

ASTON MARTIN - A GUIDE



ASTON MARTIN

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ASTON MARTIN



ASTON MARTIN TODAY



Over the past nine decades, Aston Martin has witnessed many changes. In a long and distinguished history, Aston Martin has seen some good times and some not so good times.

The fact that Aston Martin has survived is testament to the strength and resolve of everyone who has ever been involved with the company: customers and employees alike.

Now Aston Martin is on the threshold of something truly special. We have entered a new period of change quite unlike anything we have undergone before. This is not something new to our company – Aston Martin has had to continually move to survive. Over the past five years alone Aston Martin has been through some of the most dramatic and profound changes in its entire history.

The launch of the DB9 was a significant moment as it reflects the company today and the future direction that we are now taking. But it's more than just a launch of a new car; it's the re-launch of Aston Martin as a brand. It is a signal that Aston Martin is set to become a serious contender in the world sports car market.

Our plans do not end there. In addition to the Vanquish S and the DB9, we have introduced a third model line with the addition of the V8 Vantage and this will allow just a few more people access to what we regard as the world's most exclusive sports car company.

However, Aston Martin is not about to become a mass producer – we will not forget our roots or the special aspects of the brand that make up our DNA. Aston Martin is not about numbers and statistics. We are passionate about the cars we produce and we know this is a passion shared by our enthusiastic owners. All of our sports cars will continue to be hand-built and bespoke but using high technology processes in a very modern environment.

That ethos goes right back to 1914 and the very beginnings of the company. Our founders, Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford, believed that a sports car should have a distinctive and individual character. They felt it should be built to the highest standards and be exhilarating to drive and own – many things have changed over the ensuing ninety plus years, but those goals are still very relevant to us today.

An Aston Martin combines three important elements: power, beauty and soul. Aston Martins are truly special – they always have been and always will be.



Dr Ulrich Bez
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Aston Martin



LEFT: Le Mans 1959

ASTON MARTIN THE PAST



Lionel Martin



Robert Bamford

Bamford Martin. It doesn't have quite the right ring to it, yet if things had been just a little different, that is how we would know this most British of performance sports cars.

It was back before the Great War that Robert Bamford and Lionel Martin joined forces to sell Singer cars, and to prepare them for hill climbing and racing. Successfully too: it was Martin's performances with these cars at the hillclimb course in Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire that was to provide the inspiration for a name when the pair started making their own car.

In 1914, Bamford & Martin Ltd moved into premises in London's West Kensington and announced the intention to build its first car: the 'Coal Scuttle', as it was affectionately known, was powered by a Coventry Simplex side valve engine and was registered in March 1915.

Further growth was, of course, halted by the war. But once peace was restored Bamford and Martin returned to making cars at new premises in Kensington. Once again, competition success proved the product: in May 1922, an Aston Martin nick-named Bunny broke ten world speed records at Brooklands, averaging more than 76 mph for over 16 hours of continuous running.

In the same year, Aston Martin entered international racing. With backing from racing driver and Brooklands legend Count Zborowski, Aston Martin built two cars for the French Grand Prix.

The first of the company's many changes of ownership took place in 1925. Lionel Martin's heavy concentration on competition and consequent lack of production preparation – only around 50 cars were built between 1921-1925 – found the company in serious financial problems. Martin left the company he had founded, handing the reins to the Charnwood family, but it was too late and the company went into receivership.

Augustus Cesare Bertelli, one of Martin's competitors, visited the Kensington workshop in 1925. Greatly impressed with the quality of the cars remaining, he arranged a meeting between himself, his business partner William Somerville Renwick and Lord Charnwood. It was decided that Lord Charnwood, using the considerable engineering talents of Bertelli and Renwick, would form Aston Martin Motors Ltd and move to new premises in Feltham, Middlesex.

Renwick and Bertelli had already designed an advanced single overhead camshaft 1.5-litre engine which, when placed in a new Aston Martin chassis, helped create the legendary International. The International and later Le Mans and Ulster models became regular race winners with class victories at Le Mans among the highlights.

In 1932, there was another change of ownership when Sir Arthur Sutherland took over, placing his son Gordon in control. More motor racing successes ensued though Sutherland was also keen to show that Aston Martin could produce more than just competition cars.



ASTON MARTIN THE PAST



David Brown

In 1936 a major step was taken to develop the road car side of the business and a 2.0-litre engine was produced for use in saloons and tourers. Early in 1939, an avant-garde prototype was developed using an early form of space frame chassis and independent suspension. Known as the Atom, it was to form the basis of a totally new generation of Aston Martins... but yet again, war intervened in the company's progress.

Once production resumed after World War 2, it was time for another change in the company's fortunes – and this was to be one of the more far reaching changes in the history of Aston Martin. In 1947, although the company was financially more secure than at any time previously, there still weren't sufficient funds to develop a totally new car.

Thus it was at this stage that the name of David Brown entered the picture. The David Brown Group of Companies was a highly successful engineering concern building tractors and other agricultural machinery. Brown took over Aston Martin and, a few months later, also acquired another British sports car manufacturer, Lagonda.

