automatic gearbox, it was identical to the GT.

These limited-edition models boasted special five-spoke 18in alloy wheels (8in wide at the front and 9in at the rear). The suspension

comprised the same upper and lower wishbones at all four corners with coil springs and telescopic dampers, plus control arms at the rear, and front and rear anti-roll bars as fitted to all DB7 models. However, some of the suspension bushes were uprated to increase their Shore hardness and the location of the front subframe and front lower wishbones was improved to help with lateral control and handling. The bump stops on the front coilovers were lowered by 3mm in a bid to increase wheel movement and improve ride quality. The damper settings were changed, and new front top mounts were fitted. And at the rear, an extra brace was fitted to the lower suspension mounting points to help increase stability and reduce toe out under braking.

The GT and GTA brakes consisted of Brembo four-pots all round with larger 335/330mm discs front/rear and a brake servo from the V12 Vanquish.

There were some subtle alterations to the exterior of the DB7 GT and GTA, such as badging on the front and rear, a new mesh front grille and an upturned spoiler on the boot. Inside, the front and rear seats consisted of leather with Alcantara centre inserts, the fronts being electrically operated and heated and having shoulder-height bolster supports. These front seats were later fitted in the V12 Vanquish S, but at the time they were fitted in the GTA, a no-cost option was to choose between plain or ventilated leather.

There was more Alcantara fitted to the headlining and on the GTA only (i.e. not the GT), steering wheel buttons were added to change up and down gears should you not wish to rely on a fully automatic transmission.

Rarity

What makes the GTA interesting as a potential investment is its rarity. Manufactured between 2002 and 2003, a mere 112 of them were built, of which only 60 were sold in the UK (17 LHD models went to the US).

"This particular GTA is a little different in that it isn't one of the many silver or other standard colour variants," says Rupert Keyzar of Racing Lines, who is selling this DB7 GTA with its Rolls-Royce Peacock Blue exterior paintwork and matching Ocean leather and Navy Alcantara interior (he has discovered this colour choice was only specified on two GTAs) for £29,995.

Supplied new by JCT 600 of Leeds in May 2003, its specification is impressive, with heated front and rear screens, yet for a 21-year-old Aston, it's no surprise to learn it has air-conditioning as standard.

Surprisingly, despite the 5,935cc V12 engine should produce 420bhp, Rupert has discovered there's a Quicksilver large bore stainless steel exhaust system fitted to this GTA, which according to Quicksilver's own data, increases the power output by 15 bhp! Whether there's actually 435bhp at the flywheel is

unknown, and perhaps the final drive ratio of the GKN Powerlok limited-slip diff at 3.77:1 helps to preserve the gearbox – this is the same final drive ratio as used on the DB7 Vantage with a manual gearbox, whereas the same model with a ZF five-speed auto uses a 3.06:1 final drive ratio (although the DB7 Vantage could be equipped with the GTA's Touchtronic 'box and controls for an extra £4,000).

The service records that accompany this GTA reveal that it has been maintained by the likes of JCT 600, Works Service in Newport Pagnell, Trinity Engineering, Chiltern Aston, Stratton Motor Company and Chicane. Having all its documentation, including a completed and up-to-date service history and a spare set of keys is a promising starting point for buying an Aston Martin.

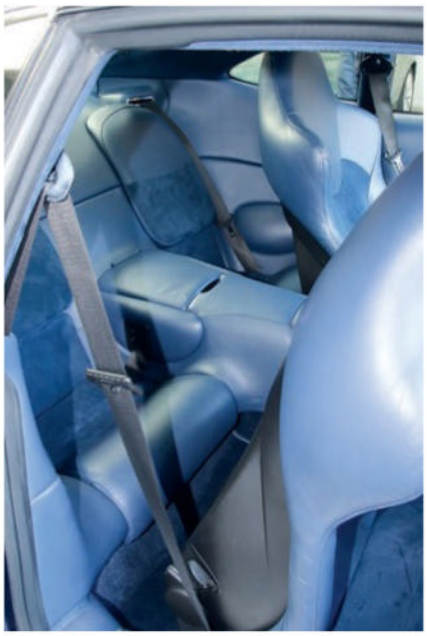
As we get into the GTA to head out and take photos, when the engine fires into life, there's a noticeable bark from the Quicksilver exhaust. The silencer creates a similar rumble on start-up and at high rpm because it uses the same by-pass valves as found on the V12 Vanquish.

On the road, there's a refined ride quality from the suspension, which even Rupert finds noticeably better than other DB7 Vantage models he has driven. With less than 60k on the clock, but 21 years since the car left the production line, you have to expect a few panel rattles and squeaks, but in this case, everything feels tight and

secure. Only an occasional flutter from what we suspect is one of the motorised climate control flaps disturbs the silence (discovered when the fan is switched off).

The Touchtronic automatic gearbox provides seamless gearchanges up and down its five forward gears. Should you wish to change gears yourself, then a short move of the gearstick to the left from Drive activates the sequential mode where you can use either the gearlever in a forwards and backwards motion or by using the steering wheel buttons.

Weighing in at around 1,852kg, this GTA feels lighter and nimbler than its kerb weight suggests, which is easily over two tonnes with a full tank of fuel and two or more passengers. And with a 0-60mph time of a little over five seconds, it's even more deceptive in its ability to perform.




DB7 GTA

Investment opportunities

It's impossible to predict whether now is the right time to buy something rare and modern, such as a 21-year-old DB7 GTA, in the hope that in a couple of decades or more, it will be worth a lot more money. Judging by Aston Martins from the Seventies and Eighties, it certainly will, although those were hand-assembled, whereas the DB7 was mass-manufactured by comparison.

Whether you want a GTA as a potential investment or not, there's no escaping the fact that if you want to buy and drive a DB7, then it makes sense to look for one that has been meticulously maintained to hopefully avoid the potential money pitfalls of corrosion and neglect. Only then can you fully appreciate what a DB7 has to offer as a sports car that saved Aston Martin and kept it on the world stage of sports cars and supercars.

"If you want the best DB7 and if you have the money, then spend a little bit more on a GTA, or even a GT," says Rupert. "These final DB7s are more than just uprated DB7 Vantages, as it's the whole package of changes that truly sets them apart." **AMD**

The DB7 Vantage is another high-performance and potentially collectable Aston that's worth considering as a future investment. With a V12 engine under the bonnet, mated to a ZF five-speed automatic gearbox, the 2000 model seen here with Aston Martin Racing Green exterior paintwork is currently for sale at Racing Lines at £25k.

If, however, it's a GTA you want, then Racing Lines have a second one for sale (pictured in the background). It's a 2003 model with a hard-to-miss leather interior and a price tag of £28,995.


D13 GTA

Who is David Such?

Age: **64**
Current job: **Proprietor of V12vanquish.com**
First Car: **1,200cc Mk1 Ford Cortina two-door - the sporty one! Cost £100 in 1978 and I passed my test in it on my 18th birthday**
First Aston: **1972 AMV8 injection bought for £2,500 from the Exchange and Mart in 1982 when I was 22. It evolved into a race car and was owned until 2008 when I wrote it off in a big accident at Donington**

Travelling from Bilbao, through to Madrid, Cordoba, Gibraltar, Badajoz, Salamanca, San Sebastian and back to Bilbao, the 2,000 mile charity run was completed by 35 cars in aid of SSAFA (Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association). Visit www.ssafa.org.uk for more information.

DESTINATION GIBRALTAR

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY
DAVID SUCH

When V12 Vanquish owner David Such signed up to complete a charity rally to Gibraltar via Spain and Portugal, the pressure was on to make sure his 22-year-old Aston with 115,000 miles on the clock would survive. He recounts the preparation work and the event

The cathedral in Badajoz which dates from 1270 when work began. It was modified in the 15th century and is now a national monument

Views in and around Madrid

The Roman bridge at Cordoba was built in the 1st century BC

I FIRST fell in love with Astons as a child. With a father who was a demonstration driver for Maserati in the 1960s, it was somehow inevitable that I would be sucked into the world of exotic cars. From the moment I could dream of owning a car it was always going to be an Aston that would capture my heart. It was a short journey from my first Ford Cortina to owning an Aston via a selection of interesting British cars, most particularly my 1969 Mk1 Capri 3000GT with full sports suspension and a Swaymar-tuned V6, the one car I really wish I still had.

Once I spotted the advert in 1982 in the Exchange and Mart for a stolen/recovered 1972 V8 that was a non-runner, I was hooked and never looked back again. That car taught me a huge amount about automotive engineering and development and, under the guidance of my dad, doing all the work myself, that car evolved over the course of 26 years into one of the most successful racing Aston V8s of its era. When I wrote the car off in 2008 at Donington, it was a bitter blow and after an enforced gap of five years without an Aston, I once again got the chance to get back behind the wheel when health issues forced my early retirement from HSBC.

I bought my current V12 Vanquish in 2014. I had loved the Vanquish from its first launch and, after having a financially painful experience with its first service, vowed to do all the work on it myself. I did much research into where the parts came from and, as my hobby and experience grew, I posted information on the AMOC forum where people started to ask if I could work on their cars. From this evolved V12Vanquish.com as it is today. Constantly learning all the time, it has almost become a seven-day week business doing servicing and restoration, parts and parts development where things are no longer available.

The Vanquish is not always easy to work on and I can tackle most jobs in my workshop and have a small stalwart group of friends and associates with expert specialist skills and equipment who help me out for those more complex jobs. There are also some great companies, particularly SS Auto Tech Ltd, out there who have engineered the problems out of the ASM [auto shift manual] system to tackle those gearbox reputational issues. Not everything can be fixed in the blink of an eye but with patience we have resolved most of the major issues and continue to work to keep these cars on the road.

The Vanquish inevitably does have its issues, many of which are down to age and maintenance having been neglected or done without sympathy for the car. The number of cars that have seized wheelarch liners and undertray bolts due to lack of lubrication is quite staggering and absorbs a lot of time and effort to resolve properly. I now fit stainless steel

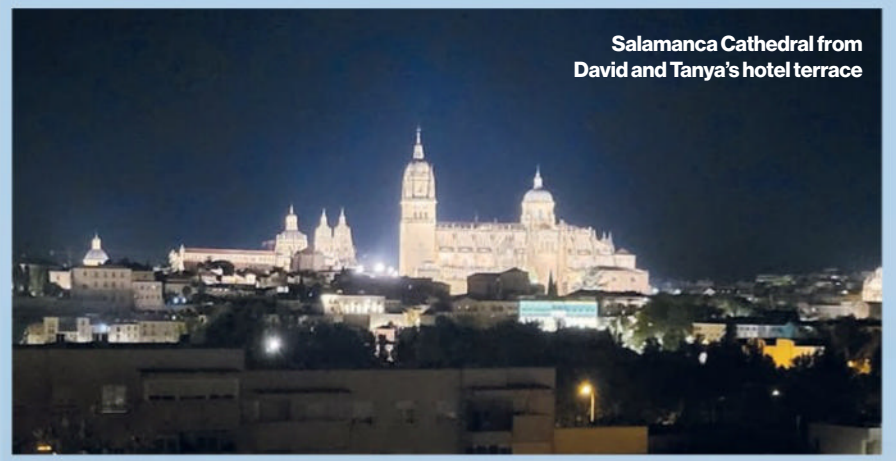
The Plaza Alta in Badajoz dates from the 15th century and is attached to the citadel walls of the Alcazaba de Badajoz which is an ancient Moorish citadel dating from around the 12th century

replacements to most cars, additionally protected with anti-galvanic paste to ease future dismantling. Nearly every Vanquish has suspension joint issues, but these are easily remedied as the parts are common with Jaguars of the same era.

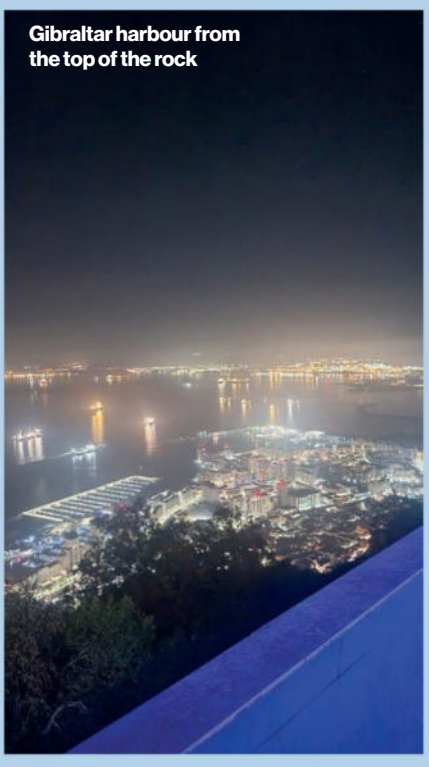
Most cars have broken tweeter covers which I now have 3D-printed, having changed some of the design features to make them more robust. My personal car, a 2002 standard Vanquish, has rear wheel spacers to fill out the rear arches, improved brake discs developed by me (based on an AP Racing disc so that they don't warp), and additional holes in the airbox, hidden out of sight, to help it breathe better. It also has a custom exhaust, which is 40 percent of the weight of the original and still retains the characteristic Vanquish growl.

My car has a manual stick shift so I don't have to worry about ASM issues, but common-sense preventative maintenance such as replacing the ASM fluid rather than just checking the level, bleeding the clutch (which has probably never been done) and perfecting the correct driving style to avoid unnecessarily stressing the clutch will all help enormously to avoid problems and make it a much more engaging driving experience. Time is now also telling, and replacing the aged ASM accumulator before it fails is a very worthwhile investment and not expensive.

The stick shift conversion on my car

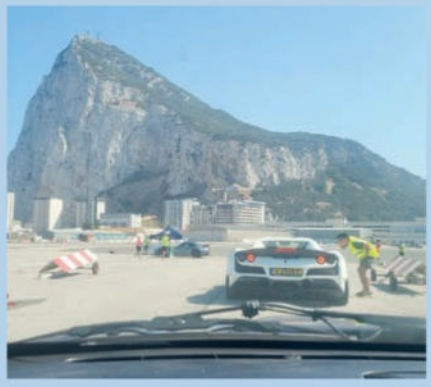


Salamanca Cathedral from David and Tanya's hotel terrace



Gibraltar harbour from the top of the rock

The main piazza in Salamanca



Airport runway at Gibraltar was closed for passenger rides

34 miles of tunnels inside the rock of Gibraltar were open to the charity rally entrants

was done by AM Works 11 years ago for a previous owner and I love it, despite its little quirks, and I am looking at ways in which it can be tweaked. From newfound experience, I am becoming more certain that some of the issues attributed to the ASM system are actually more likely down to known issues with the gearbox itself, which was never designed for automation and after time, can suffer from stiff gear selector rod issues which can throw the ASM system out. This has impacted my stick shift car, making the shift very firm, and I am in the process of resolving this issue on my own car this winter.

On the whole, my V12 Vanquish has been reliable. Major issues were when mice ate the engine wiring, which blew components in one of the PTECs [power train electronic control] and necessitated me redesigning, building and installing an entire new engine wiring harness as AM could no longer supply a replacement. I have had the usual replacement of suspension arms, coils and plugs, brake discs and a new pilot bearing, but otherwise it has generally been reliable and under my ownership I have done 73K miles all over Europe.

The thought that my Vanquish might ever let me down never crosses my mind whenever the prospect of a trip, however adventurous, comes along because my experience with the cars has taught me most of the issues that can arise with these charismatic supercars.

The charity run to Gibraltar in August this year was the second of these events in aid of SSAFA (Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association) that I have been involved in with my partner Tanya. Our first event was in 2022, when we covered over 3,000 miles going through 10 countries in 10 Days to Budapest and back, and which raised £125K.

Over the last 10 years that these rallies have been running, the total raised now stands at close to £800K – a truly astonishing figure.

Travelling in groups of five cars at a time helped to avoid losing people. David's group consisted entirely of Astons

35 cars entered the Northern Spain to Gibraltar rally, with nine of them being Aston Martins

This year's event was over 2,000 miles from Northern Spain to Gibraltar and then back through Portugal to Bilbao with 35 hugely varied cars taking part. Obviously, this necessitated ensuring the Vanquish was in fine fettle, but with the regular usage mine sees, the car actually required little more than a full service and a new set of rear tyres – a regular replacement if you drive enthusiastically.

The high temperatures could have proven an issue, but the Vanquish excels in this respect and never overheats, unlike some of the other cars, notably those from Blackpool, which struggled with even the shortest queue. The AA had a team travelling with the rally and any problems, and there were some, were dealt with

Local band performed in Portsmouth at HMS Excellent

With 115K on the clock, the interior of David's 2002 V12 Vanquish has stood the test of time

in a timely fashion and everyone made it to the end. The rally actually started in Portsmouth, where, with the military connections of Steve and Benn of Torque Events who organise 'A Driving Force', we were flagged away from HMS Excellent after a fine dinner by an Admiral of the Fleet, an Air Vice-Marshal and a Major General no less and set off to the ferry to Bilbao. More surprises were due in Gibraltar when we finally got there three days into the rally.

Travelling in teams of five cars, which makes keeping organised far easier, the first three days after the ferry crossing were a sweeping run through Madrid and Cordoba down to Gibraltar on roads ideally suited to cars like the Vanquish. The team we were in comprised all Astons, and apart from some intermittent gear selection issues with one of the DB9s, which always cleared eventually, we all ran absolutely trouble-free for the whole rally. The Vanquish really is a perfect grand tourer of the old school. Smooth, fast and hugely charismatic with mighty road presence – it's a masterpiece of design and beautiful to boot.

David and his partner Tanya were awarded the Spirit of the Rally Award for their help

David has discovered that some components on his V12 Vanquish are from Jaguar, such as these front upper wishbones that are also fitted to the S-TYPE

David has fitted spacers to the rear wheels of his V12 Vanquish to help fill out the arches

Behind the scenes at V12Vanquish.com is this two car workshop

In Gibraltar, Steve and Benn had laid on some real one-off surprises, the biggest of which was the closure of Gibraltar airport to allow us to give rides to the locals down a 400m drag strip on the airport, all to support the charity. This was a unique event, never before allowed at the airport, making us hugely privileged to be allowed to do this and our massive thanks go to Commodore Tom Guy, Commander British Forces Gibraltar, for making this happen. We also had a privately organised tour of some of the network of 34 miles of tunnels inside the Rock of Gibraltar (not normally open to the public), an absolutely fascinating insight into both the history and current use of the tunnels by the British Armed Forces. After a moving memorial service at the Trafalgar Cemetery to honour fallen service personnel and remind us of the prime purpose of the rally, our time in Gibraltar was capped off with a sunset dinner at the top of the Rock of Gibraltar with a piper accompanying the setting of the sun – magical.

The comradery of the rally is immense and the sight of the groups of cars travelling through the bigger towns is amazing, turning heads everywhere we went. On the open roads it is a more relaxed chance to see some amazing countryside, historic cities and enjoy the fabulous driving roads that can be found across the whole of Spain and Portugal. The rally is not a time trial and there is no competitive element, other than the fundraising, but it is designed to be a driving challenge with just enough time at the end of the day to relax and get a taste of the culture and cuisine in each stop. Places like Salamanca, Badajoz and San Sebastion are just stunning and the memories will live on long into the future.

