ASTON MARTIN

A PRODUCT OVERVIEW

Part III

After David Brown:
Tadek Marek's V8
and Beyond

Bibliography

With thanks to

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www.astonmartin.com

I have been working in the world of Aston Martin for the past 25 years. I came upon the marque in my general course of business in the motor trade and have become as enthusiastic as my customers about Aston Martin and their products.

My son Matthew and I with my first Aston Martin

There is an aura about Aston Martin, a heritage far beyond simple statistics. Winning at Le Mans, victory in the World Sportscar Championship, the Zagatos and Royal patronage would be enough for any car manufacturer. Aston Martin goes beyond that – every car has its character and every owner, real pride in his or her car.

Any market place has pitfalls for the unwary and opportunities for the unscrupulous. What I have tried to produce is an overview of Aston Martin cars that can act as an introduction to the marque. It is my view, coloured by my experiences and the use of my library of Aston Martin books as a reference. Most of the Aston Martin photos are from my own archive and I have been fortunate enough to enjoy handling each of these glorious cars.

This may represent your first foray into the world of Aston Martin; it may supplement your own knowledge. Whatever your point of reference, I hope this overview adds to your enjoyment.

Philip Jones
Byron International

THE ASTON MARTIN DBS

Production dates:	October 1967 – May 1972
Top Speed:	148 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 6.1 seconds, 0 – 100 in 15.0 seconds
Chassis numbers:	DBS/5001/R – DBS/5829/RC **(**39 of these numbers not used)
Team car chassis no:	
Length	15 feet ½ inch (4580 mm)
Width	6' 0" (1.83 m)
Height	4 feet 4 ¼ inches (1330 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm) **Rear** 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	36' 0 inches (1097 cm)
Dry weight	3500 pounds (1588 Kg)
Engine	4 litre
Capacity	3,995 cc
Cylinder bore	96mm (stroke 92mm)
Compression ratio	8.9:1
Power output	282 bhp @ 5500 rpm
Carburettors	3 x SU HD8
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh
Clutch	Borg & Beck 9 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 unequal wishbones and coil springs co-axial shock absorbers Anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts linkage Selectaride shock absorbers
Steering	Rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance 11.5 inch disc front 10.8 inch disc rear

1970 Aston Martin DBS
Chassis DBS/5554/R

In December 1965, the policy committee at Aston Martin rejected the Touring proposals for a new model and in January 1966 decided to commission what it described as a 170 mph two seater. Despite the rejection of Touring's four seater proposal, they were approached again with the idea of a car on a shortened DB6 chassis with a de Dion axle and powered by the forthcoming Aston Martin V8.

The target date was given for the Paris and London Shows on 1967 and the target was duly met – almost – the cars shown had their doors locked shut on the show stands because they were incomplete. They never made the market and were finished at Newport Pagnell and sold to understanding enthusiasts. While Touring were working to their brief, William Towns was supplementing his hard work on DB6 interiors with developing his own ideas for the new model.

With the same target as Touring for the motor shows of late 1967, the chosen design was engineered by Bert Thickpenny and his team with the model completed by July. Early wind tunnel results were not encouraging and neither was progress on the V8 engine. Tadek Marek had three engines running by June 1965 – two on test beds and one under the bonnet of a heavily modified DB5. The only difficulty with these were the connecting rods and Tadek quickly ironed out that problem and built another three units. Running these, they hit a more fundamental problem – heads were distorting and liners were fretting. Further development came with an association with Lola and two of its T70's were entered into Le Mans with Aston Martin V8's with the disastrous outcome of neither car finishing and it revealed that there was a major issue with main bearing housing failure. By now it was June 1967 and launch was only 3 months away and the decision was made to launch the DBS with the current DB6 4 litre Vantage engine. By way of comparison, for the DBS, the rigid steel platform chassis of the DB6 was widened by 4 ½ inches and the wheelbase lengthened by 1 inch to allow the engine to be dropped behind the front cross-member. As well as the inclusion of the de Dion back axle, roller splines were used on the shafts on a British production car for the first time. Located by trailing arms and Watts linkage, it was suspended by coil springs and dampened by double acting Armstrong "Selectaride"shock absorbers. It was a structure that promised outstanding handling and reflected a long line of development within Aston Martin cars.

The car had many of the up to date features incorporated in the DB6 – dashboard warning lights, red lights on the trailing edge of the doors, Sundym glass, electric windows and heated rear window. The petrol tank had a capacity of 21 gallons which included a 3 gallon reserve and the front end of the car was distinguished by the four 5 ½ inch quartz iodine headlights. In spite of the inauspicious portent of the transporter taking the new DBS to the Paris Show being involved in a crash, things went well for the white finished car.

It was also displayed at the London Motor Show and was equally well received, the only criticism coming from the width of the car. At six feet wide, it was a full six inches wider than the DB6 – it was even one inch wider than a Rolls Royces Silver Shadow - as it had been designed to take the V8 engine. At an asking price of £5,449, the Aston Martin DBS was £1,382 more than a DB6, which continued on in production. It was far more luxurious, much closer to a proper four seater and, with the de Dion axle, a much better handling car. However, the car had been designed for the more powerful V8 engine and carried 179 kilograms more weight than the DB6 which, as a consequence, outpaced its new stable mate in acceleration and top speed. All it needed was for the V8 engine to be fully developed.....

THE ASTON MARTIN DBS V8

Production dates:	April 1970 – May 1972
Top Speed:	162 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 5.9 seconds, 0 – 100 in 13.9 seconds
Chassis numbers:	DBSV8/10001/R – DBSV8/10405/RCA
Team car chassis no:	
Length	15 feet ½ inch (4580 mm)
Width	6' 0" (1.83 m)
Height	4 feet 4 ¼ inches (1330 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm) **Rear** 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	38' 0 inches (1158 cm)
Dry weight	3800 pounds (1727 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Power output	*310 bhp @ 5000 rpm
Carburettors	N/A
Fuel Injection	Bosch Fuel Injection
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh Option of Chrysler Torqueflite 3 speed automatic
Clutch	Borg & Beck 10 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 unequal wishbones and coil springs co-axial shock absorbers Anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts linkage Selectaride shock absorbers
Steering	Rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance 10.75 inch ventilated disc front 10.40 inch ventilated disc rear 1 ¼ inch thick discs with total swept area of 468 sq in.

**Power outputs were not published originally estimates vary from under 300bhp to 375 bhp. All that conjecture does not take away the fact that the DBSV8 was a very powerful car!*

The first Aston Martin DBS V8 rolled off the Newport Pagnell production line on 19th September 1969. For Tadek Marek it was the public debut for his new engine and the car received a rapturous welcome from the public.