The marriage of these two great names made sound commercial and engineering sense, not least because Lagonda, under the supervision of the great W.O. Bentley, had a newly developed 2.6-litre twin overhead camshaft engine just looking for a suitable chassis. Before long, Brown had the solution – the Aston Martin DB2, where DB stood for David Brown.

The DB2 arrived in 1950 and within two years had helped increase Aston Martin Lagonda production six fold. In 1948, the company made just 57 cars; by the end of 1952, production had jumped to 351. In 1954, the bigger and more powerful DB2/4 accounted for 240 of the company's total output of 324 cars. At this stage, production continued in Feltham with engines, chassis and running gear being assembled at a David Brown factory in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. The time was right to merge all operations under one roof.

And that one roof became Aston Martin's spiritual home. It was in 1954 that David Brown bought Tickford Motor Bodies in Newport Pagnell, and it is on that site today where the superb Vanquish is hand-built. The site has a long and illustrious coach-building history and was originally occupied by Salmons and Son, 'Coachbuilders to the Nobility'. Again, bringing Tickford within the fold made sound commercial sense as the company was at that time supplying bodies to Lagonda.

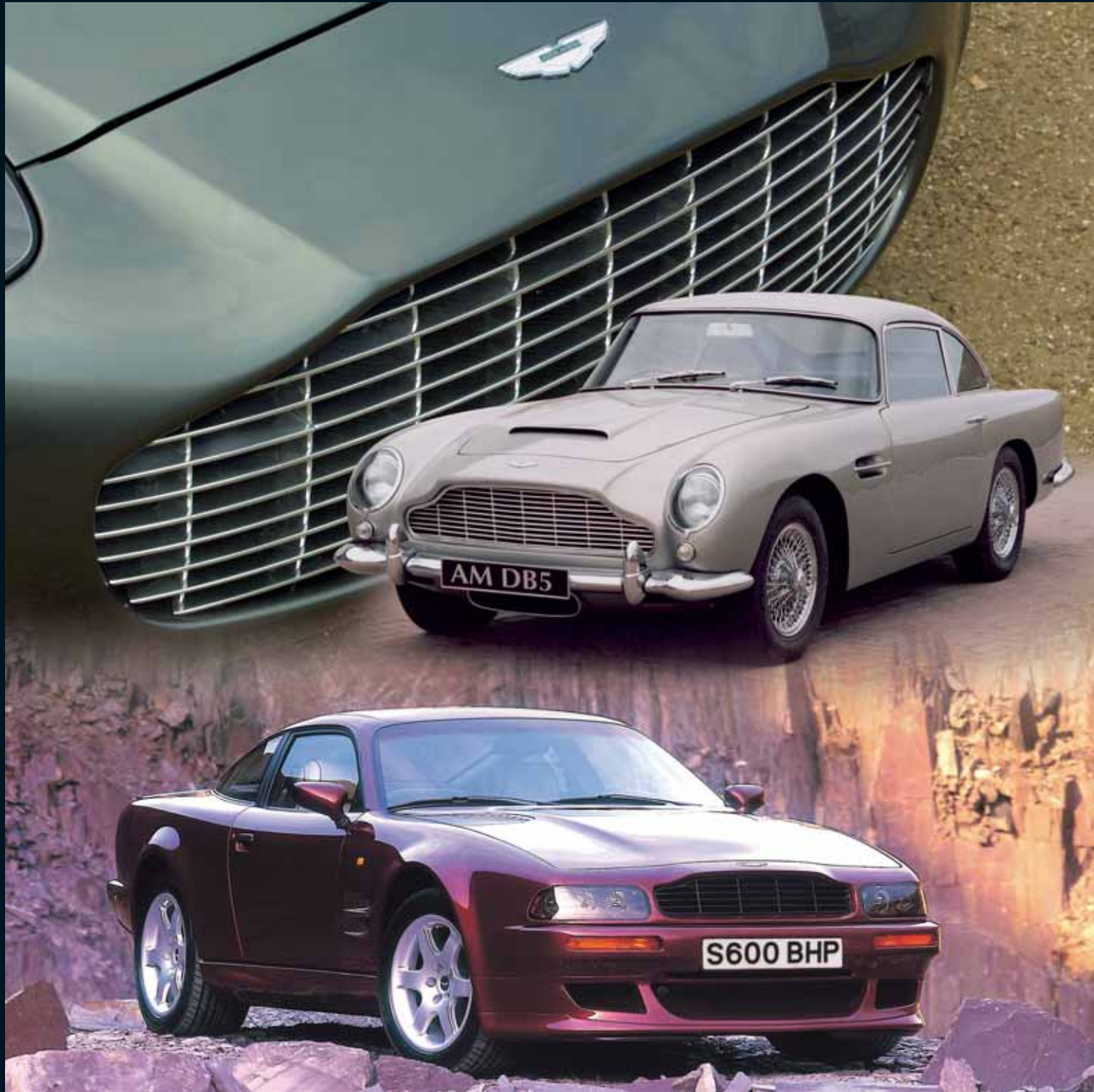
For the first few years of the new partnership, car assembly continued in Yorkshire with the manufacture of engines and other components established at Newport Pagnell.