It ended all too quickly, and on the journey back on the ferry from Bilbao there was a traditional prize-giving to highlight those who had made significant contributions to the event. Alex and Harriet Wolfe, driving an Aston Rapide, were the highest fundraisers with over £15K raised whilst Tanya and I were absolutely stunned to receive the Spirit of the Rally Award, for our work supporting Steve and Benn at many of the various fundraising events and shows in the build-up to the rally – a much appreciated surprise for us to cap an amazing adventure. **AMD**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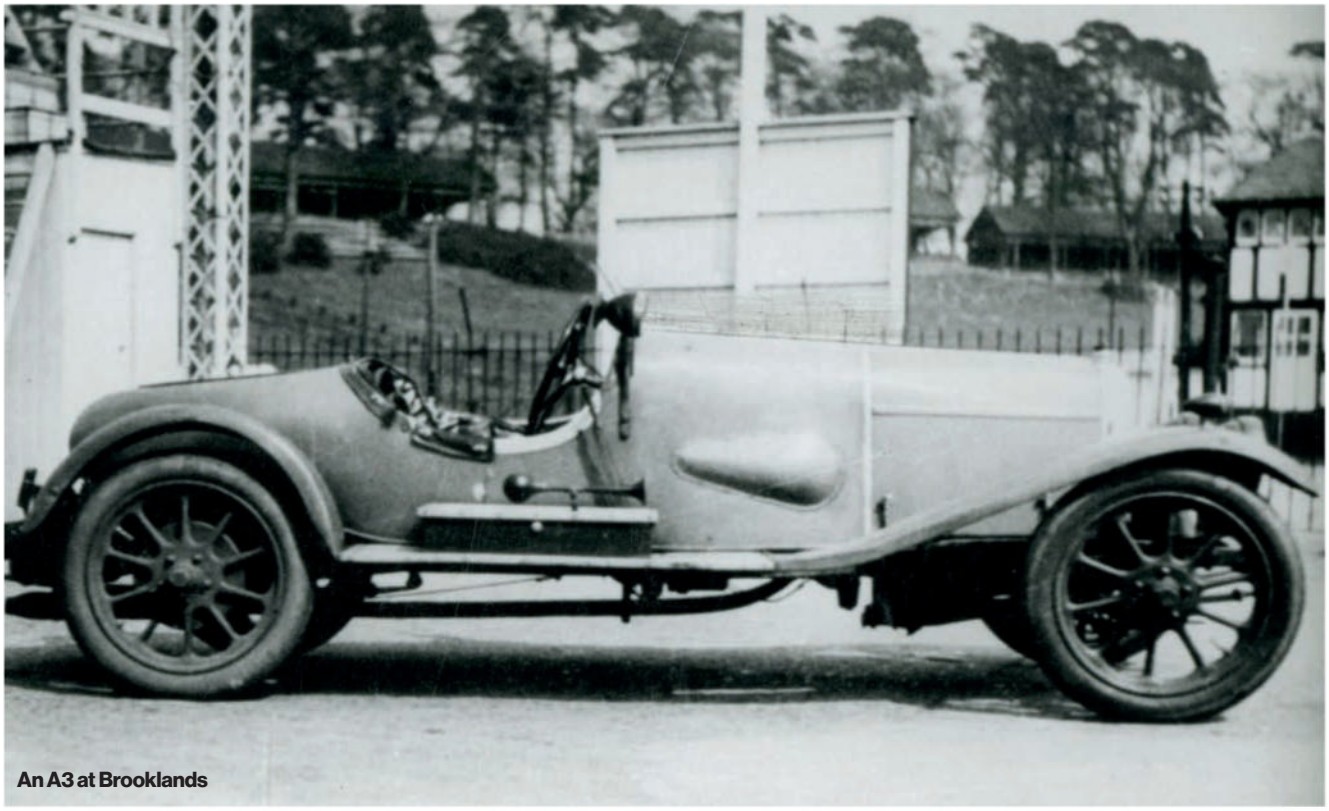
ASTON MARTIN MODEL GUIDE

This comprehensive guide covers every model Aston Martin has produced between 1913 and 2024. From the iconic Coal Scuttle through to the most famous of them all, the DB5, and on to the Valkyrie, Paul Walton outlines all of them in this collector's guide.

Origins 1913-1925



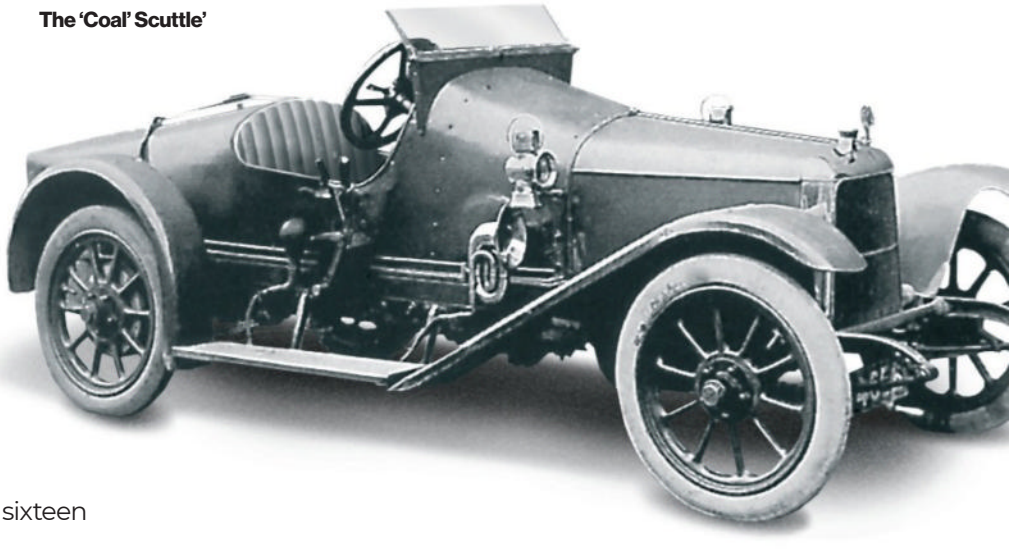
An A3 at Brooklands

Aston Martin's origins start in 1913 when former cyclist turned motorbike racer Lionel Martin met another cyclist and engineer, Robert Bamford. The two quickly became friends and in 1912 decided to go into business together selling bicycles and cars from their premises in Callow Street, Chelsea. They also serviced Calthorpe, GWK and Singer vehicles, and for their workshop premises took over the former depot of marine, motor and general engineers Hesse and Savory, in the adjacent Henniker Mews.

Bamford was responsible for the engineering side, while Martin handled the business affairs. Together though, they worked on Martin's 1912 Singer Ten, modifying it enough to raise its top speed to 70mph, an impressive speed for something with just a 1,096cc side valve engine. Martin enthusiastically took it racing and was especially successful at the Aston Hill Climb on Lord Rothschild's estate at Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire.

The success of the little Singer prompted Bamford & Martin customers to ask for similar modifications, but the pair became frustrated at what was involved and decided to build their own machine instead. They used a 1908 Isotta-Fraschini chassis and a 1,398cc Coventry-Simplex side valve engine, with their own design of distinctive radiator surround and angular, swept-up coachwork which led to the car being nicknamed the 'Coal Scuttle'. Officially though, the car – registered AM 4656 in March 1915 – was given the name 'Aston-Martin' in reference to the Aston Hill Climb where Martin had previously done so well. One purported reason for it not being christened 'Bamford-Martin' is that the woman that Martin would marry in January 1917, Katherine King, suggested 'Aston-Martin' would put the company up near the head of alphabetical lists. Aston-Martin had been born – and then almost instantly disappeared, due to the inconvenient outbreak of the first world

The 'Coal' Scuttle'



Lionel Martin

Robert Bamford

Lionel Martin gives AM 270 some attention

war and all the machinery at Henniker Mews being sold off to the Sopwith Aviation Company.

In November 1918, Bamford and Martin reconvened to start building more Aston-Martins, moving into a new 'factory' at Abingdon Road, Kensington, in January 1920. It was here that the second Aston-Martin, registered AM 270, was constructed as a better-handling evolution of the Coal Scuttle with a shorter and more robust chassis. Bamford lost interest during the later months of 1920 and was bought out by Martin.

In order to generate more publicity, Aston-Martin embarked on a full-scale racing programme, although Martin himself took on more of an organisational role and now left the racing to others. One of those who competed in Aston-Martins during the early Twenties was Count Louis Zborowski, the aristocratic racer behind the 'Chitty Bang Bang' leviathans. He also put money into the company, by some accounts giving Lionel Martin's firm a not inconsiderable £10,000. By the dawn of 1922, though, Aston-Martins might have been making quite an impression in motorsport, but none had been sold to the public.

During the first months of 1922, Martin made a trip to Bristol with Zborowski to try and convince 'an aeroplane company' (in Martin's words) to start building production Aston-Martins. However, one of the cars kept breaking down, leading to the group arriving late for lunch. Perhaps unsurprisingly after that, nothing came of the scheme. It wasn't until the start of 1923 that the first Aston-Martins started finding their way into private hands, initially ex-racers being sold off followed by entirely new cars, albeit constructed very slowly at Abingdon Road. During 1924, Aston-Martin managed to put together a mere 26 cars for sale.

During October of that year, Count Zborowski was killed in the Italian Grand Prix and Aston-Martin's vital money pipeline dried up. His place was taken by the wealthy Lady Charnwood whose son, John Roby Benson, worked for the firm as an engineer. She contributed £10,000 to acquire the assets of Bamford & Martin; a new Aston-Martin company was then formed with herself as a director alongside her son and Mr and Mrs Martin. Despite the injection of cash, Aston-Martin's finances remained woeful and on 11 November 1925, the receiver was called in. Martin was sacked two days later from the company he had founded.

Kate Martin, wife of Lionel Martin, in the Coal Scuttle

A.C. Bertelli era 1926-1938

Born in Genoa on 23 March 1890, Augustus Cesare Bertelli was an Italian engineer who learned his trade at Fiat. He came to the UK before the start of the first world war and began working for an aircraft manufacturer, Grahame White, in Hendon, North London. From there he moved to a West Midlands-based engineering firm, Alldays & Onions that was soon bought out by Enfield Autocar company, which is when Bertelli designed a new 10hp small car.

After time as a freelance designer, he was taken on by future Bentley racer and Le Mans winner Woolf Barnato, designing three cars for him based on chassis by Alldays & Onions.

In 1924, Bertelli was introduced to another young designer, William (Bill) Renwick, and they quickly set up a new company, Renwick & Bertelli Ltd, with the intention to build cars. Although they soon built a prototype, the Buzzbox, the company was put on hold when the pair had the chance to buy Bamford & Martin in 1925, starting a new company, Aston Martin Motors Ltd, and moving production to the former Whitehead Aircraft Ltd works in Feltham.

As the company's engineering director, from 1927 onwards, Bertelli introduced a new series of cars, the 1½-litre T-Type and Super Sports, that were powered by a new 2.0-litre engine that would become the mainstay of the company for the next decade. The latter especially came to define Aston Martin's early sporting heritage. The former was dropped a year later, the company concentrating on the latter, now renamed International due to compliance with the then-current international motor sport regulations, which was now ready to go racing. Together, these cars make up what's now called The First Series.

The Second Series arrived in 1932 (the year Aston Martin was bought by a wealthy entrepreneur, Sir Arthur Sutherland, and Renwick left Aston Martin to work with Cecil Kimber at MG) and consisted of the Standard and New International which were joined by the Le Mans special the following year which, thanks to progressive updates, became The Third Series two years later. These included the Mark II which spawned a successful racing variant, the Ulster (named after the 1934 TT race held at Ards in Northern Ireland which it had won), and featured a redesigned and stronger chassis, a new bulkhead with added side plates to increase rigidity plus revised suspension components.

Bertelli left Aston Martin in 1937 due to disagreeing with Sutherland on the direction of the company that included the 15/98 model which he considered was too mainstream and used too many off-the-shelf parts. He was replaced as chief designer by Claude Hill.

1932 Le Mans

1934 Mk2 Ulster


A.C. Bertelli

2-Litre Sports 1948-1950

The first car after (Sir) David Brown had bought Aston Martin in late 1946 was the 2-Litre Sports (now commonly known as the DB1). Designed by Aston Martin's lead engineer, Claude Hill, the car was based on a new tubular chassis (a development on that used by a pre-war prototype called the Atom, which was one of the reasons why Brown bought the company) and powered by a new 1,970cc four-cylinder engine. The combination proved its worth when a prototype featuring a basic body won the gruelling 24 Hours of Spa with St John 'Jock' Horsfall and Leslie Johnson at the wheel.

Although the design of the production version was relatively conservative even for the period, it's still important since its centre radiator grille was flanked on either side by two smaller, lower vents, a layout that would slowly morph into Aston Martin's most identifying feature.

Expensive at £2,331, when the six-cylinder Jaguar X120 (which, like the Aston Martin, had debuted at the 1948 Earls Court Motor Show) was over £1,000 less, the 2-Litre Sports was always a low-volume model and just 15 were produced.

This consisted of an original run of 12 built between 1948 and 1949 followed by three more in 1950 for Lord Chesham who wanted a convertible, something Aston Martin didn't offer at the time and so agreed to put the 2-Litre Sports back into limited edition. The car featured here is the first of this Second Series.

Despite being relatively unknown today, the car's mix of performance and luxury set the standard for Aston Martin's later, more famous models.

Lagonda 2.6-Litre & 3-Litre 1948-1958

Work to develop what became the 2.6-Litre had started during the later stages of the second world war. Designed by famed engineer W.O. Bentley, it featured a new chassis and his 2,580cc straight-six engine. Although at least five prototypes had been built, it was clear by the mid-Forties that Lagonda wasn't in a position financially to put the car into production and so in 1947, the company was offered for sale. It was eventually bought in September the same year by British engineering magnate, (Sir) David Brown, who later admitted he only did so when he realised the 2.6-Litre would be perfect for his other recent purchase, Aston Martin. "When I tried one of the prototypes," said Brown in Geoff Courtney's 1978 book, The Power Behind Aston Martin. "I immediately thought we could do with that engine."

When the car finally reached production in 1948, it was a handsome four-door saloon and drophead coupe powered by a 105bhp version of the Bentley engine. Despite being expensive (in 1949, the DHC cost £3,420), the car still sold reasonably well, with 510 examples made when production ended in 1953. It was replaced by the 3-Litre that although looked larger and more luxurious, used the same chassis as its predecessor, the new body designed by another of Brown's recent purchases, the coachbuilder Tickford, and the engine bored out to 2,922cc to produce 140bhp. Initially available as a saloon, two-door coupe and drophead coupe (as bought by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh), when the revised Mk2 model was introduced in 1955 (incorporating a floor-mounted gearlever) after only a handful of DHCs had been completed, the range was reduced to just the four-door saloon.

Again expensive, costing £3,000 in 1956 when a Jaguar MkVIII was £1,830, a mere 270 3-Litres were sold before production ended two years later.

HRH Prince Philip in his 1954 3-litre DHC

DB2, DB2/4 & DB MkIII 1950-1959

DB2

The first Aston Martin to use Bentley's straight-six was the DB2 from 1950 that was powered by the same 2,580cc, 105bhp version as the Lagonda 2.6. The body was the work of Frank Feeley (who (Sir) David Brown had inherited when he'd bought Lagonda), and in terms of proportions, its fastback design laid the foundations for Aston Martin's later and more iconic models. Just as importantly, the same three-grille design as the DB1 was continued, later merging to create the famous shape still used today. It was also the first Aston Martin to have a Vantage option, although this referred to a more powerful engine which was increased to 125bhp.


DB2/4

DB MkIII

The car was updated in 1953, resulting in the DB2/4 that featured a single-piece windscreen, larger bumpers, and repositioned headlights while the hitherto optional Vantage engine was also standardised. As well as the fastback coupe, the car was now also available as a handsome drophead coupe and in 1954 the 2.6 was replaced by a 2.9-litre version that produced 140bhp.

The car was updated again in 1955 (now known as the DB2/4 Mk2) and featured small tailfins, bubble-type taillights while the bonnet horizontal split line was also changed from door-sill height to a line carried backwards from the top of the front wheelarch. The car also had the option of a large-valve, high-compression (8.6:1) 165bhp engine.

The final update – called simply the DB MkIII – arrived in 1957. Although the overall specification and design remained largely the same, the car is notable for being the first car to feature the definitive Aston Martin radiator grille.

DB3, DB3S & DBR1 1951-1957

Stirling Moss driving an Aston Martin DBR1

Understanding the importance of motorsport was an excellent way to promote Aston Martin in the early Fifties. (Sir) David Brown employed an Austrian designer, Robert Eberan von Eberhorst, who had worked on the pre-war Auto Unions, to develop a racing car. Although the resultant DB3 used some parts of the DB2 – such as the 2.6-litre engine which produced 133bhp and independent front suspension – much of it was new including a De Dion rear axle and aluminium body. However, by being heavy and unreliable, even in the hands of such luminaries as Peter Collins and Reg Parnell the car was unsuccessful. Uprating the engine to the 2.9-litre version didn't help either. And so, to make the DB3 more successful, Eberhorst's assistant, Willie Watson, redesigned the car which featured a new, much sleeker body by Frank Feeley. It was also much lighter and thanks to the 2.9-litre now producing 182bhp, an increase of 22bhp, the car was transformed and between its 1953 debut and 1956 was a regular race winner in both Europe and America.

In total, ten DB3s were made between 1951 and 1953; cars one to five were used as works cars and cars six to ten sold to customers. There were then 11 works DB3Ss and, as proof of its success, a further 20 made for customers.

Due to new rules for the 1957 season which outlawed racing machines based on road cars, the DB3S was replaced by the all-new DBR1. The body was a development of the DB3S but featured a much lower profile and underneath was a multitube spaceframe chassis that was 60lb lighter than that of the DB3S. Initially fitted with a 2.5-litre racing version of the Bentley-designed straight-six, this was later increased to 2.9, which turned the car into a regular winner. The DBR1's greatest triumph, though, was winning the 1959 24 Hours of Le Mans, the company's sole overall victory of the race.

Just five DBR1s were produced and all for the works team although these were later sold off when the company pulled out of racing and they were subsequently raced by privateers.


DB3S

DB4 1958-1963

Although not as famous as its later, more iconic sibling, the DB4 is still important for being the first Aston Martin to be designed by the Italian coachbuilder Touring, the link between the two coming from when three DB2/4 chassis had been sent to the Milan-based carrozzeria to have roadster bodies fitted. The new car also featured the Italian firm's Superleggera style of construction that consisted of a framework of small-diameter steel tubes covered by thin alloy body panels. The result was a clean-lined and well-proportioned fastback style of coupe that despite its Italian parentage was every inch the Aston Martin. And although at 4.5m long and 1.7m wide it was a relatively large car, due to the Superleggera construction, the finished model weighed a mere 1,392kg (3,070lb), a whopping 71kg (156lb) lighter than a Jaguar XK150 3.4-litre fixedhead coupe. It also kept the now familiar Aston Martin grille.