The engine used the same light aluminium alloy construction as the old straight six and used a similar design for the valve gear employing two chain driven overhead camshafts per cylinder bank and two valves per cylinder. The 8 wet liner cylinders were in a V formation set at 90 degrees with fuel and air were supplied via a Bosch mechanical fuel injection system with the injector pump in the middle of the cylinder vee and eight separate throttle butterflies mounted outboard of each induction port. The engine had five main bearings and the cooling system was with thermostat, water pump and viscous-coupling fan. Putting this newly developed engine into the body that had been created for it gave Aston Martin a car that carried four people in luxury, weighed well over one and a half tons, yet could accelerate from 0 – 60 mph in less than 6 seconds and had a top speed of 160 mph.

Every aspect of the car needed superlatives for its description. With that weight and speed, the Girling brakes had to produce substantial stopping power – 1 ¼ inches thick front and rear, they were ventilated and had two independent hydraulic circuits to provide pressure to front and rear and the rear brakes had separate callipers for the handbrake. Unusually, Aston Martin made standard the fitment of specially made 15 inch alloy wheels with 7 inch rims. Another innovation was the introduction, as an option, of Chrysler's Torqueflite 3 speed automatic transmission – already a fitment of the competing Jensen, it perhaps reflected the consideration by Aston Martin, over a period of time, to buy in an American V8 rather than persist with the home grown product.

Testing the car, a contemporary road test by Autocar noted the flexibility of the new V8 engine at the bottom end of its wide range. They noted that the torque curve was surprisingly flat noting that in fifth gear, the 20 mile per hour increments from 30 mph to 110 mph each took around 4 seconds less than the straight six it had tested the year before. They also noted that the clutch, having to cope with all the extra torque, was heavier than the six cylinder – they measured that it needed 50 pounds of force to depress the pedal. Handling and grip had been improved on the DBS with the de Dion rear axle – in the DBS V8, Aston Martin went one better with the addition of Pirelli Cinturato GR 70 VR radial tyres on the new alloy wheels. Aston Martin offered air conditioning on the DBS V8 as an option costing £385.14 and, by the Motor Show in 1971, this was a standard fitment.

It was during the lifetime of this model that a great association ended for Aston Martin. Sir David Brown had bought Aston Martin in 1947 for £20,500, and in 1971, he sold the company to Company Developments, a Midlands based investment company, for an undisclosed sum. A simple sentence that does no justice to the achievements of his 25 year stewardship. The establishment of Aston Martin as a leading marque in the top flight of luxury sports cars. Aston Martin had delivered victor's laurels on the track with victories at Le Mans and in the World Sports Car Championship and astonishingly, it had delivered three major car lines – DB2, DB4 and DBS – each with a brand new engine. The DBS V8 was the last Aston Martin to carry the initials of Sir David Brown, and is now considered the "Series I V8". It was the first British car with an alloy body and its own V8 engine represented a massive legacy from David Brown. It was a model that continued for many years and an engine that survived in production for over thirty years.

Ogle created this special edition car as a design exercise with sponsorship from the tobacco company WO & HO Wills and in most contemporary photographs the Embassy cigarette livery is clearly visible. The car had the engine, chassis and running gear from an Aston Martin DBS V8 but the body design was a departure from the standard car. The steel platform chassis had a tubular structure above the waistline supporting a "greenhouse" and providing a substantial roll bar. The body shell was fibreglass with stainless steel panels for the front, rear and sills. A total of five moulds bolted together were used to make up the body shell.

1972 Aston Martin DBSV8
Sotheby Special by Ogle Design
Chassis No: DBSV8/10331/R

The style of the car, however, gives a clue to some very special design features. For the headlamps, four Lucas Quartz Halogen high intensity lamps were concealed by a pneumatically operated shutter. The headlamps were completely sealed by flat glass and cleaned by an electric washer/wiper.

The rear lamps consisted of twenty two lamps set behind acrylic edge-lit tubes performing the following functions:
Turn Signals – four amber lights each side giving sequential signals
Reverse Lights – two centrally located lights
Reflex Reflectors – to mark the vehicle extremities
Stop Tail Lamps – Ten red lamps across the width of the vehicle acting as tail lights with three each side lighting more brightly to indicate braking progression.

The interior of the car was trimmed in leather and Nairn fabric while design innovation featured in the instrumentation with a head up warning display for all major functions. The Triplex Sundym glass had a printed heating element and an additional pattern of gold lines to reflect heat and reduce light intensity in the car.

1972 Aston Martin DBSV8
Sotheby Special by Ogle Design
Chassis No: DBSV8/10331/R

This car was part of the inventory of an important customer of Byron International and is a car of significant historical importance in the story of not only Aston Martin but the whole of the British car industry.

AM V8 - A development story

Chassis Numbers:	April1972 – July 1973	V8/10501/RCA	to V8/10789/LCA (Bosch injection)
	Aug 1973 - Sept 1978	V8/11002/RCA	to V811383/RCA (Weber carbs)
		V8/11342/RCAC	to V8/12000/LCAV
		V8/12010/RCAS	to V8/12031/RCAS
	Oct 1978 – Jan 1986	V8SOR12032	to V8SOR12296
		V8SOR12297	to V8GL12499 (Oscar India 12042>)
	Jan 1986 – Oct 1989	V8SCR12500	to V8VKR12701

The production of the AM V8 stretched over a period of 17 years and, with changes in the ownership of the company as well as product development, there was a diversity in the product that the Aston Martin Owners Club (A.M.O.C.) have sought to simplify by identifying major changes with a series designation. Theses appear nowhere on the cars and certainly not within company records. They just serve to simplify a very complex subject

DBSV8:

This, the first V8, is considered among enthusiasts to be the last true David Brown Aston Martin - all equipped with fuel injection and distinctive twin headlamps.

AMV8 Series 2:

Announced in 1972, the plain "AM V8" marked the end of the David Brown era although ,as they were in stock, 17 sets of DBSV8 badges were used until chassis V8/10519/RCA.. Under the bonnet, the cam covers were embossed "Aston Martin Lagonda". The front end of the car now had two 7 inch quartz iodine headlights, the first of the single headlamp cars and although the car's length was increased to 15 foot 3 inches, all other dimensions remained unchanged. In the boot, there was more space with the spare wheel laid flat and inside a leather steering wheel completed the changes.