In 1957, the DB Mark III superseded the DB2/4 Mark II, the first Aston Martin to be built at Newport Pagnell, and brought with it many technical advances proven on the race tracks. It was one of the first production cars to have disc brakes as standard, for example.

Racing continued to be the life blood of the company. Countless class wins at Le Mans and elsewhere fell to the DB2, while the purpose-built DBR1 conquered the world's race tracks in the mid to late 1950s. Under the guidance of celebrated team manager John Wyer, Aston Martin won no fewer than six World Championship races, success culminating in outright victory at Le Mans and the World Sports Car Championship crown in 1959.

LEFT: DBR1 en route to winning the World Sports Car Championship in 1959

ASTON MARTIN THE PAST



LEFT: DB7 Zagato, DB5 and V8 Vantage

There was success on the road car side of the business too. In 1958, the stunning DB4 was unveiled, with styling by Touring of Milan. The body shape and the engine – a 3.7-litre all-aluminium six cylinder unit designed by Tadek Marek – were to become Aston Martin signatures for years to come.

As the DB4 led to the DB5 and DB6 – taking in track success with the DB4GT and film superstardom courtesy of James Bond along the way – so Aston Martin decided to concentrate on road car production. In 1964, sales increased from around 250 a year to peak at 591 in 1966 when the DB6 and DB6 Volante – the first European car with a power hood – went on sale.

In the quest for more power and luxury, a new V8 engine was developed to power the DBS, the first totally new shape from Aston Martin since the introduction of the DB4.

But its arrival coincided with another of those character-building changes for the company. In 1972, David Brown sold Aston Martin to Company Developments, a group of Birmingham-based businessmen. Brown, now Sir David, retained a seat on the board as the DBS was restyled and re-named: the six cylinder car became the Aston Martin Vantage with its bigger engined sister called the Aston Martin V8: the DB prefix was lost.

Alas, Company Developments soon discovered that running a prestige automotive business needed regular and large injections of capital. After just two years of difficult trading which, nevertheless produced some 256 cars in 1974 and which recorded the regaining of Aston Martin's entry certificate to the USA, the company was up for sale again and production reduced to a trickle.

The company was put into receivership and the end looked inevitable until to its rescue came four individuals: North American Peter Sprague, Canadian George Minden and two Englishmen, Alan Curtis and Denis Flather. Production was cranked up and the Lagonda named revived: 1976 saw the unveiling of the outrageous William Towns-designed Lagonda limousine, its sharp, straight lines, described at the time as 'origami on wheels'.

Stability was not part of the equation, though. In 1981, the company changed hands yet again when Pace Petroleum, a privately-owned company led by Victor Gauntlett, and CH Industrials took control. One of the new company's first decisions was to return to motor sport, via an association with Nimrod Racing Automobiles to whom works assistance was provided. Although unable to repeat the successes of the 1950s, third in the World Endurance Championship by a privately entered Nimrod at the end of its first year back on track was no mean achievement. Road car production, meanwhile, continued at steady levels, peaking at 214 in 1987 – some way off those heady DB days.



A 1970s AM V8 Vantage

In 1987 when Ford Motor Company acquired 75 per cent of the shares – the remainder was split evenly between the Livanos family and Gauntlett – and long term stability, finally, arrived. That same year, James Bond was reunited with Aston Martin, driving an AM V8 in *The Living Daylights*, while the following year, 1988, the new Virage appeared.

Over the next five or six years, life at Aston Martin continued largely unchanged, but things were happening behind the scenes as Ford planned the future for its new acquisition. Long-serving executive chairman Victor Gauntlett handed over control to another legend, Walter Hayes CBE, a former Ford of Europe Vice-Chairman. There was also another return to competition, with a creditable 6th overall for the AMR1 in the 1989 World Endurance Championship and plans were hatched for a new small Aston Martin.

The new car could not come soon enough. The early 1990s saw a recession hit the UK and sales of the big V8-powered Virage and Virage Volante dwindled: in 1992, just 46 cars were built. So it was that in 1993 at the Geneva Show, Aston Martin proudly showed the new DB7, a model imbued with the spirit of those classic DB models of the 1960s. Indeed, the entire project was encouraged by Sir David Brown, who died at the end of 1993.

The DB7 marked a significant change in Aston Martin's fortunes and work practices. For starters it was built not at Newport Pagnell but at a new facility near Bloxham in Oxfordshire with far more automation than had traditionally been the case. Production of the DB7 started in late 1994, the same year that Ford acquired a 100 per cent holding in the company, and the rewards were immediate. In 1995, the first full year of the DB7, Aston Martin produced more than 700 cars – an all-time record for the company.

With the arrival of the convertible DB7 Volante in 1996, production has continued at similarly high levels making the DB7 easily the most successful model in Aston Martin's history. By the end of 2001, total DB7 production had passed the 5,000 milestone and outstripped the combined total production of DB5 and DB6 models.