Power was courtesy of a new 3.7-litre straight-six designed by Aston Martin's Polish engine designer, Tadek Marek. Coming with twin SU HD8 carburettors, the engine produced 240bhp, sufficient for 60mph to be reached in a little under nine seconds and a maximum speed of 140mph, better figures than the DB MkIII with its 2.9-litre engine.

A shorter competition version, the GT, with 302bhp arrived in 1959 (19 of which were rebodied by the Italian coachbuilder Zagato between 1960 and 1963) as did a convertible two years later. Aston Martin also offered a Vantage version in 1961 that had 266bhp.

Thanks to a steady string of improvements, there were five separate series of the DB4 over its 1,185-production run, the most important being the Vantage version of the last that with its longer chassis and the same cowled headlights as the GT, laid the foundations for the most famous car in the world.

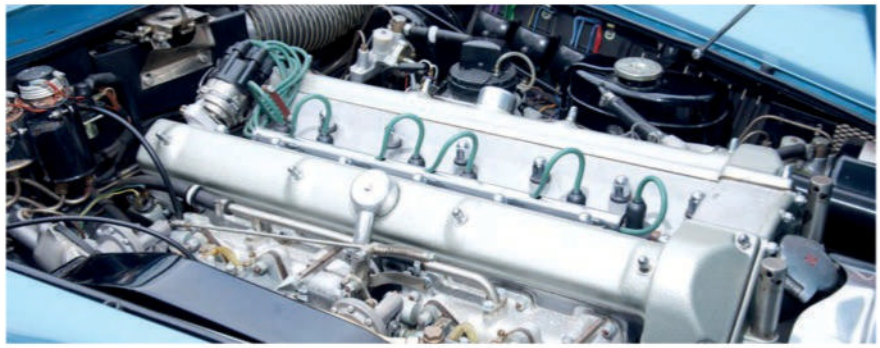
Lagonda Rapide 1961-1964

Sir David Brown had always been an enthusiast of the Lagonda brand and so despite the company unable to keep up demand for the DB4, when the 3.0-litre came to an end in 1958 he pushed for another model, this time based on the sports car. The new saloon – later called the Rapide, an old Lagonda name harking back to the Thirties – was again the work of Touring in Milan and also used the Italian company's Superleggera method of construction. The DB4's chassis was lengthened by 16in but otherwise only altered to accept a De Dion rear end.

At the front, the nose was dominated by a large upright grille that was reminiscent of both the Facel Vega and Edsel while the slanted quad headlight treatment would be used by other manufacturers later in the decade. Only the long boot gave away the car's Italian parentage since it was similar to the Touring-designed Maserati 3500GT.

The Rapide was the first car to have a 4.0-litre version of the Tadek Marek-designed 3.7-litre, achieved by using cylinder liners of 4mm greater bore. There were also revised camshafts and a pair of twin-barrel Solex carburettors rather than the DB4's triple SUs.

As a result, torque was increased by ten percent to 265lb ft at 4,000rpm although power actually dropped by 1½ percent to 236bhp.



Although luxurious, rear space was very tight while the car's controversial looks were never universally liked. Plus, at £5,251, it was £2,800 more expensive than a Jaguar MkX 3.8-litre and £1,200 over that of the already pricey Aston Martin DB4. And so, just 55 Rapides were produced before production eventually ended in 1964.

DB5 1963-1965

The DB5 isn't just the most famous Aston Martin in the world but, thanks to its starring role in the 1964 James Bond film Goldfinger and the British spy's car being kitted out with guns, an ejector seat and many other gadgets, it soon became the most famous car ever built. It was perhaps due to the car's part in the film rather than just its good looks, high speed and great handling why 1,021 DB5s were produced in a mere three years (898 being coupes, the remaining 123 convertibles).

Yet the model was actually a simple development of the DB4 Series V Vantage, featuring the same basic Touring-designed body shape, cowled headlights and Superleggera method of construction. The main aesthetical differences between the two were twin fuel fillers and a slightly different shape of bootlid, while power came from a 4.0-litre version of the straight-six engine that with three SU HD8 carburettors produced 282bhp, 40 more than the DB4's 3.7.

When Autocar magazine tested a standard DB5 in its 18 September 1964 issue, it reached 60mph in just 8.1 seconds and had a top speed of 143.6mph making it one of the fastest British production cars of the time, putting it on a par with the Bristol 408, Gordon-Keeble and Jensen C-V8.

A rare Vantage version of the DB5 arrived in September 1964 (of which a mere 65 were produced) that was equipped with triple Webers and resulted in the 4.0-litre producing 314bhp.

The first handful of cars had the same David Brown Ltd sourced four-speed gearbox as its predecessor but, from March 1965, this was replaced with a five-speed 'box from ZF that had originally been an option.

Between 1965 and 1966, Aston Martin transformed the final 37 DB5 chassis into the Short Chassis Volante (the first time the name was used) that featured some of the same design cues as the new DB6.

DB6 1965-1971

Wanting to make the DB5 more practical but rejecting proposals from Touring for an all-new replacement, Aston Martin decided to give the existing car a major facelift, resulting in the DB6. Although the nose was left largely alone, the wheelbase was lengthened by 3.75in and the roofline was raised by two inches resulting in more rear interior space. The changes, though, meant the new car lost a little of its predecessor's crisp proportions while a small lip at the rear edge of the boot to counteract aerodynamic lift was never popular with Aston Martin's traditionally conservative clientele.

While the standard engine was the same 282bhp 4.0-litre as the DB5, the Vantage model now had 325bhp resulting in a 0-60mph time of six seconds and a 147mph top speed. As with the DB4 and DB5, there was a convertible variant which again used the Volante name.

Another change was to move away from the pure Superleggera construction of the DB4 and DB5 with the frame now made from a mixture of metal tubes plus other steel sections. Yet despite this change and the car being considerably longer, the DB6's weight increase over the DB5 was a minimal 7.7kg (17lb).

The DB6 Mk2 arrived in summer 1969 and differed from its predecessor by having slightly wider wheelarches to accommodate broader wheels and tyres. Power steering now became standard and a 10.5in-diameter clutch plate was fitted. There was also the option of AE Brico fuel injection, but this wasn't popular and just 46 left the company's Newport Pagnell factory with it fitted; the rest had carburettors.

Although it lost some of the DB5's sharpness and was never used by Bond, the DB6 was still relatively popular; when production ended in 1971, 1,788 had left Aston Martin's Newport Pagnell factory.

DBS & DBS V8 1967-1972

By the late Sixties, the traditional lines of the DB6 that had first debuted with the DB4 a decade ago were starting to look old-fashioned, especially compared to newer cars such as the Jensen Interceptor, Maserati Ghibli and Mercedes-Benz SL. After once again turning to Touring but rejecting its proposal (which it had called the DBS), it was the work of one of Aston Martin's own young designers, William Towns, that (Sir) David Brown preferred.

Using the DB6's chassis, which had been widened by six inches, the new car was very different from its predecessor hence it adopted the DBS name rather than DB7 like everyone had been expecting. Not only was it wider and lower, but the crisper styling, squared-off nose, larger grille, quad headlights and fastback tail made it a handsome but arguably more purposeful car than the DB6 had been. It was also the first road-going Aston Martin to use a De Dion rear axle, something the company had first trialled with the Lagonda Rapide earlier in the decade.

The DBS was only ever available in coupe form; it would take another nine years before Aston Martin finally developed a convertible version.

The car was supposed to use a new 5.3-litre V8 that Tadek Marek had been working on for some time, but it wasn't ready for the car's 1967 debut meaning the DBS was initially powered by the company's by-now venerable 4.0-litre straight-six that, as with the DB6, produced 282bhp, while the Vantage had 325bhp.

DBS V8

Finally arriving two years later, the V8 was built alongside the straight-six model. With 360bhp, the engine transformed the DBS from a gentle grand tourer into a genuine sports car, reaching 60mph in just 5.9 seconds and a 162mph top speed. Although largely identical to the 4.0-litre models, the V8 could be identified by a larger front air dam and alloy wheels.

The DBS was discontinued in 1972 after 787 had been produced. It was replaced by the Vantage (basically the 4.0-litre model but with single round headlights of which a mere 70 were produced between 1972 and 1973) plus the visually similar AMV8 that would become the backbone of Aston Martin production for the next 17 years.

AMV8 1972-1989

Essentially a DBS V8 but with a new nose, the new AMV8 model from 1972 featured a smaller grille and dual round headlights.

Originally fitted with Bosch fuel injection (cars with this are recognisable by an open-air intake that was lower than those of the later cars fitted with carburettors), this was found to be troublesome and so in 1973 it was replaced by a more traditional set-up of four twin choke 42mm Webers plus a much larger air scoop. Although it dropped power to 310bhp, it was still very quick, reaching 60mph in 6.2 seconds.

Following Aston Martin entering receivership in 1974, when production finally restarted two years later, one of the first tasks for the new owners was to update the AMV8.

The result was the unofficially named Oscar India of 1978 (the moniker coming from the registration of the Cessna aircraft owned by the company's managing director, Alan Curtis), which had been given a slight makeover that consisted of a rear boot spoiler similar to that of the new Vantage, while the bonnet intake was closed resulting in a discreet power bulge.

Plus, following the new V8 Volante from June 1978 that featured an interior of burr walnut, as part of the Oscar India facelift, the coupe followed suit. Other changes included a hide rather than a cloth headlining, restyled headrests, a new centre console with a cigarette lighter for rear passengers plus improved air-conditioning.

The final iteration of the AMV8 debuted at the 1986 New York Motor Show and received Weber electronic fuel injection which deleted the need for a bonnet bulge meaning the bonnet was flat with no air intake.

Over two decades after the original DBS had made its debut, the AMV8 was finally phased out in 1989, replaced by the new Virage.

V8 Vantage 1977-1989

Knowing the now elderly AMV8 needed to be kept relevant for a few more years, Aston Martin's new owners decided more power was the answer.

This was achieved by the same modifications given to the Lagonda saloon, including cylinder heads with significantly larger valves which, when coupled with high-lift cams and larger 48 IDF Weber carburettors with revised inlet manifolds, larger diameter trunking and hotter spark plugs, resulted in around 375bhp, an increase of 70bhp.

There was also stiffer suspension, spacers for the rear wheels, the adoption of Koni shock absorbers and wider tyres (255mm). It differed physically from the standard V8 by a front air dam, tail spoiler, Perspex headlamp covers (although these were soon dropped), and twin 7in Cibie spotlights recessed into the grille. Wind tunnel tests resulted in the radiator grille being blanked off since it increased coolant temperature at idle from 85 to 95 degrees, which was the optimum temperature for engine efficiency.

When the V8 Vantage debuted in early 1977, at £20k it was a whopping £3,000 more than the entry V8. To put that into perspective, in 1977 a Ford Escort RS Mexico was a little over £3k.

For the Oscar India update from 1978, the Vantage received an integrated rear spoiler and a smoother bonnet bulge plus a slight increase in power, to 390bhp. Although the AMV8 received fuel injection in 1986, the Vantage didn't and continued using Webers.

The Vantage Volante from 1986 had the same power as the coupe but also an outlandish bodykit which wasn't universally liked. One of those that wasn't a fan was HRH King Charles (then Prince Charles, Prince of Wales), who ordered a Volante with the Vantage engine upgrades but minus the bodykit. Although never an official model, Aston Martin sold another 21 similar cars that together are now known as the Prince of Wales specification.

The 1986–1989 X-Pack was a further upgrade before the car was replaced by the Virage, with Cosworth pistons and Nimrod racing-type heads producing 403bhp

Lagonda 1979-1990

Other than a long-wheelbase version of the DBS V8 designed by William Towns, which had started as a one-off prototype in 1969 used by Sir David Brown before seven production models were made in 1974, the Lagonda name hadn't been seen since the Rapide a decade earlier.

Having been sold again in 1975, after going bankrupt the year before, Aston Martin's new board of directors didn't want to give up on the Lagonda brand. So, in February 1976, plans were made for a new model that had an ambitious target of being ready for the British Motor Show just eight months later.

Towns was again asked to design the car but what he came up with was nothing like his previous model, a large, razor-sharp saloon that was the epitome of the wedge styling that was popular at the time and which he would become synonymous with.

Although the engine was Aston Martin's familiar 5.3-litre V8, not only did the car use a brand-new and substantial platform but it was an electronic tour de force with never-seen-before levels of equipment. This included digital read-outs in the dash plus touch-sensitive buttons to control all of the car's functions, whose lengthy development is one of the reasons why the car didn't reach production until 1979.

The Lagonda was updated twice, first in 1986 when fuel injection replaced the four Weber carburettors which increased power to 305bhp, plus new and improved vacuum fluorescent display instrumentation. The second facelift arrived a year later that saw slightly rounder lines, fixed headlights instead of the pop-ups plus 16in alloys.

With 645 cars produced, it made Towns' Lagonda one of the most successful Aston Martins of the immediate pre-Ford era and helped keep the company afloat throughout the turbulent Seventies and early Eighties, which considering its nicheness was a remarkable achievement.

V8 Zagato 1986-1987

Aston Martin's first tie-up with the Italian coachbuilder Zagato in over 20 years was based on the V8 Vantage. The model stemmed from the company's then chairman Victor Gauntlett's desire to cash in on the trend for low-volume collectors' models such as the Ferrari 288 GTO and Porsche 959.

Rolling chassis complete with engine, gearbox suspension and wiring were constructed at Newport Pagnell before being shipped to Milan. After being shaped the old-fashioned way on a wooden master buck, the largely aluminium panels (the nose and rear section were from a glass-fibre composite) were then added and the interior trimmed. The completed cars were then transported back to Aston Martin for testing.

The work of Zagato's chief designer, Giuseppe Mittino, by being very hard and angular, was very different from the car it was based on, but thanks to its wide DB2-like grille, there was no doubting the car's heritage. Plus, although it used the same wheelbase as the Vantage, at 14ft 4.75in, the car was around a foot shorter giving it a much squatter appearance while its lines were squarer and more angular.

To make sure there was enough power for the car to reach the desired 300kph, at the last-minute, Aston Martin decided to use Weber 48 IDF carburettors rather than the Magneti Marelli fuel injection the standard AMV8 had been given. This meant the bonnet needed a power bulge for the carburettor's airbox. However, those Webers together with high-lift camshafts, larger porting to the cylinder heads plus a 10.2:1 compression ratio resulted in a 410bhp version of the V8, later called the 580X, that was originally developed for the standard Vantage.

Ensuring exclusivity, just 52 coupes were produced followed by 37 Volantes the following year.

Virage & V8 Coupe 1990-2000

By the late Eighties, the company was finally in a position to replace the now ancient V8 model. Designed by two Royal College of Art tutors, John Heffernan and Ken Greenley, the result was a longer, wider and much more conservative car than its predecessor but still very much an Aston Martin.

It still used the company's trusty Tadek Marek-designed 5.3-litre V8 but, to be compatible with lead-free petrol and able to meet UK and American emission laws yet without losing performance, it was given four valves per cylinder by Callaway Engineering based in Connecticut in the US. The power of the modified engine was quoted at 326bhp with 365lb ft of torque compared to 305bhp/340lb ft of the final version of the V8 saloon. However, since there wasn't initially a Vantage version, for those who wanted more power, in 1992 Aston Martin Works offered a 6.3-litre conversion that also included the option of a bodykit. A Volante version arrived at the same time.

Although the critics appreciated the car's performance and refinement, customers never liked the design. And so, in 1996, after 411 Virage coupes and 223 Volantes had been built, the car was given a facelift that included some of the new features previously seen on the Vantage two years earlier, such as the headlights, grille, front spoiler with two fog lights and circular rear lights.

Facelifted V8 coupe from 1996

The update also used the same cylinder heads and block as the Vantage, which increased the power to 350bhp. The dashboard now featured veneer rather than the plastic binnacle, a design to be seen with the Virage Volante and repeated with the Vantage. To distance itself from the car's unloved predecessor, the Virage name was dropped and it was renamed the V8 Coupe. Just 100 hardtops and 64 Volantes (which had 7in added to its wheelbase) were built before production came to an end in 2000.

Vantage 1992-2000

Due to its long development time, the Vantage version of the Virage didn't arrive until 1992. Rather than use the 6.3-litre V8 engine that Aston Martin Works Service was currently offering to Virage owners, the engineers decided to stick with the standard car's 32-valve 5.3 instead, meaning the extra power had to be found another way. The answer was two Eaton superchargers that increased power to 550bhp and 550lb ft of torque. For the engine to cope with the extra power, a new crankshaft and Cosworth pistons were required. The V8 was then mated to the same ZF six-speed manual box as those Virages fitted with the 6.3-litre.

To counteract the axle tramp (or wheel hop) that the early prototypes suffered from (caused by the increased power), the car needed substantial suspension changes such as stronger springs and shock absorbers, but this resulted in an overly harsh ride. The answer was a torque tube, a stationary housing around the driveshafts that holds the rear end in place during acceleration and braking.

Aesthetically, the Vantage was closer to what John Heffernan and Ken Greenley had originally envisaged for the Virage, but which had been watered down by Aston Martin. And so, with its six square headlights under rectangular Perspex covers, twin side vents plus substantially flared wheelarches to accommodate the larger wheels and tyres, the result was a much leaner and aggressive car than what it was based on. The Virage's original VW Scirocco-sourced rear light clusters had been swapped for more stylish individual circular units while an inbuilt rear spoiler helped to promote 150-170lb of downforce. The result was a handsome and distinctive car, but with 550bhp, it was also the most powerful production Aston Martin. With a 186mph top speed and a 0-60mph time of 4.6 seconds, this made it one of the world's fastest cars at the time.

For those that wanted even more power, a 600bhp – the V600 – update was available for existing cars through Aston Martin Works. The final 40 Vantages were a limited-edition model (pictured here) to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the company's 1959 Le Mans victory and featured five-spoke magnesium alloy wheels, a blanked radiator with twin openings, bonnet cooling ducts plus redesigned wing vents similar to those of the race-winning DBR1.

Vantage production ended in 2000 after 511 had been built.

DB7 & DB7 Vantage 1994-2004

As Aston Martin's first arguably mainstream model, the DB7 is important in the company's history. Yet ironically, the car started life as a Jaguar project, the XJ40-based XJ41, in 1980. When Ford cancelled the car in the late Eighties after buying the company, its designer, Keith Helfet, quickly realised the project's hard points matched those of the XJS' chassis meaning it could be reborn at a much cheaper cost.