AMV8 Series 3:

Unveiled in August 1973, this car had replaced the Bosch Fuel Injection system with four, twin choke, and downdraft Weber carburettors. To accommodate this new arrangement, the bonnet sported a much larger and distinctive bulge that continued to the trailing edge. A lip adjacent to the boot replaced extractor louvers behind the rear window. Longer by a further ¾ inch, there were other modifications – mechanically, cooling was improved and an option was offered on axle ratios. Internally, new seats, revised switchgear, a larger ashtray and fuses located in the glovebox. The passenger door could be locked electronically from the drivers side and adjustments to the shape of the fuel tank had given extra luggage space. Towards the end of 1976, the "S" specification was introduced as a production line change with identification by an "S" suffix on both engine and chassis number. Reprofiled cams, revised exhaust and adjustments to the rear suspension delivered the ultimate Series 3.

AMV8 Series 4:

October introduction and the shorthand for that, has made the Series 4 version of the car one of the most identifiable among enthusiasts. The "Oscar India" was identifiable with the revised bonnet and a boot lid that now incorporated a spoiler. Wood trim came to the dash and the headlining was leather not cloth. Improved air conditioning helped passenger comfort as did the revised shock absorber settings. In 1980 major engine improvements included barrel shaped pistons, polynomial cam profiles, tuftrided valves with dished heads and revised compression ratios. By 1981, luxuries included interior switches for boot, fuel filler and mirror adjustment. There was a lock up facility on the automatic transmission as well as a cruise control option on the same transmission.

AMV8 Series 5:

First seen at the New York Motor Show in 1986 was identified by the flatter bonnet. This was because it marked the re-introduction of fuel injection that took less space than the carburettors. The injection was now by Weber rather than Bosch and was described as an electronically controlled sequential system. Over the years, the V8 saloon had grown 3 ½ inches in length and had added a meaty 202 pounds (95 kilos).

With the departure of Sir David Brown, the new owners had to establish a different identity and made their first move in dropping the "DB" nomenclature and this creates the first confusion among potential enthusiasts insofar as what was the DBS six cylinder became the AM Vantage. The name suggests a performance variant, but it was the base model of the range. The DBS V8 became the AM V8 and was noticeably different with single headlights replacing the twin and the spare wheel laid flat in the boot. The latter did not improve the overall load volume, just the ease of loading.

1972 AM Vantage
Chassis No: AM/6033/RM

1971 DBSV8
Chassis No: DBSV8/10228/R

After some 250 of the AM V8's and 70 of the AM Vantages had been produced, Aston Martin Lagonda dropped the Vantage in August 1973 introducing a new model. Changes to the car with revised air extraction out of a lip on the boot, a sunshine roof option, new sound deadening and, most noticeably, a larger bonnet bulge. In addition to revised cooling for the transmission and engine, the Bosch fuel injection had been dropped in favour of four twin choke Weber 42DCNF downdraft carburettors. With no need for a surge tank, the main fuel tank was redesigned delivering a larger boot area. Valve timing was altered and lower final drive ratios completed the package. In the meantime, Aston Martin Lagonda had external pressures on the business.

Firstly, the American market was clamouring for the V8 and entry to the American market was said to be part of the rationale for changing from injection to carburettors. Alongside that was the impact of the 1973 Yom Kippur War in the Middle East and the consequences of that on fuel prices and the overall economy. William Willson, Chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda, approached the new Labour government and applied for financial support. Twice rejecting the loan application may have been a political statement against a symbol of capitalism but, irrespective of the reasoning, it lead to Aston Martin Lagonda being forced into receivership in December 1974. The receiver shut the factory and laid off the workforce – Rolls Royce who had benefited from government support, were quick to open a recruitment office in Newport Pagnell looking at taking on the best of the skilled workforce.

The service department was kept open by the receiver and this was a small beacon of hope keeping the promise of revival alive. The catalyst of revival was the American distributor, Rex Woodgate. He had been tireless in his efforts to help gain emission approval for the AM V8 and now he brought together two North American investors – George Minden of Toronto and Peter Sprague of Massachusetts. They shared a love for the marque and joined together with an English Aston Martin enthusiast, Alan Curtis and paid £1,050,000 to the receiver for the assets of Aston Martin Lagonda. Six weeks later, they were joined by a fourth partner Denis Flaher who had retired from the family steel firm in Sheffield and had left a cheque with the receiver against the possibility of becoming involved should the company restart. Aston Martin Lagonda (1975) Limited was now in business.

1972 Aston Martin V8
Series II
Chassis No: V8/10554/RCA

1973 Aston Martin V8
Series II
Chassis No: V8/10731/RCA

THE ASTON MARTIN AMV8 *"SERIES 3"*

Production dates:	March 1973 – 1978
Top Speed:	155 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 5.7 seconds, 0 – 100 in 12.7 seconds
Chassis numbers:	**In the same series as the V8 Saloons
Length	15 feet 3 ¾ inches (4667 mm)
Width	6' 0" (1.83 m)
Height	4 feet 4 ¼ inches (1330 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm)
	Rear 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	38' 0 inches (1158 cm)
Dry weight	3800 pounds (1727 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Power output	320 bhp @ 5000 rpm
Carburettors	4 Weber 42DCNF twin choke downdraft
Fuel Injection	N/A
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh
	Option of Chrysler Torqueflite 3 speed automatic
Clutch	Borg & Beck 10 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 unequal wishbones and coil springs Koni shock absorbers
	Anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts linkage
	Lever arm shock absorbers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance
	10.75 inch ventilated disc front
	10.40 inch ventilated disc rear
	1 ¼ inch thick discs with total swept area of 468 sq in.
Tyres	Avon GR70VR x 15 specified rather than Pirellis

1974 Aston Martin AMV8 Series 3
Chassis No: V8/11118/RCAS

It was early 1976 that production really restarted – staff had to be found, parts suppliers re-acquired, new dealer agreements had to be established and a number of components re-sourced or completely re-designed. In the intervening period, some of the engineering time was devoted to providing consultancy services while the factory produced parts for a British stunt plane built in association with Cranfield. At the same time, William Towns was asked to produce proposals for both an updated V8 and a Lagonda 4 door version. The parallel development of Aston Martin and Lagonda goes back to the David Brown days where a Lagonda V8 had been developed based on the DBS V8 with a wheelbase of 9 foot 6 ¾ inches.

1975 Aston Martin Lagonda V8
Chassis No: L/12004/RCAC

William Town's design for the new car was futuristic and reflected a forward looking management style that would see the Bulldog prototype become the flagship of the company. So while the new four door Lagonda was taking shape, development of the Aston Martin V8 continued with the introduction of a new Vantage model. Not a reversion to the six cylinder engined Vantage of the early '70's but an uprated car, the Series 3 V8 saloon. Revised camshafts, airbox, larger inlet valves and carburettors, new inlet valves and different plugs all added up to deliver 40% more power and 10% more torque. Power output was put at 375/380 bhp and the cars ran through a standard ZF gearbox or Torqueflite automatic. All this additional power needed some aerodynamic help and this came from front and rear spoilers, blanked off radiator and bonnet air scoop. Koni dampers and a larger anti roll bar completed the transition.