This same period saw a new V8 model developed from the Virage, culminating in the hugely powerful V8 Vantage, the last example of which was delivered in October 2000. The 'V' car traditional continued at Newport Pagnell with the 2001 launch of the V12-powered Vanquish.

In 2002 Aston Martin unveiled the first purpose-built facility in the history of the company at Gaydon in Warwickshire. The DB9 was the first car to be built at the facility, which will be the home of all future Aston Martins.

ASTON MARTIN THE PRESENT



LEFT: Customer reception at Gaydon

The 21st Century has seen an astonishing change of pace at Aston Martin. With production during the final four years of the previous century running between 620 and 660 models a year, the year 2000 saw a huge jump to 1,029 units, 1,000 of which were the newly developed V12 powered DB7 Vantage. Production rose by almost 50 per cent in 2001 to 1,506 cars. Again the lion's share was of DB7 variants, but 204 Vanquish models helped make up the total. In 2003, Aston Martin created a sales record of nearly 1,600 cars and another record was created in the US with 500 cars sold representing 33% of production volume. Records were surpassed again in 2004.

Vanquish production also continues at Newport Pagnell, but now in the form of the fastest ever production Aston Martin – the Vanquish S, capable of over 200mph and offering the ultimate high-performance Aston Martin. The Vanquish S has been designed to deliver even greater performance, complemented by subtle suspension and steering changes and a number of interior and external style revisions.

Newport Pagnell is also home to the Works Service department for development of customer-driven specialist projects and accident repair, as well as Heritage Operations, which restores older Aston Martin models.

The company's new state of the art Gaydon facility begins a new chapter in Aston Martin's history. As the new company headquarters, Gaydon will house production of the DB9 and V8 Vantage as well as all future Aston Martin models.

In 2005, Aston Martin returned to international motor sport with the DBR9 based on the road going DB9.

ASTON MARTIN THE FUTURE



Aston Martin's future model plans are, naturally, a closely guarded secret known only within the organisation.

What is in the public domain, however, shows that Aston Martin's future is not only safe but very exciting.

Gaydon is the future of Aston Martin. It combines cutting-edge technology with craftsmanship and tradition. It is here that the V8 Vantage will be built, which is designed to widen the Aston Martin ownership opportunity still further. Not that Aston Martin is about to become a volume sports car manufacturer: while numbers will rise in large percentage terms when the new model arrives, Aston Martin's total annual production will still be far fewer than most other sports car manufacturers.

As Chairman and CEO, Dr Ulrich Bez says: "Aston Martin is not about numbers. It is not about market share, volume or even performance figures. It never has been and it never will be. Aston Martin is about individuality, emotions, feelings, passion, personal experience and participation.

"By increasing the number of cars we make we can simply allow a few more people to enjoy the Aston Martin experience."



ASTON MARTIN INTEGRITY

A typical modern car factory is a soulless place where cars are churned out as if they were white goods... fridges on wheels. Things aren't like that at Newport Pagnell, home of the Aston Martin Vanquish S. Here in the very same buildings that produced such enduring classics as the DB4/5/6 and the later 'V' cars – like the V8 and the Vantage – the Vanquish is assembled.

In the not-too-distant past, Aston Martins created at Newport Pagnell were largely built by hand. Panels were hand formed, lovingly smoothed into shape by a combination of trained eye and experienced hand. In contrast, production of the Vanquish S bristles with modern techniques and space age materials. But the Vanquish S remains far from mass-produced. Each car takes between six to eight weeks to build and each is built to individual customer specification: no two cars are exactly alike. In a typical year, Aston Martin expects to make only a few hundred examples of the Vanquish S.

The body structure and panels are preformed mixing lightweight aluminium with the latest composite materials, but even so, a large degree of hand finishing is required before the Vanquish S can take shape – each Superform aluminium front wing, for example, takes some five hours of hand smoothing and detail shaping before it is ready to be offered, by hand, to the body.

That said, there is a consistency and uniformity about the Superform panels ensuring far greater accuracy, build quality and panel fit than has been enjoyed by Aston Martins in the past. As a result, production quality is more consistent than before which ensures that the latest generation of Aston Martin cars are the best yet.

Great advances have been made in the paint processes, too. Aston Martins are available in any colour requested by the customer and spend a total of up to three hours in the paint bay being given no fewer than eight coats of paint and lacquer.

Once the body has been assembled, painted and partially trimmed, it is made ready to accept the powertrain. Such is the size of the engine and transmission assembly, however, that the old way of lowering the powertrain into the car can no longer be undertaken. Instead the body/chassis is lowered onto the powertrain.

After final trimming, with leather covered panels and trimmed seats created in house, each car undergoes a quality inspection – indeed, three cars in every eight are picked at random for a detailed quality audit – before it is ready for the final stage of the build process: the test drive.