Tom Walkinshaw from the company's performance partner, JaguarSport, agreed to build the car at its Kidlington-based facility as a replacement for the XJ220 supercar, which it had been producing since 1992. However, unbeknown to Jaguar, with Aston Martin also owned by Ford, the Scot approached the company's then chairman, Walter Hayes, saying if the car was made into an Aston Martin it could demand a much higher price. Hayes readily agreed and following a slight redesign by Ian Callum, which included the addition of the Aston Martin radiator grille, changing the rake of the screen plus using off-the-shelf components from Ford's huge parts bin (which included Mazda 323 rear lights and door handles), the car was reborn in 1994 as the Aston Martin DB7.

Even the engine was a recycled Jaguar unit, a supercharged 3.2-litre version of its venerable AJ6 straight-six. But by producing 335bhp, it still made the car as fast as it was good-looking, hence why 1,578 coupes and 895 Volantes (that arrived in 1996) were produced.

But due to using an old engine and an even older chassis, by the late Nineties, the car was being left behind by newer models and so it was decided to give the car a 420bhp 6.0-litre V12 that had been developed by Ford's engineers in Dearborn. Smooth and powerful, the engine together with the minor facelift by Ian Callum that included a bigger grille, larger front fog lights plus a new style of alloy wheels and other detail changes, gave the car – now called the DB7 Vantage – a new lease of life, transforming what had been a second-rate sports car into a genuine grand tourer. The GT, though, from 2003 which had another 15bhp and stiffer suspension did albeit briefly give the car its sporting edge back. When production finished in December

2003 (sales continued into 2004), 4,150 V12 engined DB7 Vantage coupes and Volantes had been produced, which together with the 3.2 straight-six model, made the DB7 the company's most successful model until the V8 Vantage from 2005.

To give the Vantage some publicity towards the end of the car's life, between 2002 and 2003, the Italian coachbuilder Zagato rekindled its relationship with Aston Martin by rebodying the car, first with a handsome new coupe, followed by a roofless convertible called the DB AR1. A mere 100 examples of each were produced.

Vanquish 2001-2007

The origins of the Vanquish go back to an Ian Callum-designed concept called Project Vantage that debuted at the 1998 Detroit Motor Show. With Ford seeing Aston Martin as the pilot for forthcoming technology, the car was overflowing with new developments, such as a chassis constructed from aluminium honeycomb while aluminium chassis sections and roof pillars were reinforced with carbon fibre.

It was also the first Aston Martin to be powered by a V12, beating the DB7 Vantage by a year. A 5,935cc unit with chain-driven twin overhead camshafts per bank and four valves per cylinder, it developed 442bhp and 320lb ft of torque.

Although a concept, Ford's vice-president, Jac Nasser, personally gave Aston Martin's chairman, Bob Dover, the green light to put the car into production.

The resultant Vanquish from 2001 looked similar to Project Vantage and was also the first production Aston Martin to feature a bespoke bonded aluminium composite chassis with a carbon-fibre backbone. A steel, aluminium, and carbon-fibre subframe supported the engine while carbon-fibre windscreen pillars supported the roof. The 6.0-litre V12 was also retained, now in what Aston Martin called a 'Stage 2' state of tune. This included a new air induction system, uprated camshafts and manifolds plus a revised crankshaft and valve gear which together increased power to 460bhp giving the car a 186mph top speed and a 0-60mph time of 5.2 seconds.

Transmission was a similar six-speed Tremec manual gearbox as used in the DB7 Vantage, but changes were actuated by an electro-hydraulic clutch via Formula 1-style paddles on the steering column, a system that was developed by Magneti Marelli and previously seen in the Ferrari Modena F1.

Fast and good-looking, the Vanquish was deemed imposing enough to be the first Aston Martin driven by James Bond since the AMV8 in 1986's The Living Daylights when it featured in the 2002 spy film, Die Another Day.

After more than 1,500 Vanquishes had been produced, in 2004 Aston Martin introduced a more powerful version, the S. Thanks to new cylinder head castings with fully machined inlet ports and combustion chambers that improved airflow, plus new fuel injectors and revised engine mapping, the power of the V12 was increased to 520bhp. This gave the car a genuine 200mph-plus top speed while the dash to 60mph dropped slightly to 4.8 seconds. After 1,086 examples of the Vanquish S model had been produced, the car came to an end in 2007, replaced by the DB9-based DBS as Aston Martin's flagship model.

DB9 2004-2016

The look of the DB9 was initially started by Aston Martin's design director, Ian Callum, but when the Scot left for the same position at Jaguar in 1999, it was finished by his replacement, the former BMW designer from Denmark, Henrik Fisker. An effortlessly elegant and graceful car, in one sweep it made the well-matured beauty it replaced, the decade-old DB7, look old-fashioned and awkward.

Yet the new car wasn't called the DB8, as many had expected, since Aston Martin was worried customers would incorrectly assume it was V8-powered since under the bonnet was roughly the same 6.0-litre V12 as the outgoing DB7 Vantage. But with carbon-fibre driveshafts, new cams, inlet and exhaust manifolds as well as a revised engine management and lubrication system, its maximum power had been increased from 420bhp to 450bhp, resulting in the DB9 having an incredible 180mph top speed.

The DB9 was the first Aston to have been based on the company's then new VH (vertical horizontal) platform that would be the basis for all future models, although some elements of its design were first seen on the chassis used by the first Vanquish from 2001.

As a testament to its speed, a successful racing version, the DBR9, debuted in 2005, the highlight of its long career being victory of the GT1 class at the 2007 and 2008 24 Hours of Le Mans.

A handsome Volante version arrived in 2005 and the car was given two facelifts; a minor one in 2010 followed by a more comprehensive update two years later that saw 60 percent of the panels redesigned. Under the bonnet was the new-generation V12 engine that was developed for the then new Vanquish that pushed power up to 509bhp.

As with the DB7, a faster GT model arrived in 2015 that saw the power of the V12 increase to 540bhp as well as several minor aesthetical changes.

After over 16,500 DB9s had been made, production finally came to an end in 2016.

V8 Vantage & V12 Vantage 2005-2018

Arriving in 2005, the Vantage was the second Aston Martin to use the VH platform. Heavily based on the AMV8 Vantage concept that was revealed at the Detroit Motor Show in January 2003, although the family resemblance was clear, by being smaller, lighter and much more muscular in appearance, if the DB9 was a yacht then this was a nimble speedboat.

It was powered by a new-to-Aston 4.3-litre which, although related to Jaguar's 4.2-litre AJ unit, was repackaged with a dry sump to drag down its mass and the car's centre of gravity to the benefit of its handling while the inlet-only variable valve timing was unique to Aston Martin. The engine produced 380bhp and through a six-speed Graziano manual gearbox the car could reach 60mph in as little as 4.8 seconds and had a top speed of 175mph.

A roadster version arrived in 2006 and then, to answer criticisms that the original 4.3 wasn't powerful enough, in 2008 the engine's capacity was increased to 4.7 litres. The extra 455cc pushed the power to 420bhp (an increase of 11 percent) and torque to 347lb ft (up 15 percent) which lowered the 0-60mph time by 0.2 of a second to 4.7, making it identical to the DB9's.

A 6.0-litre model arrived in 2009 that featured the same V12 as the DBS and produced 510bhp and 420lb ft of torque. This power together with the car's kerb weight of 1,680kg resulted in the V12 Vantage being able to accelerate from 0-62mph in 4.2 seconds and achieve a top speed of 190mph.

Together, the V8 and V12 models were the basis of 28 different variants, which resulted in the Vantage becoming the most successful Aston Martin in the company's long history. Between 2005 and 2018, when the 6.0-litre came to an end (a year after the 4.7) over 24,700 had been produced.

DBS 2007-2012

When production of the Vanquish ended in 2007, Aston Martin needed a new top-of-the-range model. The answer was to take the DB9 and add a bodykit that had similar design elements to those of the DBR9 racing car that won the GT1 class of the 2007 and 2008 24 Hours of Le Mans. This included twin bonnet air vents, a gaping air intake below the grille, a larger bootlid spoiler, a carbon-fibre splitter and powerful-looking sculpted sill extensions. Plus, there was a new flat undertray and carbon-fibre rear diffuser to boost rear downforce.

But the car was more than just a DB9 with a bodykit since under the bonnet was a more powerful version of Aston Martin's 6.0-litre V12. Thanks to bigger inlet ports plus a higher 10.9:1 compression ratio it now produced 510bhp, an increase of 60bhp over the DB9.

The bonnet, bootlid, wings and doors were all made from carbon fibre, shaving 30kg off the car's kerb weight while standard carbon brakes – a first for an Aston Martin road car – shed another 12.5kg. Even the two vestigial rear seats of the DB9 were ditched, making the DBS a strict two-seater (although they became an option in 2010). The result of this weight saving was that at 1,695kg the DBS weighed 65kg less than a DB9.

This lightness together with its more powerful V12 transformed the DBS into a genuine supercar; 60mph was reached in 4.3 seconds while its top speed was 191mph, both figures faster than those of the DB9.

Before its official debut in 2007, the DBS had featured in the James Bond film Casino Royale, which was released the year before. The DBS was apparently chosen by long-term Bond producer Barbara Broccoli when Aston's then CEO, Dr Ulrich Bez, had personally invited her to see the car in late 2005 while it was still under development in the design studio.

When production of the DBS ended in 2012, 2,536 coupes had been built plus 845 Volantes which had arrived in 2009.

One-77 2009-2012

In 2009 the-then boss of Aston, Dr Ulrich Bez, stunned the car world when he announced that Aston Martin was going to build a limited-edition supercar that would cost a million pounds, taking on the likes of Bugatti and Pagani.

When the finished car made its debut a few months later, the One-77 – so named since just 77 production models would be built –bore a resemblance to the current models (wide grille, swept-back headlights, a prolonged bonnet and cab-back stance with a pert tail), but this was definitely not some sort of powered-up, flared-out Vanquish spin-off covered in a bodykit. The car was designed around a race-spec carbon-fibre monocoque with exquisite carbon subframes cradling the front-mid-mounted engine and inboard suspension. Incredibly, the lights, wheels, doors and glass were all tooled specifically for this ultra-low-volume model.

As Aston Martin's flagship model, there was only one engine it could have chosen, its normally aspirated 6.0-litre V12, which had been updated by Cosworth who swapped the usual cylinder liners in favour of a nanoscopic low-friction coating and increased capacity to a mighty 7.3 litres. Thanks to lighter internal parts, the engine's weight fell by 15 percent to 260kg.

Resulting in 750bhp, the One-77 was at its launch the most powerful naturally aspirated car in the world, good for a claimed top speed of 220mph, with 0-62mph achievable in 3.7 seconds.

Inside, the sills, the door panels and even the floor were trimmed in glossy carbon fibre. Everything else was either covered in rich leather or black anodised aluminium.

Despite its hefty £1.4million price tag, production of the One-77 was completed in 2012 with all 77 examples sold.

Rapide 2010-2020

The final all-new model to use the VH architecture was the Rapide, Aston Martin's first four-door saloon since the Lagonda 30 years earlier.

Although designed under Aston's current chief creative officer, Marek Reichman, it was clearly influenced by the earlier Ian Callum- and Henrik Fisker-designed models. Only the different-shaped lower air vents set the trio apart for the casual observer.

Yet it was still a handsome and elegant car, looking more like an elongated coupe with close-to-perfect proportions than a frumpy saloon. This meant, though, interior packaging was tight for a four-seater, especially in the rear.

Power came courtesy of Aston Martin's always magnificent 6.0-litre V12 that pumped out the same 470bhp as that in the DB9. Mated to a six-speed automatic gearbox (there was never a manual option), it resulted in a 0-60mph time of 4.7 seconds and a 188mph top speed, both similar to its coupe counterpart.

A faster S replaced the standard model in 2013. With the power of the V12 increased to 550bhp, it resulted in a 0-60mph time of a slightly lower 4.5 seconds.

Five years later, Aston Martin unveiled an even faster version, the AMR (pictured below). Drawing on technology and character from the unit used in the Vantage GT12, it produced 595bhp although its 205mph top speed and a 0-60mph time of 4.2 seconds were just 2mph and two-tenths quicker than the Rapide S.

Visually, the AMR included a large and aggressive front grille plus circular daytime running lights identical to those of the Vanquish Zagato models. The only time a feature from one of the Italian-designed cars was used elsewhere was further proof of the AMR's exclusivity.

To reduce lift there was also a larger front splitter, rear diffuser and bootlid lip spoiler, all produced from carbon fibre, as were the deeper side sills and bonnet with large ventilation inserts to minimise weight. In a first for Aston Martin, the car wore massive 21in forged alloy wheels, the multispoke design aiding brake cooling.

Just 188 AMRs were produced before production of the Rapide came to an end in 2020.

Virage 2011-2012

Debuting at the 2011 Geneva Motor Show in March, the Virage resurrected the name of the largely unloved model produced between 1990 and 1996. This new car was designed to occupy the narrow space between the smaller DB9 and the more powerful DBS, offering the elegance of the former with the performance of the latter.

Although similar in appearance to the DB9, the sills and skirts were now bolstered, the grille was ever so slightly wider, the headlights borrowed from the Rapide and there was a subtle rear diffuser. The result was a slightly more masculine-looking car than its sibling, the updates suggesting an extra dose of sportiness.

Again, using the VH platform, power came from Aston Martin's familiar 6.0-litre V12 that in this application generated 490bhp and 420lb ft of torque resulting in the Virage being able to accelerate to 60mph in just 4.6 seconds and a 186mph top speed.

"With both the Virage Volante and the coupe, Aston has created a terrific car," was *Top Gear's* view in 2011. "It's certainly the pick of the bunch compared to the 9 and S, because its chassis and driving experience feel much more sophisticated. As the flagship model, the DBS looks safe from the Virage's encroachment, but the DB9... well, Aston needs the variety in its model line-up to keep attracting customers in an ever-more competitive market. But if it were our money being spent, we know where we'd be putting it."

The interior was largely the same as the DB9's although critics at the time noted it was slightly better built using a higher quality of materials.

A Volante joined the coupe in 2012 which wasn't long before production came to an end due to the DB9's major facelift. It's thought around 1,000 Virages were produced.

V12 Zagato 2012-2013

Created as a way to celebrate Aston Martin and Zagato's 50th anniversary of making cars together, the V12 Zagato was based on the Vantage, only clad in a handcrafted aluminium and carbon skin. This featured several elements seen on previous cars from the Milanese carrozzeria such as the 'double-bubble' roof and short body overhangs. Weighing just 1,680kg and using a 519bhp version of Aston Martin's V12, the car had a 0-62mph time of 4.2 seconds and a 190mph top speed.

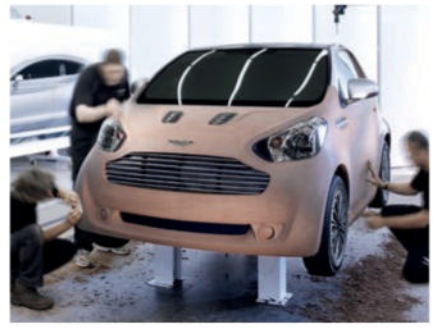
Unusually for a car using the Zagato name, it was actually engineered in-house by some of the same team behind the One-77 before being built in the same area of the Aston Martin's Gaydon factory where the limited-edition supercar had been. The link with Zagato came from the aluminium bodywork made by Coventry Prototype Panels (CPP) that had bought the Italian company in 2011.

The car took around 2,000 hours to assemble, five times that of a standard V12 Vantage. Little wonder, the V12 Zagato cost £396,000 in the UK, double that of the car it was based on. After originally planning on making 150 examples, a lack of orders meant a mere 61 examples were made before production ceased in 2012.

Launched first in a harder competition 'Corsa' specification, the road-going 'Stradale' followed a year later and differed from the former by lacking its black quick-release catches on the bonnet and boot, while its exhaust pipes were further apart.

Cygnet 2011-2013

Perhaps the strangest Aston Martin you'll find in our guide is the diminutive Cygnet, since it started life as the Toyota iQ. Legend has it, the car's origins stem from when the chairman of Aston Martin, Ulrich Bez, and Akio Toyoda, the-then president of Toyota Motor Co and grandson of its founder, met at the 2009 Nürburgring 24-hour race. During a late-night party, Bez admitted to Toyoda that Aston Martin needed a small car to lower the company's CO2. After Toyoda replied that he'd been disappointed by the sales of the iQ, a plan to help each other out was quickly hatched. When the Cygnet reached production the following year, completed iQ donor cars in black, white, or silver, were shipped from the Toyota factory in Takaoka, Japan, to Gaydon where they were transformed into Cygnets, which included being repainted in the colour of the customer's choice. The car also received the Aston Martin grille plus other detail changes. The 150 hours it took to produce a Cygnet was just 50 shy of the DB9's build time, making it very labour intensive for a small car.



Although the interior was reupholstered in the same quality of leather as Aston Martin's other models, under the skin was the standard Toyota iQ mechanical components including the 1.33-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a six-speed manual or continuously variable transmission (CVT).

Yet at £30,995, the Cygnet was twice as much as a standard iQ, even though it offered the same level of performance and interior room.

Unsurprisingly, the car was always a slow seller. Despite Aston Martin initially announcing up to 4,000 would be sold annually, when production quietly came to an end in September 2013 a mere 300 had been sold, split 50/50 between the UK and the rest of Europe. This makes it one of the rarest post-war models the British company has ever produced.

Vanquish 2012-2018

Replacing the DBS as Aston Martin's flagship model, although the Vanquish – a return of the name first seen in 2001 – looked similar to both it and the original DB9, several changes made it a new car. To begin with, whereas all the other DB9 derivatives had always been skinned in aluminium, the most important change for the Vanquish was the use of carbon fibre for all the body panels which contributed to a 25 percent increase in torsional rigidity. The new material also gave Aston Martin's design team some new possibilities such as the scalloped roof, the One-77 supercar-style door strakes and the cut-out spoiler in the boot.

The Vanquish might have been 40kg lighter than the DBS but only 6kg of that was down to the carbon fibre. Aston Martin had worked hard to lower the weight elsewhere and so there was also carbon ceramic brakes as standard plus carbon fibre in the rear structure such as the rear floor. And by using hollow-cast rather than solid-cast aluminium, the front chassis was also 13 percent lighter than that of its predecessor's.

The interior was again similar to the previous model's but featured a redesigned centre console with touchscreen interfaces and new rotary dials. Improvements in packaging resulted in more interior room and at 368 litres, the boot was 60 percent larger than that of the DBS.

Although the familiar 6.0 V12 was reused, it was seriously upgraded for the Vanquish with a revised block and new heads plus variable valve timing on both camshafts, larger throttle bodies, new intake manifolds and fully machined combustion chambers. To help handling, the engine also sat 19mm lower than previous models. Power and torque rose from the DBS's 510bhp and 420lb ft to 565bhp and 457lb ft.

A handsome Volante arrived the following year while to further distinguish the Vanquish from the then new DB11, in 2016 Aston Martin introduced the S model that saw the power increase to 595bhp plus the addition of a bodykit. Production ended in 2018 when it was succeeded by the DBS Superleggera.