1987 Lagonda V8
Series III
Chassis No: SCFDLO153HTL 13533

THE ASTON MARTIN AMV8 VANTAGE

Production dates:	March 1977 – 1989
Top Speed:	170 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 5.3 seconds, 0 – 100 in 12.7 seconds
Chassis numbers:	In the same series as the V8 Saloons
Length	15 feet 4 inches (4674 mm)
Width	6' 0" (1.83 m)
Height	4 feet 4 ¼ inches (1330 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm)
	Rear 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	38' 0 inches (1158 cm)
Dry weight	3800 pounds (1727 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Power output	**380 bhp @ 5000 rpm
Carburettors	4 Weber 42DCNF twin choke downdraft
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh
	Option of Chrysler Torqueflite 3 speed automatic
Clutch	Borg & Beck 10 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 unequal wishbones and coil springs Koni shock Absorbers. Anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts Linkage. Lever arm shock absorbers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance
	10.75 inch ventilated disc front
	10.40 inch ventilated disc rear
	1 ¼ inch thick discs with total swept area of 468 sq in.
Tyres	Pirelli CN12 255/60VR x 15 inch

As with the main body of Aston Martin V8's enthusiasts have identified "unofficially" three different series for the Aston Martin V8 Vantage to assist with differentiation:

Series 1: *Later examples had Vantage body features fitted during factory construction rather than after build. Some standard V8's will be sold, for example, with Vantage spoilers Except for two that started as V8 saloons, they are identified with a "V" suffix to the engine and chassis numbers.*

Series 2: *The revised specification of the Oscar India series were shared by the Vantage variants and the first Series 2 is identified by the chassis V8VOR 12040 with the second V standing for Vantage. Leather replaced the vinyl covering and cloth headlining and the interior was devoid of wood unless the customer insisted on it. From early 1980, a new engine was introduced with the cylinder head based on the Lagonda with1.35" exhaust valves and 2.1" inlet valves. New inlet camshaft and pistons put the compression ratio to 9.3:1.*

****Series 3:** *Revised bodywork identifies a car that first appeared at the NEC Motor Show in 1986. It was stated to have 400bhp with an option of a 432bhp variant. The engine suffix on these models is /X and the car sat on 16 inch wheels.*

1978 Aston Martin
Vantage V8
Series I
Chassis No:
V8 /11929/ LCAV

1978 Aston Martin
Vantage V8
Series II
"Black Dash"
Chassis No: V8VOR12047

1989 Aston Martin
Vantage V8
Series III
Chassis No:
SCFCV81V6KTR12688

1979 Aston Martin V8
Volante "Series I"
Chassis No: V8COR 15095

1987 Aston Martin V8
Volante "Series II"
Chassis No: SCFCV81COGTR 15477

Open topped motoring had always been part of British motoring but a combination of economics and the efforts of Ralph Nader, in the United States, to drive safety into car manufacturing meant that there was a shortage of convertibles on the market. Aston Martin, seeing escalating prices of second hand convertibles and hearing the clamour on both sides of the Atlantic for a new model, introduced the V8 Volante to the market in June1978.

The base specification of the car followed the contemporary V8 saloon, but Aston Martin took the opportunity to introduce some changes – a burr walnut dash and trim as well as a new bonnet, that were to be seen on the Oscar India saloon. With a fully lined, power operated soft top, the standards of luxury were maintained. The weight of the new Aston Martin V8 Volante was published as identical to that of the saloon – it reflected that any weight gained by removing the roof was replaced with strengthening. Records show that, although the car was launched in 1978, all production, except for the prototype, were exported to the United States. This represented around 3 cars per week for that period and it was only later that any cars were released to the home or European markets. Interestingly enough though, I have personally sold a number of right hand drive 1978 Volantes so perhaps some slipped through the export net for favoured customers.

1980 Aston Martin V8 Volante Series 1
Chassis No: V8COR15163

The A.M.O.C. has again identified two "series" for the Volante in addition to the clearly identifiable Vantage Volante. Series 1 was the car, as launched in 1978 – effectively, an Oscar India Volante – and it shared the various improvements over the years with that saloon model, such as the standardisation of BBS wheels in 1983. Series 2 identification comes from the adoption of the Weber fuel injection system that was fitted to the Series 5 saloons from January 1986.

In the October of 1986, Aston Martin used the platform of the NEC Motor Show to announce the Vantage Volante. Some of the V8 Volantes had already been fitted with Vantage engines but the Vantage Volante was distinguished by modified bodywork – spoilers and flared wheel arches that continued down to the sills. Like the Vantage saloon, the engine delivered 400bhp in standard form with the option of an uprating to 432bhp. 16 inch wheels were the final external identification – important because the first 20 cars produced shared chassis numbers with the standard V8 Volantes and can only be identified by the /X suffix on the engine number. Later models reverted to the saloon Vantage identifier with the chassis prefixed V8V.

A small number of Vantage Volantes are identified as PoW specification. It reflected the personal preference of the Prince of Wales to dispense with some of the body extras – no boot lip or air dam and a far less pronounced flaring to the wheel arches.

This 1979 Aston Martin V8 Vantage first had the 6.3 litre factory upgrade of the engine then, later, the 7.0 litre engine upgrade by Aston Martin specialist RS Williams – note the distinctive green cam covers.