There is no such thing as a zero-mile Vanquish. Every car is given a 40 mile shakedown test drive at the demanding Millbrook proving ground before being given the all clear by Aston Martin's Quality Inspector, who personally checks every finished car before signing it off. It's his name that adorns the famous plaque placed on every finished car signifying it is ready for its new owner.

In the trim shop a team of dedicated professionals hand cut and stitch the leather hides that help give every Aston Martin its unique ambience.

Its cars might be at the leading edge of 21st Century automotive engineering, but there is still plenty of room for traditional skills to play their part at Aston Martin.



LEFT: High technology production line at Gaydon



ASTON MARTIN WORKS SERVICE

The Newport Pagnell site not only houses Aston Martin's Vanquish production facility, it is also home to the Works Service department, a unique customer-facing operation that keep the Aston Martin tradition alive.

Behind the customer welcome centre lies an enthusiast's dream. Dozens of older Aston Martins and Lagondas sit patiently side by side awaiting their turn for attention. Some are in merely for a service or minor repair, others are undergoing major work or total ground up restoration.

Many owners take the opportunity of having their Aston Martin maintained by the very people who built it. Indeed, no other British motor manufacturer has such a long and distinguished record of factory backed maintenance.

The Aston Martin Works Service department is able to undertake scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on all post 1950 Aston Martin cars from DB2 through to our latest V8 Vantage and DB9 models.

Through our new Accident Repair Centre and use of our Blackhawk Korek 4000 body alignment system, heavy collision damage can be accurately repaired ensuring correct suspension geometry and panel alignment. Our factory trained technicians utilise skills both traditional and contemporary; from a twist of a wooden handled screwdriver to the operation of the latest in microprocessor diagnostic equipment.

On restoration projects, all Aston Martin's skills are combined to bring a cherished motor car back to its former glory.

After the initial contact, owners are invited to visit Works Service at Newport Pagnell so that a complete assessment of the car can be carried out. If this proves to be impractical we will carry out the assessment at the customer's own premises. The assessment will include a partial strip down to gauge the extent of the necessary repairs.

The original vehicle build history will be drawn from our archives and referred to throughout the process to ensure originality. Our experienced technical staff will then provide a detailed, itemised estimate for the necessary refurbishment or replacement of components. Once approval is given the car will be fully stripped down in readiness for each area to be restored.

Heritage is an important part of the Aston Martin story and Works Service helps keep that heritage alive.

LEFT: Aston Martins old and new are still looked after by the people that made them



ASTON MARTIN HERITAGE AND PARTS

Aston Martin Heritage Operations, is our vision of a bright future for our celebrated past.

The company has always taken pride in looking after all of its cars regardless of age, and through Heritage Operations we are renewing our commitment to preserve the generations of classic Aston Martins across the world.

It has been calculated that over 75% of all Aston Martins ever built are still on the road today.

This is a true reflection of the respect and loyalty in which these cars are held and far outweighs the volumes involved. Many cars stay in the same family for decades and are handed down to the next generation as a matter of course. Once the Aston Martin passion is in the blood, it is very difficult to remove. Our aim in life is not only to share that passion with our customers, but to provide the support and parts service to enable owners past, present and future to enjoy their cars with the confidence that they have "A Car for Life".

Aston Martin also operates a highly efficient parts and distribution service from Wolverton, Milton Keynes, and supplies parts for classic Aston Martin cars dating back to 1958.

Our facilities provide for a maximum of 38,000 part locations for, currently, 33,000 different part numbers. We are the single biggest supplier of genuine parts in the world, from DB4 to current production. Additionally, we provide an exclusive technical support service to dealerships, owners and enthusiasts.

Aston Martin continues to promote and preserve the 'Car for Life' theme with a unique service designed and dedicated to meet the demands of all our customers.

The lack of information on technical data, parts manuals, workshop manuals and part number supersessions can sometimes cause confusion when ordering parts for older cars. At Aston Martin we have five specialist technicians who are available to answer any and all questions or queries, giving professional advice on the right part for the right car, right first time.

Aston Martin has always been receptive to the demands of its customers with the result that many extremely rare and unique cars have been produced for discerning owners. In support of these cars the Parts and Distribution Department has been built around a total dedication to meeting the demands of those customers.



ASTON MARTIN GAYDON

Gaydon symbolises the future of Aston Martin. A combination of cutting-edge technology, hand-craftsmanship and tradition ensure the facility is probably amongst the best of its type in the world.

The new facility at Gaydon has been set in the gently undulating landscape of an English country estate – reflected in the stone of the reception elevation. Gaydon's sweeping curves and lack of decoration suggest a company that is dynamic and contemporary.

The offices are immediately adjacent to the production building separated by the double-height 'street' which acts as an informal meeting area and a light well to the back of the deep, open-plan offices.

The production facility provides a clean, clutter free, modern environment where ease of communication is paramount and all members of staff, production and office, can work together. It has silver clad walls, a gently barrel-vaulted roof and a polished concrete floor slab containing the production lines in one large room.

The dramatic architecture of Aston Martin's new Gaydon home and the elegant materials used in its construction reflect the quality of the design and finish of the cars themselves.