The third generation of Vanquish was announced in late 2024 and will be powered by the twin turbo 5.2-litre V12 that debuted in the DB11 in 2016, but now making 824bhp and 738lb ft of torque. The car uses the same platform as the DB12 and Vantage.

Lagonda Taraf 2015-2016

As the first Lagonda since the William Towns model (which it was clearly inspired by), the Taraf was developed by Aston Martin's Q division, which specialises in bespoke cars and customising existing models to customer specifications.

It used the same third generation of the VH platform as the facelifted DB9, Virage and Vanquish, but with a lengthened wheelbase to ensure it offered more room than the coupes. The body panels were then made of carbon fibre reinforced with plastic.

Unsurprisingly, the luxury limousine was powered by Aston Martin's familiar 6.0-litre V12 which in the Taraf produced 533bhp resulting in a 0-62mph time of 4.4 seconds and a maximum speed of 195mph.

Despite its exclusivity, much of the interior was borrowed from other Aston Martin models, such as the centre console which was taken straight from the Rapide.

The car was initially an exclusive model for the Middle East market (according to Aston Martin, Taraf means 'ultimate luxury' in Arabic), which was demonstrated at the car's debut at the 2014 Geneva Motor Show when it had a million-dollar price tag. As the American *MotorTrend* remarked at the time, "This $1 million sedan, hand-built by Aston Martin, costs more than five times as much as a Mercedes-Maybach S600. Yet it matters little to the people who will buy the Taraf."

But following interest from other markets, days ahead of the 2015 Geneva Show, Aston Martin announced the car could now be ordered in the UK, Europe and South Africa. It was initially planned that just 100 would be handmade at the same dedicated area of the Gaydon factory as the One-77, but this later increased to 200. However, when production ceased towards the end of December 2016, just 120 had been delivered.

Vulcan 2015-2016

Following the Ferrari FXX and McLaren P1 GTR, in 2015 Aston Martin joined the market for exclusive track cars with the Vulcan. Designed by Aston Martin's creative officer Marek Reichman, the two-door coupe took inspiration from the company's then-current models such as the Vantage, DB9 and One-77. Just 24 of these supercars were produced, one for each hour of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, priced at $2.3 million each.

The Vulcan was powered by a 7.0-litre version of Aston Martin's normally aspirated V12 that produced a staggering 820bhp and 575lb ft of torque resulting in a 208mph top speed (minus the wing) while it could reach 60mph in a stomach-churning 2.9 seconds.

Using cutting edge and racing-inspired engineering influenced by Aston Martin's successful GT racing campaign, the car featured a carbon-fibre monocoque and body constructed by the company's long-term specialist body engineering and manufacturing partner, Multimatic, that had also been involved with the Rapide AMR, One-77 and Taraf.

There was an integral limited-slip differential, magnesium torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft and Brembo racing brake calipers acting on carbon ceramic racing discs which measure 380mm in diameter at the front and 360mm at the rear.

"Aston Martin Vulcan is, by its very nature, a rare and thrilling supercar," said the company's then CEO, Dr Andy Palmer, at the time. "Designed and engineered to deliver a genuinely bespoke driving experience that draws on our rich heritage, this car tailors its power and handling to both the capabilities of the driver and the characteristics of the track."

In 2017, the company unveiled an AMR Pro package for the car (pictured below) that included extensive aerodynamic enhancements that increased downforce by 23 percent, plus shortened gearchanges

Zagato Vanquish 2016-2017

Just as the Zagato Coupe and DB AR1 saw out production of the DB7 Vantage in the early 2000s, a series of four special editions – which were again designed by the Italian house – did the same for the second generation of Vanquish 15 years later. Based on the more powerful S version, they were also the last new cars to use both Aston Martin's VH chassis and its 6.0-litre V12.

The series started in 2016 with the carbon fibre-bodied Zagato Concept that was based on the Vanquish S, complete with the production car's 595bhp version of the 5.9-litre V12 and its eight-speed semi-automatic gearbox. Revealed at the prestigious Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, held on the shores of Lake Como, as a handsome yet muscular coupe, it was clearly influenced by the recent Vulcan and One-77 supercars, yet having more of an Italian flavour.

A month later, it was announced the car would be put into limited production of just 99 examples, all of which would be built to order at Aston Martin's facility in Gaydon. Despite the £500,000 price tag, they all sold almost immediately after the car's announcement.

A Volante version soon followed that shared the same proportions as the coupe. Aston Martin's design boss, Marek Reichman, said the brand had, "endeavored to create an elegant, flowing shape that emphasises the car's sculptured rear haunches." As with the hardtop, a mere 99 would be produced, although this time it would cost a little over half a million.

Yet neither Aston nor its Italian partner was finished, since 12 months later, two further Vanquish-based limited editions were revealed; a Shooting Brake plus another convertible that, thanks to not having a roof, was accurately and excitingly named the Speedster. There were again 99 examples of the Shooting Brake – which, as its first factory-produced estate, Aston said it had been conceived as "an individual and exceptional practical GT" – but the Speedster was much more exclusive. Just 28 would be built but despite costing a little under £1m each, they again all sold almost immediately.

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DB11 2016-2023

With the DB10 name being used for a bespoke concept model developed specifically for the 2015 James Bond film, Spectre, the next production car in the range was the DB11. Arriving in 2016 (the Volante the following year), although the radical styling was a departure from the successful DB9-based cars, as a front-engined 2+2, it didn't stray far from Aston Martin's well-proven GT recipe.

There were, though, two other major differences over its predecessor; not only was the V12 now a 5.2-litre twin turbo but for the first time in the DB range's history, there was a V8 option, a Mercedes-Benz sourced 4.0-litre twin turbocharged unit, as used in the C63 AMG, marking the start of Aston Martin's long-standing and still-current technical partnership with the German company. With 503bhp, this 'entry' model still offered a four second 0-60mph time and a 187mph top speed.

With 600bhp, the V12 made the DB11 the most powerful DB model in the range's history, the engine dropping the 0-60mph dash down to just 3.6 seconds and giving a maximum top speed of 200mph.

The car used a brand-new bonded aluminium platform, the VH-II, that compared to the original used by the DB9, Vantage and Rapide was both stiffer and lighter, while the car's body panels were made of both aluminium and composite materials.

In 2018, Aston Martin announced an even faster version of the V12, the AMR, that pushed the power to 630bhp, which resulted in a 208mph top speed. It could be distinguished by much of the exterior detailing being in carbon fibre and gloss black, while the brightwork was also darkened. The AMR had the option of Stirling Green exterior paint complete with a lurid lime green stripe.

The DB11 continued until 2023 when it was replaced by the DB12.

Vantage 2017-present

V12 Vantage

Arriving a few months after the DB11 was a new generation of Vantage that visually took many of its styling cues from the DB10 concept that appeared in the 2015 Bond film, Spectre, such as its low front grille.

As with its larger sibling, the car again used the Mercedes-Benz's 4.0-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine that had a power output of 503bhp and 505lb ft of torque and is based on the same bonded aluminium platform. Initially a coupe, an open version of the new Vantage arrived in 2020.

In 2021, Aston Martin announced a limited-edition model to celebrate the company competing in Formula 1 for the first time since 1961. The F1 Edition featured a fixed rear wing, increased engine power to 528bhp, a top speed of 195mph while the time it took to accelerate to 62mph dropped from the standard car's 3.6 to 3.5 seconds.

In 2021, a V12 version of the Vantage arrived, but was limited to just 333 examples in coupe form. It used Aston Martin's 5.2-litre twin-turbocharged V12 with a power output of 690bhp and 555lb ft of torque. The V12 model had revised suspension, a 40mm increase in track width, a new aerodynamic kit which generated up to 204kg (450lb) of downforce and could reach 62mph in just 3.5 seconds. A convertible version of the V12 model arrived the following year, this time limited to 249 examples.

V8 Vantage

The V8 model was facelifted in mid-2024, its new nose bearing a strong resemblance to the DB12's, while the grille was 38 percent larger, with more-rounded headlights plus angular cooling gills that nod back to the One-77. The traditional Aston Martin side vents also made a comeback, while the rear bumper incorporated brake cooling vents and four slash-cut tail pipes.

Under the bonnet, the 4.0-litre V8 gained a new block and heads, larger twin turbochargers, modified cam profiles and improved cooling. Power was now 665bhp, allowing the car to reach 60mph in 3.4 seconds.

DBS Superleggera 2018-2023

Developed as a replacement for the second-generation Vanquish, the DBS Superleggera paid homage to the historic super lightweight construction technology by the famous Italian coachbuilder Touring, as used for the DB4,5 and 6.

Beneath the front-hinged carbon-fibre clamshell sat the same twin turbo 5.2-litre V12 that was first deployed in the DB11, only it was tweaked electronically to produce 715bhp and 664lb ft of torque. The latter figure necessitated an all-new transaxle gearbox: ZF's ultra-modern 96HP eight-speeder with the power sent to the rear wheels via a carbon-fibre propshaft. The Superleggera had a top speed of 211mph and blistering acceleration that dispatched 0-62mph in just 3.4 seconds.

The DBS's chassis was pure DB11, using the same aluminium platform and with a double-wishbone front and multilink rear suspension design, each with coil springs, Skyhook adaptive damping (changeable through GT, Sport and Sport Plus mode) and anti-roll bars front and rear.

There were some detail changes, though, since the DBS was laterally stiffer, with only 2.6 degrees of roll per g compared with 3.0 for the DB11.

As well as a Volante that followed the coupe in 2019, there were also two limited-edition models, the first being the '59, a project instigated by Aston Martin Cambridge that celebrated the 60th anniversary of the company's sole overall victory of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. All of the 24 examples were produced by Aston Martin's Q division and finished in Aston Martin Racing Green with gloss-finish carbon fibre on the roof panel and side strakes plus bronze detailing.

The second, the 770 Ultimate, arrived in 2023 as the DBS's swansong, the name coming from the amount of PS the V12 now produced (770PS, which equates to 759bhp) making it the most powerful production Aston Martin ever made, propelling the car to a top speed of 211mph. Front-end lateral stiffness was improved by 25 percent to provide maximum performance feel and response. With its 21in 'spiderweb' design of wheels (inspired by those that were optional on the Valkyrie) and small carbon-fibre aero tweaks such as a revised front splitter and side skirts, it set the car aside from the standard model. Just 300 of the 770 Ultimate coupes and 199 Volantes were produced before production of the DBS came to an end in 2023.

DBX 2019-present

With the likes of Bentley, Porsche and Rolls-Royce all producing SUVs, it was a market Aston Martin could no longer ignore and so following a 2015 concept, in 2019 the British company revealed a production model, the DBX, which was (and still is) built at a new factory at St Athan in South Wales.

Despite off-roaders having totally different proportions to the sort of sports cars Aston Martin was famed for, it still kept several of the company's styling cues such as the radiator grille. The result was a handsome car that despite its svelteness still offered a spacious interior which included 632 litres of boot space.

The DBX was based on a dedicated bonded aluminium platform and powered by a new version of the 4.0-litre, twin-turbocharged V8 engine first used in the DB11 and Vantage, which for the SUV pumped out an impressive 542bhp and 516lb ft of torque. This resulted in the car being able to accelerate from 0-62mph in 4.5 seconds and on to a top speed of 181mph.

Transmitting this power and torque to the road was a nine-speed automatic gearbox, allied to an all-wheel-drive system with active differentials featuring an active central differential and an electronic rear limited-slip differential (eDiff). This allowed the torque to be moved precisely both fore and aft in the vehicle and also across the rear axle.

"Does it feel like an Aston? Let's put it this way: it doesn't not feel like an Aston," was Autocar magazine's view in August 2020. "Alongside some long-bonnet coupés and short-bonnet supercars, it feels like the right third leg to the brand's line-up, something that will become an invaluable part of what looks to be shaping into a usefully diverse range."

Arriving in 2022, the even faster DBX707 used different turbos with additional cooling to create 707PS (697bhp) and 663lb ft of torque that Aston Martin claimed made it the world's most powerful luxury SUV, which it was until the 715bhp Ferrari Purosangue came along in 2023.

Valkyrie 2021-present

If the urban legend is correct, then the Valkyrie was originally conceived over four plates of bangers and mash eaten by Red Bull's design legend Adrian Newey, Red Bull's team principal Christian Horner, Aston Martin's then CEO Dr Andy Palmer, plus Simon Sproule, the-then head of Aston's marketing and communications in a pub near Milton Keynes. For a long time, Newey had wanted to develop the ultimate road car and Horner desperately wanted to keep him away from F1 rivals at Ferrari. The result was the Valkyrie, the fastest and most driver-focused car the company has ever made.

Power comes from an all-new 6.5-litre naturally aspirated 65-degree V12, co-developed with Cosworth, while a clever gearbox integrates an electric motor that draws power from a 1.8kWh battery pack supplied by Rimac, the Croatian automotive manufacturer. Together, the V12 and e-motor deliver a combined 1,139bhp yet due to being made entirely from carbon fibre, the car weighs a featherweight 1,270kg allowing it to accelerate to 62mph from standstill in a mere 2.6 seconds. Designed by Newey, the racing-inspired bodywork creates up to 1,100lb of downforce. Just 150 of the road-going Valkyries were produced plus another 40 track-only cars, the Valkyrie Pro, that are longer, lower, and wider. They also have a race dash, race seat, carbon clutch, Michelin slick tyres, and rotary knobs for traction control.


Valkyrie Spider

In August 2021, Aston Martin revealed a Spider variant with production commencing during the second half of 2022 with a stated intent of 85 examples being produced. It features a removable carbon-fibre roof and swaps the coupe model's gull-wing doors for a pair of front-hinged dihedral butterfly doors.

In 2024, Aston Martin announced the racing version, the Valkyrie AMR-LMH, would compete at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

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DB12 2023-present

Arriving in 2023, the DB12 was technically a major restyling of the DB11 with some design features of the DBS Superleggera plus a larger radiator grille, wider track and new LED headlights. To tell the DB11 and DB12 apart, the latter is wider and more purposeful and looks like it has far greater sporting intent.

A coupe was first, closely followed by a Volante a few months later. It was also the first model to feature the brand's new logo.

Although the DB12 was the first DB since the DB7 Vantage, 25 years ago, not to have a V12 version, power from the reworked 4.0-litre twin-turbocharged V8 was still up by 29 percent to 680bhp at 6,000rpm. Torque takes an even bigger leap, up 34 percent to 590lb ft. In a car weighing 1,685kg (85kg lighter compared with the launch-spec DB11 V12), that means 0-62mph in 3.5 seconds and a top speed of 202mph.

The chassis is a redesign of key components within the DB11's bonded aluminium monocoque, resulting in a seven percent improvement to torsional rigidity.

The DB12 was the first DB model with a torque-vectoring electronic rear differential (like that of the smaller Vantage) and also had firmer suspension springs and anti-roll bars than the DB11 had, plus new latest-generation adaptive dampers. But unlike its predecessor, to enhance precision and feedback it has a rigid-mounted electro-mechanical steering system.

"On the road, the DB12's V8 doesn't want for much – certainly not outright power, nor mid-range response, nor effusive audible presence," said *Autocar* in April 2024. "Thanks not only to that headline power output but also a shortened final drive ratio, the car feels much quicker and keener than its predecessor ever did, but it's still more soulful and mellow than a visceral, frenetic Ferrari V8 might be."

Valour & Valiant

2023-present

Putting everything Aston Martin learnt from the track, the company describes the Valour as "the most extreme front-engine road car ever." An evolution of the one-off 836bhp Victor from 2020, it was masterminded by Aston Martin's Q division, the marque's special vehicle and personalisation task force. Limited to just 110 units, each one costs a cool £1.5m.

The design clearly harks back to the company's V8 models from the Seventies, but having a modern edge which Aston Martin calls 'Retro Futurism'. Yet despite the high price, the Valour is a concoction of bits, the result of Aston Martin raiding the parts department from a number of models. The resultant cocktail is akin to an old-fashioned, classic recipe, albeit covered in a bespoke body, crafted entirely from carbon fibre.

The car is powered by the now familiar 5.2-litre V12 from the Valour, produces 705bhp and 555lb ft torque, meaning although Aston Martin hasn't released performance figures, 60mph should arrive in under 3.5 seconds and it'll keep going until 200mph. Wanting the car to be an old-fashioned type of performance model, there isn't an automatic gearbox version; every car has a six-speed manual by Graziano.

The Valiant

When Aston Martin F1 driver Fernando Alonso wanted a "more extreme, race car-inspired version" of the Valour, the company agreed, resulting in the Valiant. The V12 engine offers the same 555lb ft of torque as in the Valour, but the power – again delivered through a six-speed manual gearbox – has been boosted by 29bhp. Aston Martin global brand chief Marco Mattiacci said the car has been treated to an "obsessive weight-reduction" programme. Although Aston hasn't disclosed the car's overall weight figure, the total saving compared with the Valour is around 100kg.

Finally, the Valiant's bodywork has been largely sculpted in carbon fibre and features several styling changes over the Valour which add downforce while reducing drag. There is a large front splitter, which features F1-esque multilayer end plates to smooth airflow past the front wheels. Just 38 examples of the Valiant will be produced, each one costing close to £2m.