1979 Aston Martin V8 Vantage
Chassis No: V8VOR 12132

1989 Aston Martin V8 Vantage Volante Automatic
X Pack 400 bhp
Chassis No: SCFCV81V5KTR 15744

THE ASTON MARTIN AMV8 VOLANTE

Production dates:	June 1978 – 1989
Top Speed:	142 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 8.9 seconds, 0 – 100 in 25.5 seconds
Chassis numbers:	1978 – 1980 V8COR15001 – V8COR15439
	1981 – 1984 V8CBL 15220 – V8CGR15849
	1984 – 1989 V8CFF 15400 - V8CKR 15226
Length	15 feet 4 inches (4674 mm)
Width	6' 0" (1.83 m)
Height	4 feet 6 inches (1372 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm)
	Rear 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	38' 0 inches (1158 cm)
Dry weight	3950 pounds (1791 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Power output	**Series 1:**320 bhp @ 5000 rpm
	Series 2:305 bhp @ 5000 rpm
Carburettors	**Series 1:**4 Weber 42DCNF twin choke downdraft
Fuel Injection	**Series 2:** Weber Marelli
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh.
	Option: Torqueflite 3 speed automatic
Clutch	Borg & Beck 10 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 wishbones, coil springs Koni shock absorbers anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts linkage
	Lever arm shock absorbers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance
	10.75 inch ventilated disc front
	10.40 inch ventilated disc rear
	1 ¼ inch thick discs with total swept area of 468 sq in.
Tyres	**Series 1:** Pirelli CN12 255/60VR x 15 inch
	Series 2: Avon GR70/VR x 15 inch

1986 Aston Martin V8 Volante Series I
Chassis No: SCFCV81C2GTR 15433

While the development of Aston Martin road cars continued, it is important to remember that there was a consultancy and engineering development focus maintained on both Aston Martin and Lagonda. The most famous and instantly recognisable product of that focus is the William Towns designed Lagonda. In simple engineering terms, the car had a marginally "softer" version of the 5.3 litre engine producing 280 bhp and driving through the Torqueflite gearbox. But Towns wanted the car to be the cutting edge of technology as well as design and the Cranfield Institute of Technology created computers and electronics from scratch, many of which are taken for granted in modern cars, and that development delayed the launch of the car for over 12 months. At launch, the Lagonda had a bewildering 46 switches covering every aspect of the car apart from driving it.

Development of the car continued – the Javelina Corporation of Dallas improved the computing and over the years, the power output varied up to 300 bhp back to 289 bhp. Tickford produced an upgraded version that only sold 5 units, most into the Middle East and technology carried on with the car getting a voice synthesiser to deliver warning signals. When sales finished in 1990 after 14 years, 645 cars had been sold – not a failure, but not particularly profitable. At the same time that the Lagonda was being developed, ideas were moving towards a mid engined Aston Martin. The project began in 1977 with a design again from the drawing board of William Towns and was targeted for show at the 1978 Motor Show. The car was half complete when focus turned elsewhere and it was 1979 before focus on the prototype returned.

The project was passed to Keith Martin who set up his small team at the end of the main engineering workshop at Newport Pagnell. By the time the car was shown to the press in April 1980, the car had a twin turbocharged engine that was reputed to be good for 200 mph. The best achieved on the short track at MIRA was 191 mph.

There was never going to be enough money to put this supercar into production – rumour has it that the Bulldog prototype stood on the company books at over £400,000 - but it provided the lifeblood of publicity for Aston Martin in difficult times and perhaps paved the way for the next headline maker, another Aston Martin Zagato.

THE ASTON MARTIN V8 ZAGATO

Production dates:	Saloons – 1986 – 1988
Top Speed:	186 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 4.8 seconds, 0 – 100 in 25.5 seconds
Chassis numbers:	Saloons V8ZGR 20010 – V8ZJR 20062 (except 20042) Volantes V8XGR20042 – V8ZJR 30010 – V8X30034
Length	Saloon: 14 feet 4 ¾ inches (4390 mm) Volante 14 feet 8 ½ inches (4480 mm)
Width	6' 1 ¾ " (1.860 m)
Height	4 feet 3 inches (1295 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches (140 mm)
Track	**Front** 4' 11" (1500mm) **Rear** 4' 11" (1500mm)
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	38' 0 inches (1158 cm)
Dry weight	Saloon: 3637 pounds (1650 Kg) Volante: 3718 pounds (1685 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Power output	432 bhp (305 bhp Volante)
Carburettors	4 Weber 42DCNF twin choke downdraft
Fuel Injection:	Volante - Weber Marelli
Chassis	Square section tube frame, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed synchromesh.
Clutch	Borg & Beck 10 ½ inch plate
Front suspension	2 wishbones, coil springs Koni shock absorbers Anti roll bar
Rear suspension	Coil springs, de Dion axle, trailing links and Watts linkage Lever arm shock absorbers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	Girling disc with separate servo assistance 10.75 inch ventilated disc front 10.40 inch ventilated disc rear 1 ¼ inch thick discs with total swept area of 468 sq in.

1989 Aston Martin V8 Zagato Volante
Chassis No: SCFCV81Z3JTR 30020

1989 Aston Martin V8 Zagato Vantage
Chassis No: SCFCV81ZGTR 20019

In 1978, George Minden had left the board of Aston Martin and the burden of financial responsibility fell increasingly on the shoulders of Alan Curtis. In 1980, three new faces, Peter Cadbury, Tim Hearley of CH Industrials, supplemented the board along with Victor Gauntlett of Pace Petroleum and later that year, Pace and CHI agreed to buy out the other shareholders. One of those new faces, Tim Hearley bought a V8 Volante from me and, reportedly, was very nearly instrumental in purchasing MG for Aston Martin Lagonda!! Aston Martin Lagonda (1975) became simply Aston Martin Lagonda Limited with Victor Gauntlett very much in a leading role.

In 1984, Victor Gauntlett met with Elio and Gianni Zagato at the Geneva Motor Show. To quote a contemporary Zagato brochure *"Their idea, to create a car so exceptional as to be considered unique was ambitious but justified by the importance of the Aston Martin name whose glorious sporting history is no less than that of the Milan coachbuilding firm."* A year later, the first Zagato badged Aston Martin since the DB4GT was announced with the plan to produce 50 cars at a rate of two cars per month. Finally, in March 1986, again at the Geneva Show, the V8 Vantage Zagato was introduced to the public.

Let Zagato's own brochure describe the car. *".....This design concept unites rather than connects the lower lines of the body with those of the roof. All the pillars supporting the side windows, rear window and windscreen are situated on the inside and thus cannot be seen. It was created with the technical collaboration of Saint Gobain.....This new car brings together two philosophies and two histories. It embodies the traditions of two glorious companies which have found each other again, but it's also a rediscovery of the fine craftsmanship of two friendly nations who together have created the world's best loved motor cars."* .....more prosaically, the chassis from Aston Martin was virtually the same as the V8 Vantage while the engine was the 432 bhp version of the Vantage engine.

Launched in March 1987, again in Geneva, the Zagato Volante was 7 ½ inches shorter than the Vantage Volante and was a slim 133 kilograms lighter. In the end analysis, 52 saloons and 37 Volantes were made before production ended. Each chassis was built at Newport Pagnell and road tested by Aston Martin before being shipped to Milan. There was no pre-construction of bodies so it wasn't just a matter of dropping a body on a chassis when it arrived. Chassis were first checked for damage or missing parts then the panels were added in a process that mirrored the standard build at Newport Pagnell.