Accurate measuring of every chassis built at Gaydon ensures each car is built to within the smallest tolerance levels. Only by using precision measuring equipment can we ensure that every car will enjoy the same high standards of handling, road holding and refinement.

Rather than entrust the painting of an Aston Martin to a machine, every car is painted by experts using the latest quality equipment. Achieving the finish of an Aston Martin is one of the most labour intensive aspects of its production.

Unlike most car factories – where cars sit on a moving line and production is completed against the clock – building an Aston Martin takes place at a less frenetic pace. Approximately 200 man-hours are involved in building each DB9 and V8 Vantage. Cars are made at a series of work stations, where technicians hand-build the cars. Once work is completed at one station, the bodies are moved to the next station on the small indexed line: the key word is quality and we take our time to achieve it.

Although today's Aston Martins are built in far greater numbers than their predecessors, Aston Martin remains a long way from being a mass-producer. Each car remains hand built by craftsmen with decades of experience beneath their fingertips.

LEFT: Gaydon - the first purpose built facility in Aston Martin's history



ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH S

Since its introduction in 2001, the Vanquish has proved to be one of the most significant Aston Martin models ever, pioneering the use of advanced technologies and materials such as aluminium and carbon fibre. Furthermore, its on-screen appearance in the James Bond film *'Die Another Day'* has ensured the Vanquish has created international appeal for the Aston Martin brand.

With the capacity to continue to turn heads, the design of the Vanquish is already established as a modern classic. Perfectly proportioned from every aspect, design confirms the promise of outstanding "Supercar" performance and an impeccable pedigree that makes the Vanquish the flagship Aston Martin model.

The aluminium and carbon fibre technology developed for the car's structure is a world first combining dimensional accuracy, durability, efficiency, safety and best-in-class torsional strength for superior handling.

All the exterior body panels are constructed from aluminium with each individual panel hand tailored to the central structure to ensure a perfect panel fit. Every carefully detailed feature provides graphic evidence of the painstaking craftsmanship and quality, which is invested in its construction.

Now further developed as the Vanquish S, the Aston Martin designed and developed 6.0-litre V12 engine produces a prodigious 520 bhp, (388 kW) enough to power the Vanquish S to a maximum speed over 200 mph (321km/h) and a sub 5.0 second 0-62 mph (100 km/h) acceleration time.

It is coupled to a class leading Formula 1 style six-speed sequential manual transmission and electro-hydraulic clutch that operates without the use of a conventional clutch pedal. Gear changing is performed via levers behind the steering wheel. This superb performance is matched by a supremely luxurious interior and a complete standard equipment list.

LEFT: Vanquish S



The future of Aston Martin is epitomised by the DB9, a 2+2 seater sports car that sets new standards in its class due to its astonishing combination of agility, V12 power, smoothness, beautiful design and hand build.

Using a radical new aluminium-bonded body frame, the DB9 is one of the most sophisticated and technically advanced sports cars in the world. It is powered by the latest version of Aston Martin's own designed and developed 6.0-litre V12, producing 450bhp and a top speed of 186mph. Yet the DB9 is significant well beyond being a class-leading sports car. It is the beginning of a new era for Aston Martin. It is the first car to be hand-made at Aston Martin's new high technology facility in Gaydon, Warwickshire, where all future Aston Martin models will be developed and built.

The body frame is one of the most structurally efficient in the world, taking into account strength, torsional rigidity and weight. It has double the rigidity of many rivals, as well as being lighter, resulting in superior handling and agility.

All body panels are either aluminium or lightweight composites with magnesium being used on the steering column and inner door frames. Even the gear selector paddles are made from magnesium alloy. The total weight is 1710kgs, extremely light for a V12-powered prestige 2+2 seater sports car with every imaginable luxury feature. This has a hugely beneficial effect on performance. Top speed of the manual is 186mph and 0-100 km/h (62mph) acceleration takes just 4.9 seconds. Other technologically radical features include a ZF 'drive-by-wire' six-speed automatic gearbox that dispenses with a traditional gear lever. Instead, the drive, park, neutral and reverse controls are selected by buttons.

Touchtronic manual mode enables the driver to change gear using paddles mounted behind the steering wheel. The automatic gearchange has been tuned to provide the perfect balance between super-fast operation and comfortably smooth shifts. A conventional six-speed manual transmission is also offered.

The agility of the car is boosted by the perfect 50:50 weight distribution. This has been achieved partly by putting the gearbox at the rear. A carbon fibre drive shaft, running in a cast aluminium tube, delivers torque from the engine to the gearbox. Handling is further improved by the light aluminium wishbone suspension and aluminium bodied dampers. The whole DB9 cabin is hand-finished in premium quality materials giving it a simple and functional feel. Aluminium is used in the interior, reflecting the most commonly used material in the structure and body. Even details such as the instrument dials are made from aluminium. Features include full leather Bridge of Weir upholstery of the highest quality and a state of the art music system specially developed for Aston Martin by British audio specialists Linn.