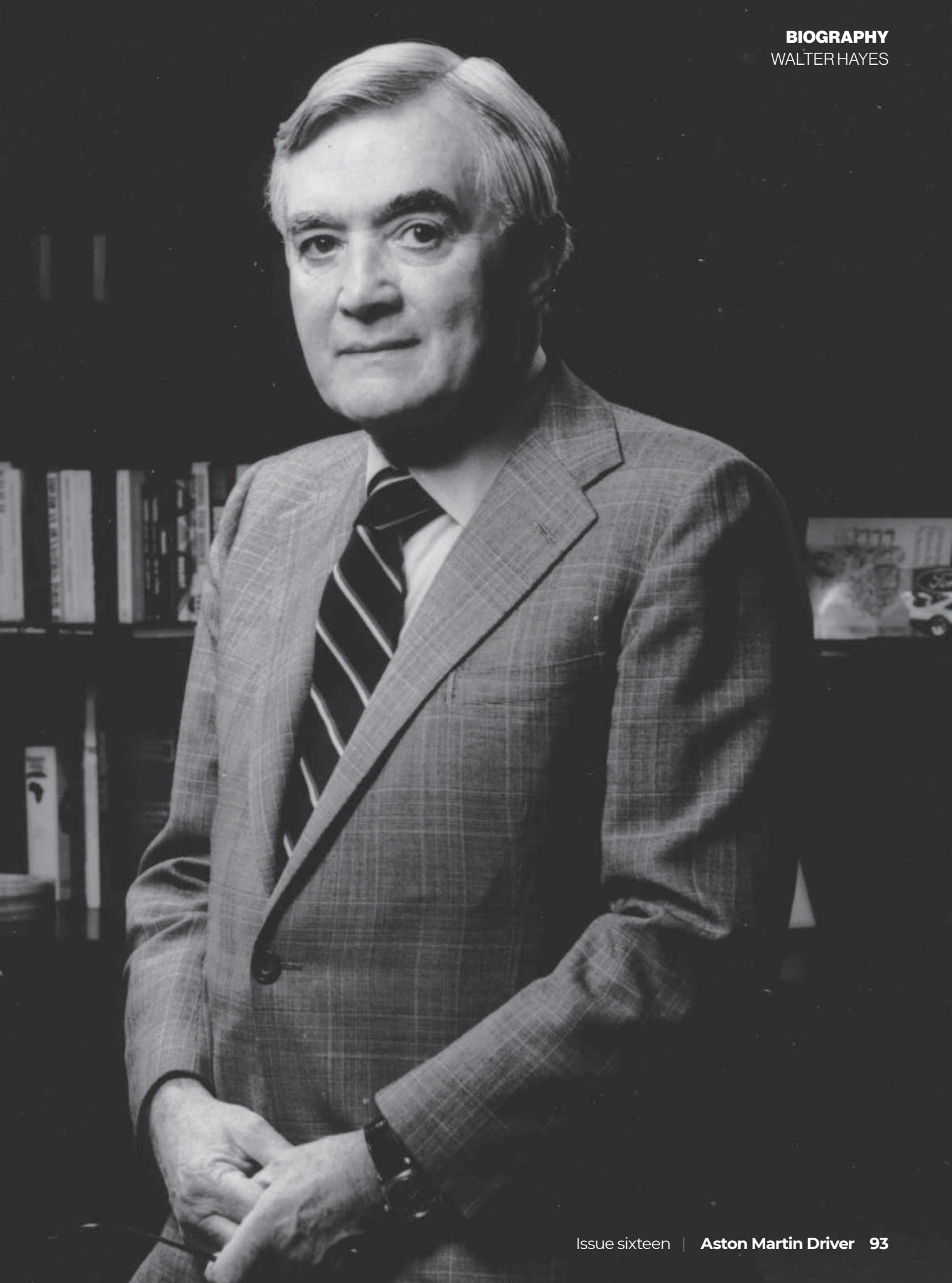
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

The motoring world would be a very different place if it wasn't for Walter Hayes and his ability to listen and liaise. In the century since his birth, we outline how he came to make such a difference to Aston Martin

WORDS: ROB HAWKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF RICHARD HAYES AND ASTON MARTIN HERITAGE TRUST

"YOUR ADVICE and counsel on so many occasions were what produced the successes not only at the family meeting but the stockholders and management meetings as well – your continuous optimism and refreshing and thoughtful ideas did so much to make sense," commented Henry Ford II in a letter he handwrote to Walter Hayes dated 1 July 1979.

Such comments not only reflect the character of Walter Hayes, but also the environment he worked in where corporate pressure and the structure of a large multinational organisation meant that everybody was dispensable should they be held responsible for getting something wrong. ▶



The notion that the people at the top are untouchable isn't always true.

In the year that would have celebrated Walter's 100th birthday, the impact he made on the motoring industry lives on, but what was the secret to his success?

"He got things done, cut through red tape, yet charmed his bosses and won them over," wrote Paul Fearnley in the February 2001 issue of Motor Sport magazine, following Walter's sad passing on Boxing Day in 2000 at the age of 76.

His background provides many of the answers as to how he managed to get those things done.

Born on 12 April 1924, Walter lived in Harrow and was educated at Hampton Grammar School in London, which was attended by the likes of Sir Brian May. After schooling, he joined the Royal Air Force and was undergoing pilot training in the former Rhodesia when the second world war ended.

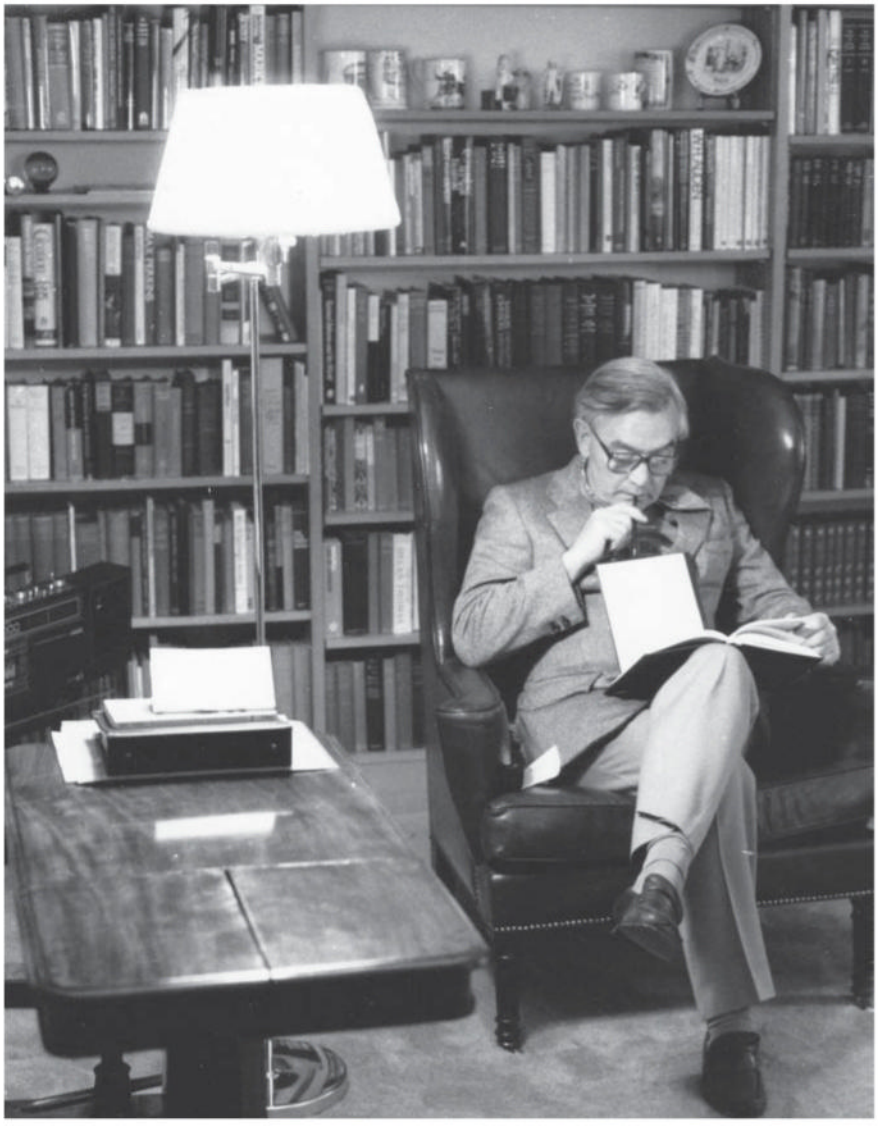
After leaving the RAF in 1945, he switched his career to journalism and quickly progressed from copy editing with the London Daily Mail to being its associate editor, moving on to associate editor at the Daily Sketch before becoming editor-in-chief of the Sunday Dispatch. At the time, this made him the youngest ever editor of a national British newspaper.

Walter and Jackie Stewart at Millbrook in 1993.

Walter's company car was this Ford GT40, which he insisted Ford shipped to the US when he moved there during the early Eighties

Taken by the wife (Kate) of Henry Ford II, when Walter and his wife, Elizabeth, accompanied the couple to the UK Embassy in Washington when Henry received his honorary knighthood.

Taken at Goodwood with Walter in the centre, alongside Le Mans 1959 winners Carroll Shelby and Roy Salvadori.



Very much a thinking man, Walter gained such a reputation which threw many Ford executives who were more aggressive in their management style.

It was during his time at the Sunday Dispatch that he perhaps began to understand the value of employing talented people, recruiting a young Terence Conran to comment on style and a promising engineer, Colin Chapman, to be his motoring correspondent.

Walter's success within journalism resulted in him being headhunted in 1962 by Ford UK for the role of director of public affairs.

"When he arrived, the company was considered a staid, blue-collar brand," remarks Paul Fearnley in the February 2001 issue of Motor Sport. "When he left it boasted perhaps the greatest sporting heritage of all – and he'd had a hand in all of it: the Lotus Cortina, the GT40, Formula Ford and the rally Escorts."

"You have to remember just how different a company Ford UK actually was before Hayes arrived," wrote Graham Robson in the March 2001 issue of Classic Ford magazine. "A big company, sure. A profitable company, definitely. But with a sporting image – certainly not."

Engaging Colin Chapman, who was then running Lotus, into developing the Lotus Cortina was one of the earliest success stories (Lotus was already using Ford's four-cylinder crossflow engine block for its famous twin-cam engine).

"Quite unconceivable to Ford's old guard, it was the first of many innovative sporting cars inspired by Hayes," continued Graham Robson in his Classic Ford article.

Sir David Brown (left) with Walter Hayes (right) at Sunnyside, Newport Pagnell.

The creation and development of a car intended for motorsport was never a straightforward path. When Walter joined Ford, he discovered that the Works rally cars were being prepared in the press garage at Brentford. He managed to secure funding (£32,000) to build a new Boreham Motorsport Centre in Essex, which transformed Ford's commitment to motorsport.

There were also some enthralling publicity stunts to help put Ford on the motorsport map, such as sending Cortinas to the Italian ski resort of Cortina to run down the Winter Olympic toboggan run, asking a team of enthusiasts to break endurance records at Monza in a Transit van and challenging Eric Jackson and Ken Chambers to beat the London-Cape Town record in a Cortina and to beat an ocean liner from Cape Town to Southampton in a Corsair.

"If not directly, then always behind the scenes, as a string-puller, impresario, negotiator, advisor or the finder of money, Hayes was an ever present," says Graham Robson in Classic Ford.

Convincing Ford to invest £100,000 in a new Ford Cosworth grand prix engine resulted in 150 wins for Ford and world championship success for the likes of Graham Hill, Jim Clark, James Hunt, Emerson Fittipaldi and Jackie Stewart. It also put Britain on the map of Formula 1, which still exists today.

The success of Walter's plans and projects meant that he quickly rose through the ranks from director of public affairs at Ford of Britain to vice-chairman at Ford of Europe, and then to vice-president of Ford USA.

The ability to get the most out of smaller organisations, such as Lotus and Cosworth, perhaps made it inevitable for Walter Hayes to cross paths with Aston Martin. The UK sports car manufacturer was heading for yet another collapse during the mid-Eighties as sales plummeted and there were no distinctive new models on the horizon, just revamps of the DBS and Virage.

To illustrate how far off Aston Martin was from retiring into the history books, total sales between 1972 and 1982 were a mere 2,141, but this dropped to 1,855 between 1982 and 1992. When Ford stepped in during 1987, buying a 75 percent stake in Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd, sales were down to 224 for the year, dropping to an average of 209 per year between 1988 and 1990 for a manufacturer that had a potential

maximum output of 275. Walter played a major role in convincing Ford to invest in Aston Martin, having been the person who suggested to Henry Ford II in May 1987 that Ford should buy it. Henry Ford approached the company's chairman, Alex Trotman, and Trotman asked Hayes to write a proposal for the board of directors to outline the value of Aston Martin to Ford should it go ahead.

It couldn't have been easy. Here was a mass-production car manufacturer, which as Walter explained in a lecture to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in 1992, was turning out 1,250 Ford Fiestas a day, so why would anyone be interested in a company making around 200 hand-assembled sports cars per year?

There were no signs of success from the start of Ford's involvement, and even four years later, in 1991, AML recorded a loss of £6.6million. Walter had retired from Ford in 1989, but the following year, he was made a non-executive director and board member of Aston Martin. In 1991, Aston Martin chairman Victor Gauntlett retired, and Walter was voted in to take his place. The writing was still on the wall for Aston Martin, but many people, including Walter, had a plan to save the company. It required them to switch to manufacturing high-volume, low-cost sports cars instead of the increasingly expensive models it had – the V8 Virage, for example, sold for £48,000 in 1986, but had a £135,000 price tag by 1992.

Why would anyone be interested in a company making around 200 hand assembled sports cars per year?

After receiving the initial photographs and drawings of the DB7, Sir David wrote to Walter to express his approval of the car and its association with the DB range

Other suggestions for improvement involved engaging with current owners of Aston Martins. Total sales of all models since 1913 came to a mere 11,500 at the end of 1992, but whilst that was less than the number of Ford Fiestas produced in ten working days, what mattered is that 8,500 of those Astons were still owned and active in some shape or form, yet there was no parts catalogue for the majority of them, including some existing models. Up until that point, it was down to independent specialists, such as Aston Service Dorset (who had bought the manufacturing rights for the parts used in the DB2 and 2/4 and the David Brown Lagondas), to support some of the cars.

"It's very important to preserve the crafts and craftsmen of fine cars, to keep faith with past owners," explained Walter at the 1992 lecture to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. "We have said we will repair, restore, maintain every Aston Martin ever built for ever and we have to be around to keep that promise."

Whilst the Works Service department began to look after customers of current and old Astons (under what was termed as the Car for Life scheme), Walter's other long-term aim was to realise his goal of establishing a new low-cost, high-volume model.

The development story of the resulting DB7 has been recounted many a time in AMD magazine, but was it the right move for everyone concerned and could there have been a better way to achieve this? Sceptics may judge the DB7 to be nothing more than the X100 generation of the Jaguar XK8, but with an older engine and underpinnings, and an aluminium body instead of steel. However, with Ford owning both Jaguar and Aston Martin, this was the most cost-effective route into high-volume, low-cost sports car production. The alternative could have been to look to the Ford Mustang and

reinvent the DBS/AMV8, which admittedly had been a huge success during the Seventies and Eighties. Perhaps it was time to return to the sports car roots of the David Brown era and this is exactly what the DB7 reflected upon.

The success of the DB7 was on the cards before the first cars were delivered, when Sir David Brown wrote to Walter in January 1993 after being sent photographs and drawings of the new model. In his letter he wrote, "I am of course delighted and very honoured that the new Aston Martin should be designated a 'DB'. From what I have seen of it, I am sure it will be a world beater and more than worthily uphold the 'DB' tradition."

However, it wasn't all plain sailing and Walter apparently faced opposition for the DB7 project from within Ford, Aston Martin and Jaguar. Ford's vice-chairman, Wayne Booker, didn't believe Ford's investment in Aston Martin was worthwhile (and this opinion didn't change, even when Booker acquired a DB7). Jaguar's CEO, Nick Scheele, had suggested Aston Martin should be merged into Jaguar, and the same for many of the dealerships. There were also disagreements with Tom Walkinshaw Racing (TWR), who had collaborated with Jaguar on numerous projects and was responsible for the design (along with Ian Callum) and engineering of the DB7. Even when it was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1993, Ford hadn't fully approved the programme or its funding. It perhaps helped that it was voted car of the show.

It's important to note that the successful development of the DB7 and the driving force to its completion wasn't down to one person, but many, including people ranging from designer Ian Callum to executives at Ford, Jaguar, TWR and Aston Martin. Walter was the glue to keeping it all going. His ability to liaise with people was the key to his success. In October 1991, for example, he wrote to the nephew of Henry Ford II, Bill, who was then the head of business strategy for the Ford automotive group in an attempt to explain the importance of Aston Martin in the UK and the world, saying, "Perhaps my real difficulty is knowing just how committed Ford is likely to be...

A low-cost, low-volume sports car was the recipe for saving Aston Martin, and the DB7 under Walter's guidance achieved this with sales exceeding 7,000 during its 10-year production life.

There is a reputational issue where Ford is concerned. There would be a negative response to the burial of AML just as there would be a very positive one to its rescue and survival. And it always seems odd to me that Ford has never had a fine sports car of its own and if neither Jaguar nor Aston Martin can produce one, it does not say much for our imagination, skill or dedication."

Throughout the development of the DB7, the threat of Aston Martin's closure or the project being axed was seemingly always a concern for Walter, who in December 1992, wrote to Ford's chairman of the board, Alex Trotman, saying, "If Aston Martin is trivialised or destroyed, Ford will stand accused of having wrecked one of Britain's proudest companies... I have spent more than two years of my life generating AML, meeting and beating all budgets and coming up with the most-wanted British car [the DB7] for many years. We have increased our dealer strength from 38 to 71, we have sold all next year's planned DB7 production and we could have sold twice the number."

Walter retired from Aston Martin in February 1994, soon before he turned 70 on the 12 April, although he was asked to continue as a non-executive director and honorary life president. Unfortunately, it did mean that when the first DB7 was ready to be driven off the production line on 1 June that year, he wasn't behind the wheel, although he had unveiled the car at the Geneva Motor Show.

Sales of the DB7 throughout its 10-year production run exceeded 7,000, proving it to be a success as a low-volume, low-cost sports car. Back in March 1992, Ford had been informed that annual sales of the DB7 would be around 625.

So perhaps the key to his success was in his ability to pull everyone together, but there was more, which says about his attitude towards solving problems. Stuart Turner, who was headhunted by Walter from BMC in 1969 to run Ford's Motorsport division, said, "Walter was the great thinker, the great philosopher. Throughout the years I worked with him,

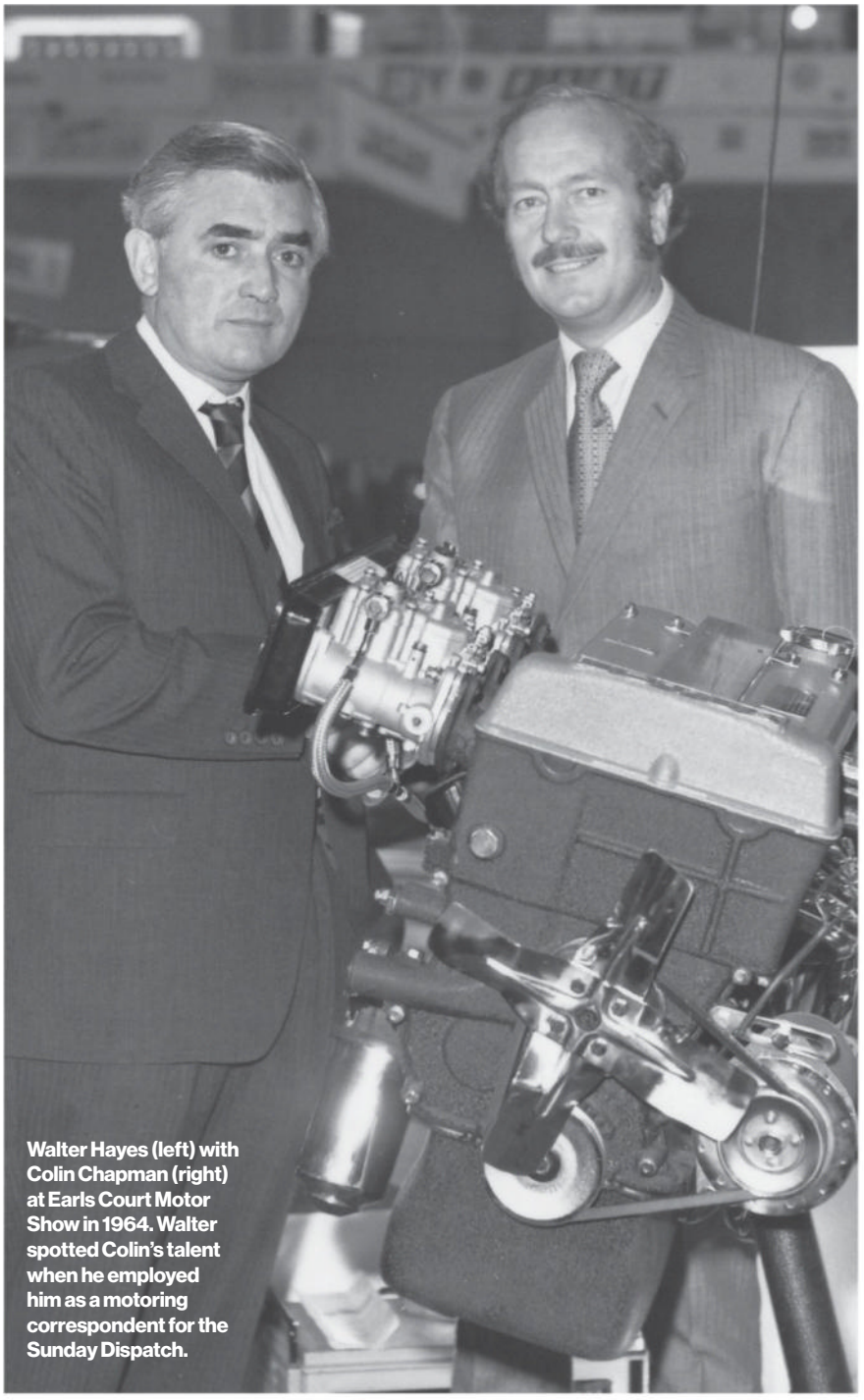
he refused to get bogged down in detail – there were occasions when I would walk into his office to find him with his feet on the desk, pipe in mouth, just thinking. Some of the get-up-and-go Americans were puzzled by this approach but it was when he was at his best, his most creative."