The finished car was put on "slave wheels" and sent back the United Kingdom for final checks and fitment of the Speedline wheels of Zagato's own design. The car had a drag coefficient of 0.28 and met all the design constraints. The Volante design had to be strengthened to accommodate the loss of rigidity of the hard top. The end compromise was the lesser powered (305 bhp) engine with fuel injection – this allowed a smooth bonnet with no bulge for carburettors to compensate for the aerodynamic penalty of the missing roof and allowed the performance envelope to be closer to the saloon.

The front end treatment continued the aerodynamic theme with the radiator grille replaced with a plastic panel to improve air flow. The windows were also designed to be the full length of the door to help air flow. Zagato maintained a purity of purpose when designing the Volante that some owners subsequently altered by asking the factory to fit the higher powered engine, accepting the bonnet bulge and others who opted for the saloon grille on the Volante. Whichever way it is viewed, the collaboration reignited interest in Zagato and paved the way for the Sanction II DB4 GT Zagatos.

ASTON MARTIN V8 VIRAGE COUPE

Production dates:	October 1988 - 1995
Top Speed:	155 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 6.0 seconds, 0 – 100 in 15.00 seconds
Chassis numbers:	AMSLR 50000 - 500426
Length	Saloon: 15 feet 6 ½ inches (4737 mm)
Width	6' 1" (1.854 m)
Height	4 feet 4 inches (1321 mm)
Ground clearance	
Track	**Front** 1511mm **Rear** 1524mm
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	
Dry weight	Saloon: 3948 pounds (1790 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Power output	330 BHP
Fuel Injection:	Weber Marelli
Chassis	Steel box section chassis, steel superstructure, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed manual Torqueflite 3 speed automatic (1993 4 speed)
Clutch	265 mm inch plate
Front suspension	Independent double wishbones, anti roll bar, co-axial dampers
Rear suspension	Alloy de Dion axle, triangulated trailing arms Watts linkage Dual rate coil springs and telescopic dampers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	13 inch ventilated disc front 11.3 inch solid disc rear Vacuum assisted servo and split circuit hydraulics

1990 Aston Martin V8 Virage
Chassis No: SCFCAM153LBR 50039

Victor Gauntlett had a happy knack of being able to focus people on a task and when, in 1986, he invited 5 sets of designers to produce their vision of the new Aston Martin for the 1990's, he gave them a deadline of 13th August, of that year, to produce a quarter scale model of their ideas. That was just 3 months and it was a deadline met by all competing design studios. The models were put on display in the Service Department at Newport Pagnell and a mixed jury of executives, dealers, customers and others were asked to vote for their favourite. In October of that year, the design contract was awarded to John Hefferman and Ken Greenley and Design Project 2034 was up and running.

Working with the Factory Design Team, the first victims of the project were the originally specified pop up headlights. Cost, weight and reliability won the day and new lights had to be sourced and some Audi units met the brief. For the first time, Aston Martin had a newly installed CAD/CAM (computer aided design/computer aided manufacture) system as a point of reference. It is a credit to the engineering team that they not only used the system but let it validate work already done by traditional methods. A Lagonda chassis, with a two door body to disguise the project objective, was used as the mule to develop the chassis for the new car and test new suspension ideas.

One of these ideas, for triangulated radius arms on a central pick up for longitudinal location on the axle, was thought by Aston Martin engineers to be original. Embarrassingly they found that Alfa Romeo had introduced the system on the new GTV6 and the Board agreed to the purchase of an Alfa to assist their own development. Chassis DP2034/1 was put together as a prototype with the front suspension designed "on the hoof" but the car showed up well. At the same time, development was happening on the 5.3 litre V8.

The brief was the production of a car that would run on unleaded fuel, had a 4 valve per cylinder head and delivered over 300 bhp. Into the team came an American called Reeves Callaway of Callaway Engineering . Together with a German living in California, Hans Herrmann, they targeted the Porsche 928 engine that delivered 70 bhp per litre and bench testing the Aston Martin V8, the first test delivered 65 bhp per litre. It meant that for the first time, Aston Martin had a car that could meet and beat the emission rules for anywhere in the world without expensive modifications for individual markets.

Victor Gauntlett was to the fore when it came to naming the car – he wanted a name that had a "V" as with Vantage and Volante and finally came up with the name Virage from the French for "turn". On display in Birmingham at the 1988 Motor Show, two saloons, one in silver and one in metallic green sat in luxurious splendour. Connolly hide, burr walnut veneer were enhanced by the simplicity and elegance of the Virage design. Two spoke leather steering wheel and leather covered gear lever were typical of the driver comforts while the top of the range four speaker stereo system was standard equipment. Electronics were to the fore with an electro-luminescent back lit instrument panel and a computerized information unit with fault finder.

For the owner possibly concerned about security on his £110,000 investment, the car shut down its systems as soon as the key was removed from its ignition and the car even locked itself if the key was out of the ignition for a certain period of time. Although a customer did not receive a new Virage until early in 1990, the launch impact of the car meant that the first two years production – 6 cars per week – were sold before that first customer took delivery.

Aston Martin Virage

For further details, please contact

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ASTON MARTIN V8 COUPE LIMITED EDITION

The V8 Coupé Limited Edition made its world debut at the British International Motor Show on the 18th of October 1994. The suspension system and external appearance, owes more to the Vantage than the Virage. The following are selective quotes from the press release issued by Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd.

"With a maximum speed in excess of 150 mph the Aston Martin Limited Edition offers 10% more power than the Virage or Volante and there is an equivalent reduction in exhaust emission levels through the use of more efficient design 32 valve cylinder heads and a new electronic management system for the 5.3 litre V8 engine. Production of the Limited Edition will be restricted to no more than 10 units for delivery during the next six months.

Each Limited Edition model will be finished in a dark metallic "British Racing" green with a contrasting saddle brown Connolly hide upholstery which is matched to beige and green leather for the roof lining and interior door trims."

"In a break with tradition burr elm is used for the instrument and facia panels in preference to the more traditional burr walnut used on other Aston Martin and Lagonda models. Each Limited Edition model will have the original owner's name together with its chassis number engraved on to a brass plate mounted on the facia panel."