Among the many technological firsts is the 'message centre' in the dashboard. It is an organic electroluminescent display (OEL), as opposed to the more common LCD. OELs have a higher resolution and better contrast and are easier to read, especially when viewed at an angle. Of course, no Aston Martin would be an Aston Martin without a beautiful body. The DB9 is modern and clean but retains much of its heritage. It is a modern interpretation of a traditional Aston Martin, the successor to benchmark designs such as the DB4 and DB5. The aluminium bonnet is long and extends all the way to the car's leading edge. There is a minimum number of 'cut' or 'shut' lines, to aid styling simplicity and beauty.

The design of an Aston Martin is integral to its appeal. Taking styling cues from the past, but reinterpreting them for the future forms the central theme of every new Aston Martin currently under development.

The DB9 manages to combine all facets of style, quality and usability of a traditional Aston Martin without relying on retrospective detail or design. It is a totally modern Aston Martin.



The elegant DB9 Volante



ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE



The long bonnet and two-seater cabin creates an instantly recognisable stance, while minimal front and rear overhangs, combined with a wide track, appear to push the rear wheels out and enhance the extremities of the bodywork. At the rear a hatchback offers practicality not normally found in sports cars of this type.

Offered with an imaginative combination of different leathers, contemporary fabrics and aluminium, V8 Vantage customers will have an extensive choice of standard body and trim colours from which to choose.

The V8 Vantage is a two-seater, with the rear environment offering a large luggage shelf area accessed by a tailgate.



Inside, Aston Martin's craftsmanship is matched to striking 21st century style. The dials are made from aluminium, and together with the switchgear have a very distinct design and unique Aston Martin look and feel.

The V8 Vantage has endured the most extensive test and development programme in the Company's history during which 78 Prototypes were vigorously tested more than 1.5 million miles. In Dubai over 12,000 miles of testing was carried out where ambient temperatures regularly hit 48°C and the bodywork of the cars reached 87°C.

High speed testing was conducted at the Nardo test track in Italy and extensive testing was carried out at Nürburgring's Nordschleife in Germany, and cold weather testing in temperatures as low as -30°C was undertaken in Sweden.

The V8 Vantage is the second model to use Aston Martin's unique VH (Vertical Horizontal) architecture. Constructed from lightweight aluminium extrusions, precision castings and pressings, the underframe is bonded with aerospace adhesives and mechanically fixed with self-piercing rivets. The frame is bonded with cold-cure adhesive which has exceptional damping properties that help soak up the vibrations which may otherwise appear if the structure was welded.

The unique architecture provides an excellent backbone, while the use of sophisticated materials such as lightweight alloys, magnesium and advanced composites for the body further contributes to the car's low weight and class-leading rigidity. Heightening manufacturing flexibility, this structure will be produced within a new, dedicated facility, located within the company's existing Gaydon headquarters.

The V8 Vantage is very much a pure sports car, so from the outset, the priority of Aston Martin's engineers was to focus on a lightweight, compact size, agility and power. At just 4.38 metres long it is compact and very nimble and is the smallest model in the Aston Martin range.

The new 380 bhp engine is a 4.3 litre, low emissions all aluminium alloy V8, unique to Aston Martin. This new V8 uses the latest technology to deliver outstanding performance in all environments.

The layout of the powertrain adopts a transaxle configuration, whereby the front mid-mounted engine is connected to the transmission at the rear of the car via a cast aluminium torque tube and carbon fibre prop-shaft. This configuration provides the car with a 49:51 weight distribution, giving outstanding handling characteristics and excellent all round capabilities.

A dry-sump lubrication system is employed in the V8 Vantage. Often used in racing cars, this system allows the engine to sit very low in the body, lowering the centre of gravity which in turn helps to improve handling and the overall balance and stability of the car. The system also helps to improve engine durability by maintaining lubrication under conditions of extreme cornering and braking.

The advanced quad-cam 32-valve engine is hand assembled by skilled Aston Martin technicians at the company's new engine production facility in Cologne, Germany, where every Aston Martin engine, including the V12 units for Vanquish S and DB9, are built.

LEFT: The V8 Vantage - the latest addition to the Aston Martin range



The DBRS9 race car

Aston Martin returned to international motor sport in 2005 with an exciting new programme focused on the DBR9 - a stunning GT based entirely on the road going sister car - the DB9.

The DBR9 was unveiled at Aston Martin's state-of-the-art facility at Gaydon, near Warwick on 4 November 2004 finished in the same evocative shade of Aston Martin Racing Green as the Works cars of the 1950's.

Though billed as a 'test and development year', the DBR9 made an instant impact, taking class honours on its debut at 12 Hours of Sebring in March 2005 and then winning the famous Tourist Trophy - today a round of the FIA GT Championship - at Silverstone. Aston Martin's eagerly-anticipated return to Le Mans followed and with it came further podium success - the DBR9 shared by David Brabham, Stephane Sarrazin and Darren Turner posting a top ten overall result on the car's maiden appearance at the Sarthe circuit and finishing third in its GT1 category.