Retirement from Aston Martin didn't see him disappear into the shadows. Walter became involved in the Brooklands race circuit preservation movement, he was regularly consulted on F1 policy, and when Ford retired the Works Escorts with a celebration near Cheltenham in 1998, he was the guest of honour. Along with the AMOC, he helped establish the Aston Martin Heritage Trust in that same year, becoming its first chairman. And even in his final year, Ford was consulting him over what to do with their acquisition of Jaguar Land Rover and, in particular, the museum at Gaydon.

Outside of the motoring world, he was making a similar impact, having been the chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust, taking his camera to churches he visited to record details of historical and architectural importance, helping to raise the profile of the trust's annual review and approving female choirs in cathedrals.

Perhaps the best way to sum up Walter Hayes was that he was an expert in the art of communication, whether it was in changing the public perception of a car or ensuring that the development of a new car succeeded. **AMD**

Thanks to Richard Hayes and the Aston Martin Heritage Trust for their invaluable help in writing this feature. For further details on Walter Hayes, visit https://walterhayes.co.uk and also listen to the podcasts (episodes 13 and 14) about him on the Aston Martin Heritage Trust website at amht.org.uk/podcast.



Walter Hayes (left) with Colin Chapman (right) at Earls Court Motor Show in 1964. Walter spotted Colin's talent when he employed him as a motoring correspondent for the Sunday Dispatch.

MOTORSPORT in association with MOTORSPORT NEWS

By Matt James
Editor,
Motorsport News

Aston Martin won the race to snare Adrian Newey

Formula 1's greatest ever designer has masterminded 25 grand prix world titles and now he is heading into a new challenge with the team in 2025

As his designs have won 12 constructors' championships and 13 drivers' titles in Formula 1, it would be hard to imagine there was much new for engineering brainbox Adrian Newey to experience in grand prix racing. But, after revealing his big-bucks switch to Aston Martin in the middle of September, he admitted to a fresh sensation.

In a well stage-managed press conference, Newey was presented to a limited collection of media and a swathe of staff members who are already hard at work at the Silverstone headquarters on the squad's 2025 machine. Newey was visibly taken aback.

"The reception I had from all the employees here was a 'pinch yourself' moment because it is a side of it I never think about," explained Newey afterwards. "I usually just enjoy my job. My passion has always been trying to find ways to make the car go faster and to work with everybody in the team – my fellow engineers – I try to keep myself relatively immune."

He could hardly have been immune to the rampant speculation which followed him everywhere since he decided to part ways with Formula 1 dominators Red Bull in March. The British designer had become

Fernando Alonso (left) with Adrian Newey on the right

weary of his role within the squad – or "a little stale", as he calls it – and there was a tempestuous start to the year with his former employer. The team principal Christian Horner was wrapped up in a very public scandal and, although Horner was later cleared of any charges of wrongdoing against a female staff member, it seemed that the bitter taste it left was too much for Newey to swallow.

All rivals were put on high alert when the 65-year-old Briton, Newey, confirmed he was parting ways with the Red Bull team he had been an integral part of since 2006. Grand prix racing was still reeling from the news that Lewis Hamilton was quitting Mercedes and heading for Ferrari in Italy in a shock move that no one had seen coming and that was only made public in the middle of January. The immediate thought that Newey could team up with the seven-time British world champion at the Scuderia was lip-smacking, if ultimately wide of the mark. In truth, even the designer himself wasn't sure what his future direction would be when he decided to take a break. ▶

"I am in a very fortunate position where I don't need to work now. I could retire and have a very comfortable lifestyle quite happily, but I still love the job I am doing," Newey reflects. "When I decided I needed to stop at Red Bull, at that point, in late April, I genuinely had no idea what to do next. Would next be retirement and sail around the world? Would I go and do something completely different? Would it be staying in Formula 1?

"I decided that I wasn't going to make any decisions for a while. I let it all soak in. I think by late-June I really started to think that I had always wanted to be a designer in motor racing ever since I was about 10 or 12 and I had been lucky enough to achieve that and I still loved the job and the challenge of working with everyone to try and make the car go faster. That's what gets me up in the morning."

And he still wanted to get up in the morning. After evaluating his future, Newey decided that the motorsport passion was too strong to take to the water and enjoy a life of leisure instead. Just at that moment, Aston Martin owner Lawrence Stroll went into overdrive to capture Newey's signature on a contract of employment.

With Ferrari in the picture, only Mercedes and Aston Martin realistically were the others who had pockets deep enough to offer Newey the incentive he needed. The initial bid from Stroll was said to have been made to Newey at the end of March around the time of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, but there was no immediate reaction.

Stroll said, "We had been talking for a few years on and off, and when he announced that he was actually leaving Red Bull, we immediately re-engaged in a more serious conversation, and I was quite determined to get him."

A top-secret trip for Newey to the all-new AMR Technology Campus in the middle of the summer was organised. All staff members working in the building were banished for the period of the tour for the design genius. No one was to know of the visit, although reports did emerge – but what no one knew at the time was that Newey was so impressed it swayed his mind.

It is hard not to be impressed by the new headquarters. It is the newest Formula 1 facility that has been created which, as expected, means it is the most cutting-edge of all. It has been designed with a specific purpose and no stone has been left unturned.

This was just one promise that Stroll made when he rebranded Racing Point and brought it into Formula 1 at the start of 2021. When he started this grand prix adventure, the team owner said, "I have never failed in business. And I don't intend to start now."

Alongside the bricks and mortar, signing up two-time F1 world champion Fernando Alonso to spearhead the campaign on track in 2023 was another signal of the ambition. The Spaniard, who is teamed with Stroll's son Lance in the other car, repaid that faith with fourth in the drivers' standings last term. This year has been a bit tougher as the AMR23 has proved trickier to perfect but the technical input that Alonso has been able to bring from previous stints at McLaren and Ferrari has undoubtedly sped up the learning process for a team which is only in the fourth year of its grand prix journey.

Stroll said, "I believe we have demonstrated our ambition, my passion, and our intent in so many ways such as the incredible new facility that we have [at Silverstone]. We have an incredible wind tunnel that no one in Formula 1 has anything like. Now with Adrian coming in as a shareholder, as a partner and as a technical leader of this organisation, it fills a very important gap. There are still some of the outer fringes to fill, as there always is, but this gives some real technical leadership to this company."

The deal means that Newey, who has been granted an undisclosed number of shares in Aston Martin Racing, will deal directly with Stroll as the team owner, which is something he found appealing. With many squads owned by multinational companies supported by investment firms with input from wealth funds, the fact that Stroll stands alone is an appealing aspect for his new recruit.

Newey said, "I have been hugely inspired and impressed by the passion and commitment that Lawrence brings to everything he is involved with. Lawrence is determined to create a world-beating team. He is the only majority team owner who is actively engaged in the sport. His commitment is demonstrated in the development of the new AMR Technology Campus and wind tunnel at Silverstone, which are not only state of the art but have a layout that creates a great environment to work in."

That work will have to start as soon as possible, but there is a slight speed bump. As is usual when someone has had inside access to his former employer's plans, Newey will not be able to take up his new job straight away. Instead, he has been placed on gardening leave from Red Bull to make sure that no secrets are transferred from one team to another. Usually this standard practice in the engineering-led world of Formula 1 would not be a major problem but there is a looming cloud on the horizon.

Grand prix racing will undergo a major overhaul of its technical rulebook ahead of the 2026 campaign. Cars will feature revamped moveable wings, something

which would play directly into the hands of aero expert Newey. The rules will also be changed for the hybrid powerplants, which will now be required to use more regenerated energy. Those rules have been a major hit and have tempted manufacturers like Ford and Audi to sign up to F1, along with Honda, which will partner with Aston Martin from the advent of the new rules. The final spec of these new machines will be set out in January 2025, but Aston Martin's newest recruit will be left kicking his heels until he can start work at the end of his gardening leave in March.

Two months might not sound like too long, but in the 200mph world of Formula 1 development, it is an eternity. It means Newey will be playing catch-up to his rival designers when he does finally get pen to paper on his creations (yes, he really does still operate in that way...).

"It will be a case of getting myself up to speed as quickly as possible, and just as importantly getting to know everyone here as quickly as possible, and how we get the best out of each other," explains Newey. "They [the new rules] are an opportunity. Whether we will be able to capitalise on that, we just don't know. I don't spend too long fretting on these things. Just get on and do the best we can."

For Aston Martin to achieve ultimate success, it will need to take further steps and one of the most significant of these could be on the driver front. While Alonso was the marquee signing for Stroll in 2023, he will be 45 years old by the time the new regulations come into play. His experience will once again provide the team with some shortcuts to know-how but the smart money would be on Stroll going out to recruit the next generation of grand prix superstar to step into Alonso's shoes. Whispers have suggested he will chase three-time champion Max Verstappen, which would fully complete his raid of Red Bull's treasure trove. Lawrence's own son Lance seems pretty secure in the other machine, which causes a lot of chatter among the rest of the grid after some underwhelming performances over the course of the last two campaigns.

The combination of Alonso and Newey united is something of a romantic story. The Spanish racer knows all about Newey's creations, having been beaten by them on many occasions over the last 20 years. Indeed, Alonso probably has a more detailed knowledge of the design tricks of the rear end of Newey's car than just about anyone else because it is what he has been staring at while driving for all of his previous teams.

He has looked on enviously from the sidelines as drivers like Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen have swept all before them on track, and the driver said that fighting against Newey for so many years has actually improved his own skills.

"I would say Adrian was an inspiration thanks to his talent and his cars," he adds. "We all got better as a driver, as engineers; we all had to raise the bar thanks to him to be able to compete. Lawrence's vision is taking shape with this building, Honda, Adrian – this is definitely the team of the future and for me it is going to be an incredible opportunity professionally to work with Adrian," said Alonso.

There is a fizz of excitement with the news of Aston's new capture. Lawrence Stroll is the man who is bubbling with enthusiasm the most of all, and so he should after pulling off a major coup. The Canadian knows how important it is.

"You just have to look at Adrian's track record: nobody has won as many Formula 1 world championships in history than him – and that is not only at one team, that is over three teams," concludes Stroll. "[Adrian] is a big piece of the puzzle that was missing [for Aston Martin]. He has clearly demonstrated that no one has understood how to make a car go faster than him most of the time. It is a very very, proud moment." **AMD**

Q&A

TREADING CAREFULLY

Can the rubber that connects your classic Aston Martin to the road really make a difference? We ask classic tyre specialist Dougal Cawley of Longstone Tyres to explain all about the best tyres for Astons ranging from a DB2 to an AMV8.

Q What's the difference between a cross-ply tyre and a later radial tyre?

A: The clever thing about a radial is that as the sidewalls flex the tread stays flat on the road. This is particularly helpful in the corners where a cross-ply would flex its tread while in contact with the road, dramatically decreasing grip and longevity. The radial has a belt inside the tread that is independent of the sidewall carcass to hold the tread flat.

Q Is it simply a moneymaking scam to recommend changing tyres in sets across an axle and keeping with the same brand?

A: Under emergency braking, one tyre will lock up before the other which could well lead to a spin and loss of control. So, tyres should be changed in pairs. It is not the law, but we buy good tyres not so much for everyday driving but so that if that emergency does occur, we can maintain control of the car.

RIGHT: Dougal Cawley of Longstone Tyres at his premises in South Yorkshire, where tyres for vintage and classic vehicles are delivered around the world.

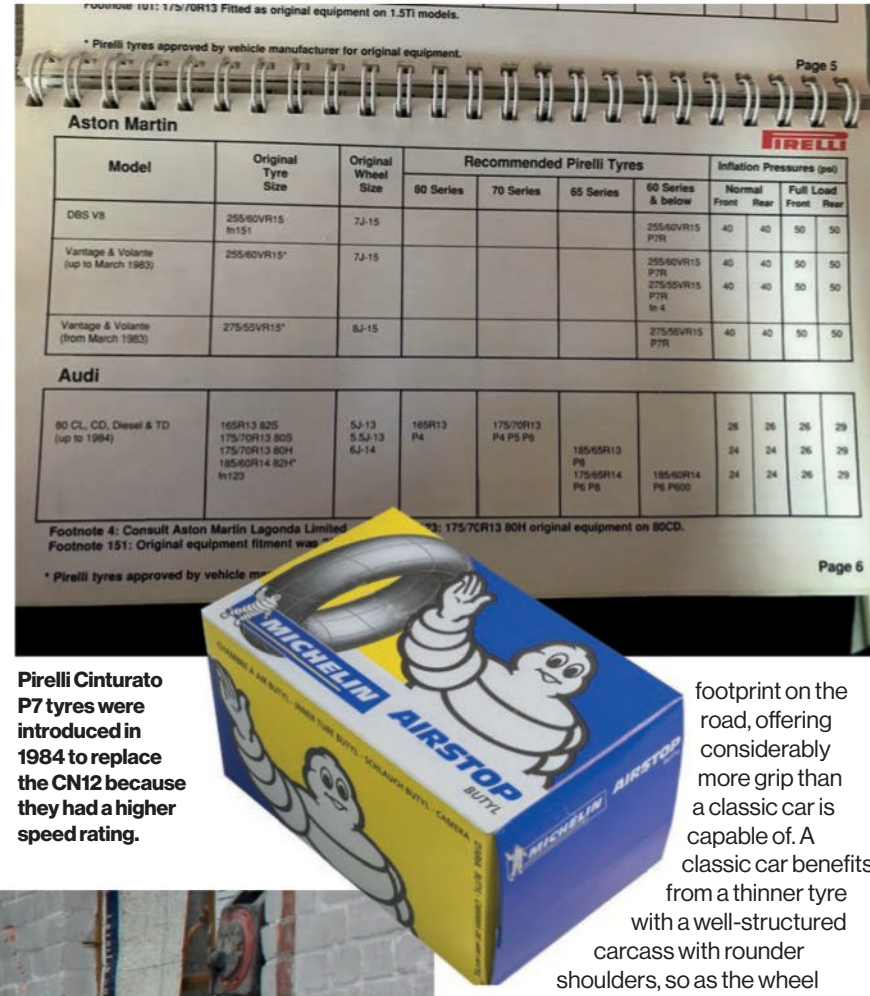
How long do tyres last, even if the tread depth is sufficient?

A: For an MOT, if the perishing in a tyre reaches a point when the fibres inside the carcass are visible then it is a fail. This is rational, because if you can see them, grit can get to them. Also, when a tyre reaches ten years old you should just change it. There are the visible issues such as perishing, but we are also concerned about the internal structure, and without doubt a tyre's performance when ten years old will be bad.

Does a wider tyre always provide better handling?

A: No, but of course it's not as straightforward as that. There is a difference between grip and handling. There is also a big difference between what works on a modern car and what works on a classic car. On a classic car wider tyres often spoil the handling because the suspension is not capable of keeping all that footprint in contact with the road, causing a sudden breakaway as the car leans in corners. A modern car's clever stiffer suspension will keep all that footprint on the road, offering considerably more grip than a classic car is capable of. A classic car benefits from a thinner tyre with a well-structured carcass with rounder shoulders, so as the wheel leans in the corners in conjunction with the car, the contact point moves gradually around the shoulder of the tyre, so there is no sudden loss of grip, as you get with a modern wide tyre on a classic car. Modern cars also have dramatically more caster than a classic car which overcomes the tramlining caused by wide tyres, the derogatory effects of this caster are then overcome by today's modern clever power steering. Wide modern tyres on a classic car cause tracking and tramlining as the outer extremities of the tread pick up the ruts in the road.

A classic car will handle at its best if fitted with a top-quality period tyre with a carcass structure designed to complement the geometry of a car of that period.



Pirelli Cinturato P7 tyres were introduced in 1984 to replace the CN12 because they had a higher speed rating.

Why is driving with a tyre that's almost flat dangerous?

A: The tyre will overheat, resulting in a greater risk of damage and a blow-out. Lower pressure in a tyre also reduces its directional stability and creates slushy handling in the corners.

Q Is a lower profile tyre really any better?

A: Only on a modern car. It can provide more tread when in contact with the road if you have the modern chassis geometry to suit it. And there is less risk of sidewall deflection, but there is also a greater risk of producing skittish handling and a low-profile tyre does give a rougher ride than a tall sidewall. No road car pre-1970 will handle well on a tyre with a profile of less than 70%, unless you make some serious modifications to its geometry, which will contribute to making it a less pleasant road car. It could potentially make it faster on the track if you modify your car enough to make it a good race car but is an unpleasant road car.

Q The 255/60VR15 Pirelli Cinturato CN12 was the choice of tyre for the AMV8 Vantage (from 1979). The first Vantage fitted 225/70R15 like the standard V8, but in 1984 this was changed to the 275/55R15 Pirelli P7 because it had a higher speed rating (a German motoring magazine recorded 164mph in the early Eighties). Considering few owners will be travelling at such speeds, are there any other differences to consider between the two tyres?