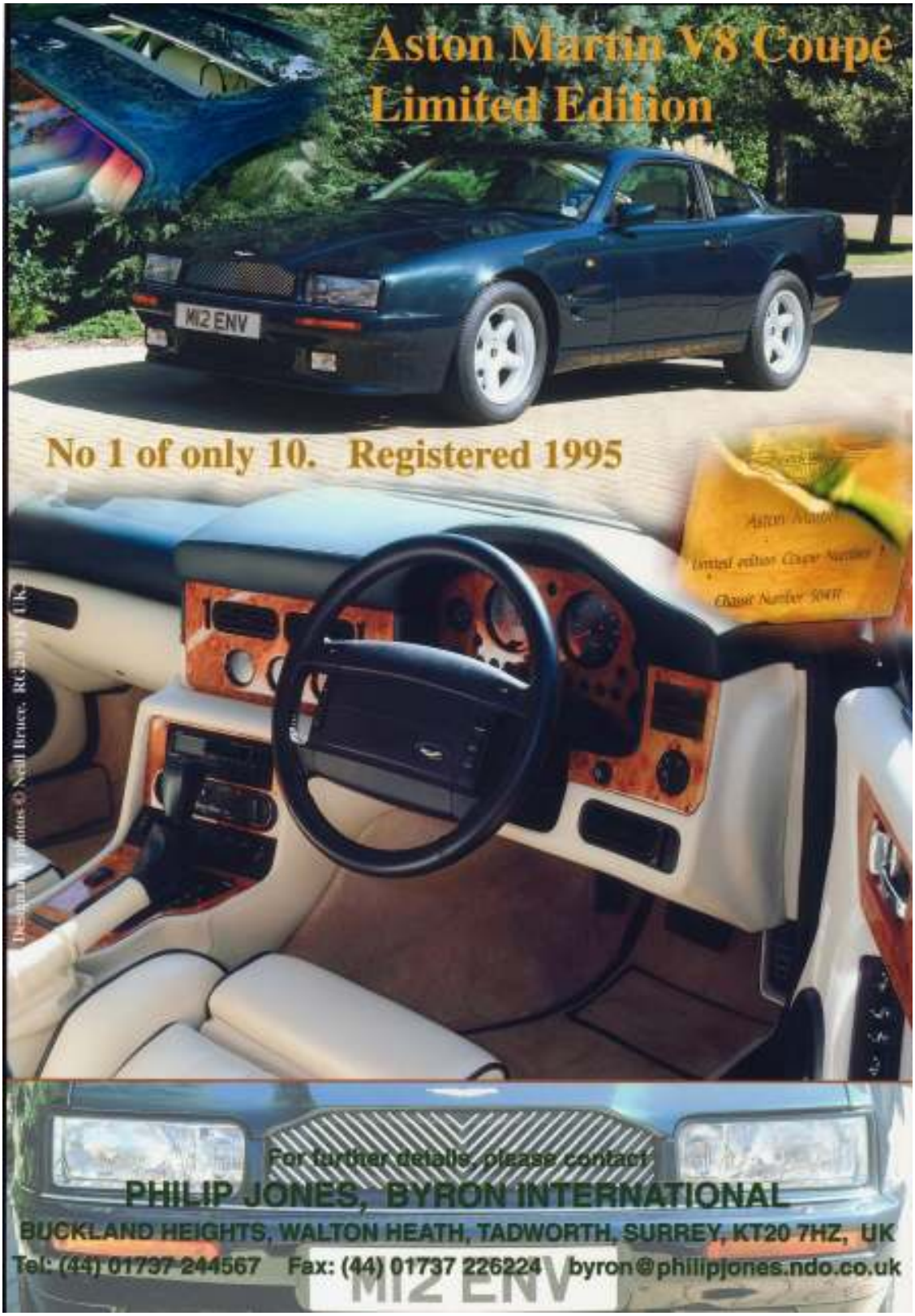
"A special 'V' motif radiator grille has been designed to give the Limited Edition model its own distinctive appearance while acknowledging its heritage in relation to the Virage, Volante and Vantage.

Priced at £137,500 the Aston Martin Limited Edition has 4 wheel anti-lock disc brakes, an advanced design climate control system, a driver's side air bag and a choice of a 5-speed manual or 4-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission."

Byron International have been privileged to represent three of these wonderful cars, most recently, chassis number 50414, that had just one owner from its supply new in 1995 and covered only 5,600 miles in the first thirteen years of its life.

In spite of the low mileage, the car was maintained with a full service history provided by the supplying dealer, Aston Martin specialists, Stratstones of Wilmslow in Cheshire.

1990 Aston Martin V8 Limited Edition Coupe
Chassis No: SCFAM2S9RBR 50414


Aston Martin V8 Coupé
Limited Edition
M12 ENV
No 1 of only 10. Registered 1995
For further details, please contact
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M12 ENV

ASTON MARTIN V8 VIRAGE VOLANTE DROPHEAD

Production dates:	October 1988 - 1995
Top Speed:	155 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 6.5 seconds, 0 – 100 in 16.00 seconds
Chassis numbers:	AM1CNR 60001
Length	Saloon: 15 feet 6 ½ inches (4737 mm)
Width	6' 1" (1.854 m)
Height	4 feet 5 ½ inches (1346 mm)
Ground clearance	5 ½ inches
Track	**Front** 1511mm
	Rear 1524mm
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	
Dry weight	Saloon: 4256 pounds (1960 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Power output	330 BHP
Fuel Injection:	Weber Marelli
Chassis	Steel box section chassis, steel superstructure, aluminium body.
Transmission	5 speed manual
	Torqueflite 3 speed automatic (1993 4 speed)
Clutch	265 mm inch plate
Front suspension	Independent double wishbones, anti roll bar ,co-axial dampers
Rear suspension	Alloy de Dion axle, triangulated trailing arms Watts linkage
	Dual rate coil springs and telescopic dampers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	13 inch ventilated disc front
	11.3 inch solid disc rear
	Vacuum assisted servo and split circuit hydraulics

1993 Aston Martin V8 Virage Volante
Chassis No: SCFDAM1CXPBR 60053

There had been a process of continuous product development between the launch of the Virage and the first customer delivery. It wasn't just a matter of trying to hone the coupe to perfection – at the 1990 Birmingham Motor Show, Aston Martin launched the Virage Volante Drophead. Contemporary marketing from Aston Martin referred to the fact that "...the Virage Volante has recaptured the spirit of the golden age of grand touring." The trouble was that the car had been produced as a two seater with a simple platform behind the front seats – yes, there was the power hood that slid into its special compartment between the passenger area and the boot. It was capable of 155 mph, but the hood obscured the rear view when down and where was the driver to put their golf clubs? When the car came to the market in 1992, there were two extra seats and rear glass quarter panels lower electrically with the hood. Suspension had been revised and an ABS braking system added to the specification and there was an option of 17 inch Aston Martin alloy wheels.