Already the DBR9 is taking up where the DB3S and DBR1 left off by combining outstanding performance with the beauty and integrity of a true, thoroughbred Aston Martin.

The DBRS9 race car (pictured left) was unveiled at Le Mans 2005, and provides a competition car for club and national racing series, and a bridge for teams and drivers looking towards international GT racing.

The DBRS9 is based on the DB9 road car, but shares many design features from the full GT1 specification DBR9. It uses the road car's aluminium bonded chassis with a DBR9-based roll cage. Aston Martin Racing's engineers have tuned the standard six litre V12 engine to produce approximately 550bhp (an increase of 20%) and reduced the overall weight by 480kg, to increase the power to weight ratio to nearly 430 bhp/tonne.

Positioned between the road going DB9 and the full race DBR9, the DBRS9 makes a racing experience more accessible to Aston Martin race enthusiasts, whilst reinforcing the DB9's performance potential and inherent racing qualities.

ASTON MARTIN TIME LINE

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- 1913** Bamford and Martin Limited founded in London
- 1914** Aston Martin name is born following success at Aston Hill Climb
- 1915** First Aston Martin is registered
- 1921** First works competition car makes its appearance
- 1922** Aston Martin makes first appearance overseas at French Grand Prix
- 1924** Charnwood family lend financial support
- 1925** Company forced to close
- 1926** Aston Martin Motors Limited is formed and sets up in Feltham
- 1928** First entry at the Le Mans 24 hour race
- 1931** Bertelli temporarily 'pawns' his company to finance the Works cars
- 1932** Sutherland family take over the company
- 1937** 140 cars built – the highest pre-war production figure
- 1939** The Atom is built
- 1949** Company advertised for sale in The Times
- 1947** David Brown buys Aston Martin Motors Limited and Lagonda
- 1948** The Spa Special wins the Spa 24 hour race. Aston Martin 2 litre is built
- 1949** Two DB2 prototypes enter Le Mans and one is placed in its class
- 1950** DB2 goes into production
- 1951** DB2 comes 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the 3 litre class at Le Mans
- 1953** DB2/4 goes into production – the first 2+2 seater
- 1954** David Brown buys Tickfords and moves production to Newport Pagnell
- 1955** DB2/4 Mark II goes into production
- 1956** During this and the following three years, four DBR1 race cars are built for competition.
- 1957** DB Mk III goes into production
- 1958** DB4 goes into production
- 1959** Aston Martin wins World Sportscar Championship in the DBR1 following wins at the 1000kms at the Nurburgring, Le Mans and the RAC Tourist Trophy
- 1963** Roy Salvadori wins at Monza in a DB4GT. DB5 goes into production
- 1965** DB6 goes into production
- 1967** DBS goes into production
- 1969** DB6 Mark 2 goes into production
DBSV8 goes into production
- 1972** David Brown sells and Company Developments takes over.
Aston Martin Vantage and Aston Martin V8 goes into production
- 1975** Receivership declared and company rescued by consortium led by Peter Sprague and George Minden.
- 1976** William Towns-designed Lagonda unveiled
- 1977** V8 Vantage goes into production
- 1978** V8 Volante goes into production
- 1980** Towns 'Lagonda goes into production
- 1981** Victor Gauntlett and Pace Petroleum take over
- 1983** Victor Gauntlett is backed financially by the Livanos shipping family
- 1986** V8 Vantage Zagato goes into production
- 1987** V8 Volante Zagato goes into production
Ford Motor Company takes a 75% shareholding
- 1989** Works supported AMR1 comes 6th in the World Championship
- 1990** Virage production starts
- 1991** Victor Gauntlett resigns and is replaced by Walter Hayes
- 1992** Virage Volante goes into production
- 1993** Vantage goes into production
- 1994** Ford Motor Company acquires 100% holding in Aston Martin. DB7 goes into production
- 1996** DB7 Volante goes into production
V8 Coupe goes into production
- 1997** V8 Volante goes into production
- 1999** V8 Vantage Le Mans goes into production.
DB7 Vantage goes into production
- 2000** Dr Ulrich Bez appointed CEO of Aston Martin
- 2001** The 5,000th DB7 is built
V12 Vanquish goes into production
- 2002** After almost 15 years, Aston Martin renews its relationship with legendary Italian coachbuilders Zagato to produce the limited edition DB7 Zagato
- 2003** Aston Martin unveil the AMV8 Vantage concept car at the Detroit Motor Show
1000th Vanquish is built
The new Gaydon manufacturing facility is officially opened. It is the first purpose built factory in Aston Martin's history
DB9 Coupe goes into production
- 2004** The new Aston Martin Engine Plant in Cologne is officially opened. It is the first dedicated engine production facility in Aston Martin's history
DB9 Volante goes into production
Vanquish S launched at Paris Motorshow
Aston Martin announces a return to International Motorsport with DBR9
- 2005** Aston Martin wins GT1 class at 12 Hours of Sebring
DBR9 wins the Tourist Trophy outright at Silverstone and makes successful return to Le Mans 24 Hours with fourth consecutive podium finish.
V8 Vantage goes into production