A: The Pirelli Cinturato CN12 was really the sports car tyres of choice in period. The 255/60VR15 CN12 was among the first 60% profile tyres fitted to the rear of the Lamborghini Miura SV in 1971. These 60% profile tyres came out just three years after the first 70% profile tyres were fitted on the Jaguar XJ6 and Porsche 911. However, in the mid-Seventies, the move towards ultimate grip became the driving force, and the P7's ability to put so much rubber on the road was the coolest thing of the day, so Aston Martin's move towards 55% profile tyres was very much in trend at that period.

Then of course they moved on again in 1987 with 16in wheels and 255/60R16 tyres. It seems 275 was a step too far. It is an extremely wide tyre to have on the front of any car. These more modern tyres will give greater ultimate grip, however the CN12 was hailed as a more comfortable relaxing tyre to drive on. Currently, we are fortunate in that Pirelli still make the CN12 for the earlier AMV8 Vantage on 15in wheels and there is a choice of Pirelli P-Zero Asimmetrico and Michelin Pilot Sport for the 16in.

Q Some radial tyres during the Sixties and Seventies were equipped with inner tubes, such as the Pirelli Cinturato, but these tyres now don't seem to need them. What's your view? Should inner tubes still be fitted?

A: These tyres are now a tubeless-type, which means they can be run tubeless but only if fitted to a wheel that is suited to being used without an inner tube. All wire wheels should have inner tubes. We have seen too many failures with tubeless wire wheels to trust them. Making the current Pirelli Cinturato range tubeless opens these tyres up to being used on a wider range of cars and wheels.

Q Are inner tubes a good idea for fitting inside a tyre?

A: Good-quality inner tubes are worth fitting if you are in any doubt about whether your wheels are tubeless. All wire wheels should be fitted with inner tubes. However, you should not fit an inner tube in a tyre lower than a 70% profile. We currently recommend Michelin as the best manufacturer of classic car inner tubes.

Q If an Aston Martin has a power steering conversion, should the tyres ideally be changed to suit?

A: No. A car's chassis that is developed in line with a cross-ply or full-profile radial (such as a 185R15) tyre will handle best on a quality period tyre of that size. A power steering kit will help overcome the heavier steering caused by oversize tyres, but it won't mend the damage to handling caused by oversize tyres or a modern tyre carcass design on a classic chassis. If you are going to fit oversize tyres, a period tyre will diminish the derogatory effects on the car's progressive handling. But oversize tyres will have derogatory effects on the steering and handling, leading to tramlining, tracking, heavier, slower and numb steering. Often classic cars get fitted with power steering because the car has been fitted with an unsuitable tyre for the car. Power steering is often a modification done to overcome the derogatory effects of those oversize or modern tyres, but it only really overcomes the heaviness. It is better to just fit a 185VR16 or 185VR15 Pirelli Cinturato CA67 to any DB car prior to the DBS or DB6 Mk2. Aston Martin fitted Avon cross-ply tyres or 185 section Pirelli Cinturato

Cinturato CA67 tyres on Borrani wheels were originally fitted to the DB4 GT Zagato, but became a popular upgrade on other Astons.

▲ **Whilst Pirelli still make the CN12 for the earlier AMV8 Vantage on 15in wheels, there is a choice of Michelin Pilot Sport (left) and Pirelli P-Zero Asimmetrico (right) for 16in wheels.**

▼ **The Pirelli Cinturato CN12 was one of the first 60% profile tyres and was fitted to the rear of the Lamborghini Miura SV in 1971. It soon became the choice of tyre for Astons such as the DBS V8.**

radial tyres to their DB cars up until they fitted power steering. Then the DB6 Mk2 was fitted with 205VR15 Pirelli Cinturato CN72, as was the six-cylinder DBS. Aston Martin did not fit 70% profile tyres until the extra weight of the DBS V8, which was fitted with 225/70VR15 Pirelli Cinturato CN12 and power steering. It is interesting to note that even by August 1969, when the DB6 Mk2 had power steering, and although 70% low-profile tyres had been invented and were on the market for well over a year, Aston Martin did not fit them. Even a year after low-profile tyres were fitted to cars like the Ferrari Daytona, Jaguar XJ6 and Porsche 911, to name a few, Aston Martin's testing proved that the DB6 and six-cylinder DBS was better on the 205VR15 Pirelli Cinturato CN72.

Q If the steering on your classic Aston Martin feels too heavy, can changing the tyres make a difference (assuming there are no issues with the steering that cause it to feel heavy)?

A: Yes. Simplistically, less of a footprint makes the steering lighter, faster and more precise. It also diminishes tramlining and makes the handling more predictable and progressive.

Q What tyres would you recommend for the DB2 to DB6 models?

A: DB2, DB2/4, DB Mk3, early DB4 and DB4 GT are best on 185VR16 Pirelli Cinturato CA67 as a road tyre. As cross-ply tyres, there is 6.00H16 Avon Turbospeed and the performance cross-ply option is the 6.00V16 Pirelli Stella Bianca. However, for most drivers, fitting a performance radial tyre makes these early David Brown cars better suited to modern roads.

Towards the end of the production of the DB4, the world's best sports cars were moving away from 16in wheels. Jaguar, Maserati, Ferrari and also Aston Martin moved on to 15in wheels. The Series 5 DB4, DB5 and the DB6 Mk1 fitted 6.70V15 Avon Turbospeed as a cross-ply or 185VR15 Pirelli Cinturato (and sometimes the 185R15 Dunlop SP Sport as a budget radial). If the steering on these cars is too heavy, it is because they are fitted with a 205/70R15 or larger tyres. Simply fit it with the 185VR15 Cinturato CA67 and it will be so much more of a pleasant drive and won't wear out the steering components like a heavier tyre will. If your rim is more than six inches wide, it has been fitted to accept larger tyres. If you are concerned about fitting larger tyres, the 205/70VR15 Michelin XWX or Pirelli 205/70VR15 Cinturato CN12 will handle better than anything else. If you have power steering on these cars, then Pirelli make the 205/70VR15 Cinturato P5 which is designed to work with cars of this period with power steering.

Back in the day, one of the top upgrades, if you could afford it, was to do what Aston did to the DB4 GT Zagato and fit Cinturato tyres on a set of Borrani wheels.

Q Is there a good selection of tyres for early Aston Martins?

A: Pirelli is now producing a fantastic 5.50V18 Stella Bianca for 1930s Aston Martins, which is great news. There hasn't been a really good road tyre for these cars since Michelin stopped making the Englebert.

Q Are there any tyres you recommend for trackdays or racing, and any you generally favour over other brands?

A: The Avon radial 185VR16 Turbosteel is completely the wrong size and shape. It's heavy on the steering, it doesn't fill the wheelarches and looks odd, but makes a good trackday tyre. The Michelin X 185SR16 looks right and handles nicely at slower speeds, but isn't really a sports car tyre. Michelin make the 6.00WR16 Pilot X which is a fabulous high-spec performance tyre, but to get the right balance as a road tyre, the Pirelli Cinturato pips them all to the post - the grip and handling are spot on while keeping the steering responsive and precise.

DB2/4 equipped with Pirelli Cinturato P7 tyres.

FROM THE CLUBHOUSE

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

RM Sotheby's Marketing Director, Peter Haynes, reflects on the past 12 months of auctions and of their partnership with the Aston Martin Owners Club.

IT HAS been a true pleasure to introduce so many fantastic members to the live auction experience as part of our continuing partnership with the Aston Martin Owners Club, from the regal setting of Cliveden House to the glamour of Monaco.

While our year kicked off in earnest with the Arizona and Paris sales in January and February, our biennial Monaco auction provided the first opportunity to

In vogue shade of California Sage made this 1964 DB5 a hit with bidders

One of only 37 examples, the coveted Short-Chassis 'interim' is among the rarest production Aston Martin convertibles ever built

welcome members as guests - and what a start it turned out to be. Spread over two days for the first time in the auction's history, the mammoth 10-11 May sale was our biggest ever Monaco event. It was not only marked by quantity, but quality, with the personal collection of Formula 1 World Champion Jody Scheckter taking top billing, including the ace's 1979 World Championship-winning Ferrari 312 T4. At €7,655,000, the Ferrari understandably topped the sales charts, followed by a spectacular 1972 Ferrari 365 GTS/4 Daytona Spider by Scaglietti and Alfonso de Portago's 1954 Ferrari 625 F1.

With €522,500 in your back pocket, you would have had your choice of two fantastic yet wildly different takes on the Aston Martin theme: a 1962 Aston Martin DB4 Series V Vantage - one of just 20 left-hand-drive examples with a Vantage engine - and a 2019 Aston Martin Vantage DTM offered directly from race team HWA. Both sold for exactly that sum, though it should come as no surprise that they went home with different owners.

A total sales figure of more than €40,000,000 was a stellar result that set us up well for our first ever auction at Cliveden House the following month. A strong turnout from Aston Martin Owners Club members was expected, given the location's proximity to London, but we were still surprised at how many made the journey. Aston expert, Felix Archer, gave a fantastic tour of the venue and pointed out some of the highlight cars, which ranged from a 1960 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta to a veteran-era Stanley Steamer - which was even fired up with clouds of steam and hooting whistles, much to the delight of onlookers.

Pick of the Astons was a delightful and beautifully presented 1964 DB5 finished in California Sage over green leather that sold for £432,500, while one of the bargains of the day was a 2001 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage that made £14,950 - no doubt a few members regretted having not picked up a paddle number.

In July, the roadshow rolled on to another all-new sale, this time on the shores of Lake Tegernsee, just south of Munich, Germany. A brilliant lineup of auction cars was topped by a 2010 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Stirling Moss which made €3,335,000 and a rare six-carb 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB/6C by Scaglietti that fetched €2,536,250 - but it was a 1965 Aston Martin DB Short-Chassis Volante that drew the attention of Members. One of only 37 examples made, it sold for €815,000. **AMD**

Club Members enjoy private pre-auction tours and more with leading car experts from RM Sotheby's – the Aston Martin Owners Club official auction partner

At the time of going to press, RM Sotheby's is gearing up for a headline London sale, which this year will take place at The Peninsula London, a stunning five-star hotel situated on Hyde Park Corner in the centre of the capital. With a glittering lineup led by a 1957 Jaguar XKSS, it promises to be an event to remember, and RM Sotheby's are looking forward to sharing the excitement with Aston Martin Owners Club Members.

Jody Scheckter's personal collection reflected his life in motorsport, crowned by his 1979 Formula 1 World Championship-winning Ferrari 312 T4

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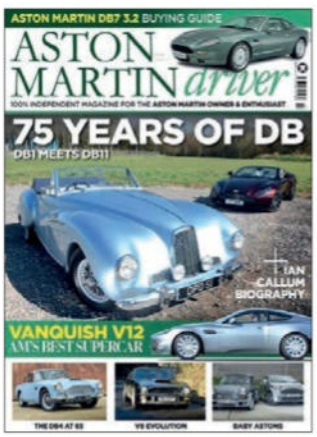
INSIDE V8 Oscar India, DB2/4 by Vignale, DB6 drive story, DBS buying guide



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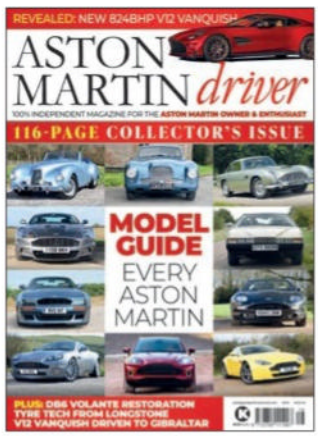

ISSUE 16

COVER STORY Model guide
INSIDE V12 Vanquish driven to Gibraltar, DB6 Volante restoration

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CURRENT LISTINGS

ASTON MARTIN V12 VANQUISH

2003, 39044 miles, £59,000. In Die Another Day specification- low mileage, collector's car recently retrimmed in black nappa leather with Aston Martin logo embossed on seat- stunning. Please call 07432608704, Scotland.

124092

ASTON MARTIN V8

1974, 73192 miles, £85,000. Series 3 Aston Martin AMV8 auto., in very good condition and in present ownership since 1998. The 5340 cc V8 aspirated engine (4-twin-choke Weber carburettors) has been converted to unleaded fuel and has matching original chassis (VIN) and engine numbers. Bodywork: Fixed-head coupe in smoke silver (champagne), repainted by previous owner from original brown. Interior: light tan leather and carpets with beige headliner, black dash and central console. Please call 07964241122, South East.

124218

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE

2006, 32000 miles, £26,495,00. Manual finished in Tungsten Grey Metallic with a great service history. This car has just had a massive overhaul with 1000s and 1000s spent. Long ownership from previous keeper and now needs a new home. Probably the most desirable paint finish and great being the manual transmission. Ebony black leather heated electric seats, front and rear sensors adaptive exhaust system. We offer great rates of finance and welcome any part exchange. If you would like more information on this car please call Rob on 07730979259, East of England.

ASTON MARTIN V8

1987, £399,000. Series 5 to 'Vantage' fuel injection spec. Manual. Please call 01993 849610, South East. (T)

121690

ASTON MARTIN DB7

2003, 58,999 miles, £29,995. First registered May 2003 (03) in Jersey this excellent Aston Martin DB9 Vantage Volante has a modest 59,000 miles recorded from new. And with the Jersey speed limit set at 40 mph this car will have enjoyed a gentle life thus far. Finished in Solent Silver with Navy Blue Hood and Magnolia Hide Seat Fronts and Bottom Roll, Navy Blue Seat Backs, Top Roll and Carpet plus Burr Walnut Veneers, all very classy! The DB7 Vantage has over 400 bhp on tap; 0-60 mph is achieved in a touch over 5 seconds. Super car performance figures in its day and still plenty fast enough. Please call 01798 874477, South East. (T)

ASTON MARTIN V8

1983, 49000 miles, £149,000. To Vantage X Pack specification. Finished in Black with Red leather interior and black carpets. Rare manual gearbox and a detailed history file kept from new. Please call 01993 849610, South East.

121691

ASTON MARTIN VIRAGE

£99,995. First registered October 1993 (L Prefix) this Aston Martin Virage Volante is the property of a gentleman, and one of two cars from his collection that we are currently offering for sale. With just over 17,000 miles recorded this immaculate Virage was acquired by the most recent titled keeper in May 2016 with 14,000 miles recorded. Finished in Buckinghamshire Green with Magnolia Leather piped Green, Green Top Roll and carpets. Very comprehensive records are with the car including the original handbooks and service voucher book. Please call 01798 874477, South East. (T)

123111

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE

2006, £29,995. First registered January 2006 (55 Reg) this Aston Martin V8 Vantage has just nudged 40,000 miles recorded. Finished in Tungsten Silver with Iron Ore leather. This example presents very well and its condition is totally commensurate with its low recorded mileage; head-turning looks, serious performance and a glorious V8 soundtrack. Launched in 2005, the all-new Vantage featured a 4.3-litre, quad-cam, 380bhp Jaguar derived V8 enabling 0-62mph in five seconds on its way to a top speed of 175mph. Supplied with its original handbook/service booklet showing nine stamps, all by Main Dealers including the pre-delivery inspection at 48 miles on 18/01/2006. We will include an inspection and the 10th service. A new battery was fitted prior to a fresh MOT which is valid until August 2025. Please call 01798 874 477, South East.

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE

2010, 462 miles, £89,999. Special 'Rose' livery. Numerous extra-cost options. Offered from an extensive private collection. Recently recommissioned by Stratton Motor Company. Built to European specifications and originally ordered with Rose exterior livery, this car boasts numerous special features in addition to the generous inventory of standard equipment. Option highlights include the following: special Speed Yellow paintwork; Racing Yellow leather interior trim; Gunmetal facia trim; Obsidian Black steering wheel; red brake callipers; front parking sensors; Sports Pack. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123618

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE

2010, 361 miles, £89,999. Built to European specification. Special 'Elwood Blue' livery. Numerous extra-cost options. Offered from an extensive private collection. Recently recommissioned by Stratton Motor Company. Built to European specifications, this car boasts numerous special features in addition to the generous inventory of standard equipment. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123619

ASTON MARTIN DB9

2007, 31,750 miles, £38,995. Petrol, Automatic, Meteorite Silver. Please call 01798874477, South East. (T)

ASTON MARTIN DB9

2007, 61000 miles, £27,500. The car looks fabulous in Beautiful Pentland Green over Sandstorm leather, with wooden centre dash and door cappings. This is the upgraded 2007 variant with enhanced interior and better ride. The car is fitted with 19" 15 spoke Alloy wheels, satellite navigation, H I D headlights, Linn 950 W audio system, bright finish grille, heated seats, heated front screen, auto dim rear view mirror, front and rear parking sensors, front and rear cameras, cruise control, Apple Carplay upgrade to allow use of Google maps etc on the standard screen, silver brake callipers, anti-misting kit fitted to headlights, air conditioning. Please call 07973839935, South East.

123983

ASTON MARTIN DB9

2017, 59 miles, £129,999. Historic last-of-the-line model. Built to European / Swiss specifications. UK Unregistered. Offered from storage. Circa 96 kilometres from new. Undoubtedly, Aston Martin's most successful production car ever, the DB9 can lay claim to being responsible for bringing Aston Martin firmly into the modern era of manufacture and in promoting today's enviable brand recognition. Delivering turbine like engine performance, agile handling and timeless styling, the DB9, last of 9, we are proud to offer is a highly fitting acknowledgement to the long-lived success of the DB9 and would make a fitting addition to any discerning Aston Martin collection. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123621

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ON SALE
20 DECEMBER 2024

DB5 VANTAGE RESTORED

Follow the meticulous restoration of a rare 1965 LHD Silver Birch DB5 Vantage

OWNING A V12 VANQUISH

The ins and outs of owning the first generation of the V12 Vanquish

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ASTON MARTIN IN THE THAMES VALLEY

2003 Aston Martin Vanquish 2+2 in fabulous condition throughout and finished in Tungsten Silver with contrasting pale grey hide interior. This is a beautifully kept 2 owner example that has covered only 36,600 miles. Not expensive at **£49,950.**

2007 Aston Martin DB9 in Midnight blue with contrasting Sandstorm hide interior and the very desirable with rare MANUAL TRANSMISSION, making it a real driver's car. Superb condition with continuous service history. **£33,950.**

2000 Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Coupe with MANUAL TRANSMISSION , finished Porsche Cobalt blue with Pacific blue and Parchment hide interior, 38,000 miles only, near perfect condition, full service history and sensibly priced at **£23,950.**

2006 Aston martin DB9 Volante in Onyx black with contrasting Sandstorm hide interior. This is a beautiful, well-kept example with just over 55,000 recorded miles and a full-service history. Seriously good value at **£29,950.**

1996 Aston Martin Wide-Bodied Virage Volante, finished in Cheviot red with Magnolia hide interior piped in red. Fabulous condition, 14,000 miles only, full-service history, a very rare find and very collectable.
£ Please enquire.

1997 Aston Martin Wide-Bodied Virage Volante, finished in Oxford Blue with Cream hide interior piped in blue. Superb condition, 25,000 miles only, complete service history, extremely rare and very collectable.
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