The modified Volante specification was not the only Virage offering to be announced during 1992. Back in the days of the Aston Martin DB5, David Brown had commissioned the coachbuilders, Radford to build a shooting brake. At the Geneva Motor Show in 1992, Aston Martin launched the Virage Shooting Brake – the fastest estate car in the world. This was not the work of a specialist bodybuilder but production by Aston Martin themselves – in Works Service. The tailgate itself was sourced from Aston's new parent Ford but the factory had done an outstanding job of blending it into the bodywork that the impression was of a purpose built whole rather than something just "tacked on" to a coupe. Two other developments were about performance – preceding the announcement of the shooting brake there came the news of a 6.3 litre engine option. This was available to be specified as an option on a new order or it could be specified as a conversion on an existing car. The new option was made up of increased bore and stroke, a revised fuel injection system, special Cosworth pistons with higher lift cam shafts and a new crankshaft. This was of a much higher specification and accommodated the new longer stroke. With the cylinder heads reworked the engine produced 465 bhp.

1990 Aston Martin Virage 6.3 litre
Chassis No: SCFCAM1S2LBR 50114

The final announcement of 1992 was one that put even the 6.3 litre power output in the shade. Aston Martin announced the production of its most powerful production road car powered by a twin-supercharged 5.3 engine producing a massive 550 bhp.

1994 Aston Martin V8 Virage Volante
Wide Body Specification
Chassis No: SCFDAM2C8PBR 60114

Aston Martin Volante LWB

One of only 64 examples
Chassis: SCFDAM2C7WBR 89006
First registered 1998

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ASTON MARTIN V8 COUPE

Following the success of the Limited Edition V8 Coupe, the new 'Vantage' style V8 Coupe was introduced on the 5th of March 1996, at the Geneva Motor Show, alongside the DB7 Volante. Whereas all ten of the Limited Edition V8 Coupes shared many external features with the preceding Virage, the new V8 Coupe reflects the overall design themes and the smooth flowing aerodynamic lines of the Vantage, as was the case with most of the suspension system. However, it has its own distinctive design radiator intake, six spoke 18" x 8.5" alloy road wheels, and circular auxiliary driving lamps integrated within the front spoiler. Special compound 255 / 50 ZR18 Pirelli P Zero tyres were developed for the new model.

The quad cam engine has 4 valves per cylinder, (last used by Aston Martin in 1921-2) and produces 350 horsepower. This was a further development of the now legendary Tadek Marek designed all alloy V8, with its racing pedigree. Improved cylinder heads, camshafts and pistons were fitted, together with an 'Alpha Plus' electronically controlled engine management system. According to Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd., the new V8 Coupe could reach 60 m.p.h. in less than 6.0 seconds and has a maximum speed in excess of 150 m.p.h. Naturally with the use of a three way catalytic exhaust system, the engine runs on unleaded fuel. However, for countries where leaded petrol was still the norm, a non-catalyst system was available. In effect, it was a 'worldwide' engine compatible for all markets.

The 4-speed automatic transmission was electronically controlled with Sport and Touring modes. Anti-lock AP / PBR brakes fitted to all four wheels, with ventilated discs and four pot callipers. With a servo-assisted tandem master cylinder, the brakes are independent front and rear, controlled by a Bosch 4 channel ABS system. The power assisted rack and pinion steering is speed sensitive. The rear axle is fitted with a limited slip differential.

All body panels are hand crafted in aluminium. Requiring ten Connolly hides each luxurious interior could be tailored to individual tastes. Burr Walnut was used for the facia panel, centre console and door cappings, and Wilton carpet for the floor covering. There are a minimum of twelve separate coats of paint applied to each complete body and each engine carried the name of the individual craftsman who was personally responsible for its build and extended dynamometer test.

There was power assistance for the adjustment of the driver and front passenger seats. A sophisticated climate control system was provided together with a stereo, radio, cassette and CD player. For the final touch of luxury, cruise control was fitted for long distance touring.

At launch, the new V8 Coupe was priced at £139,500, approximately £6,000, more than the Virage but £38,000, less than the Vantage. The last V8 Coupe, chassis number 79101, was completed in December 1999.

Autocar (7th August 1996) featured in a 'back to back' test with a Bentley Continental. Auto Express (June 1997 Summer Special Issue 452) published a 'back to back' test featuring a V8 Coupe, Vantage and DB7.

1997 Aston Martin V8 Coupe
Chassis No: SCFDAM2S3VBR 79045

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE

Production dates:	Virage: October 1992 - April 1995 Vantage: April 1995 – June 1999
Top Speed:	186 mph
Acceleration:	0 – 60 in 4.6 seconds, 0 – 100 in 10.1 seconds
Chassis numbers:	Virage: AM1RR 70001 – 70090 Vantage AM1R 70091 – AMIR 70240
Length	Saloon: 15 feet 7 inches (4745 mm)
Width	6' 4" (1.924 m)
Height	4 feet 4 ½ inches (1330 mm)
Ground clearance	5.875 inches
Track	**Front** 1548mm **Rear** 1586mm
Wheelbase	102.75 inches (2610mm)
Turning circle	
Dry weight	Saloon: 4368pounds (1920 Kg)
Engine	5.3 litre
Capacity	5,340 cc (326 cu. inch)
Cylinder bore	100mm (stroke 85mm)
Compression ratio	8.2:1
Power output	550 BHP
Fuel Injection:	Bosch sequential
Chassis	Steel box section chassis, steel superstructure, aluminium body.
Transmission	6 speed manual (Factory automatic conversion to special order)
Clutch	Valeo 11 inch plate
Front suspension	Independent double wishbones, anti roll bar ,co-axial dampers
Rear suspension	Alloy de Dion axle, triangulated trailing arms Watts linkage Dual rate coil springs and telescopic dampers
Steering	Adwest power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	14 ¼ inch ventilated disc front 11 ½ inch solid disc rear Bosch 4 channel ABS

1995 Aston Martin V8 Vantage Supercharged
Chassis No: 70093

This was the second car produced by Aston Martin to carry the Vantage name in its own right rather than being a performance derivative of another model. This could scarcely have been any different to the first, the straight six Company Developments version of the DBS. While this latest Vantage bears a passing resemblance to the Virage, it only shares door and roof skins. At the front, two groups of three headlamps were set behind a heated lens whilst the grille above the bumper moulding had an "egg box" appearance. The lower opening was larger and set in a deep air dam and flanked by two further openings. The bonnet opening panel did not reach the front edge and has two openings at the rear protected by wire mesh.

The major difference in the car was when you open the bonnet – two huge Eaton (Roots type) superchargers, each driven by a flat belt, dominate the space either side of the engine. Compressed air from those superchargers pass through water cooled intercoolers to the engine where it was joined by fuel directed by the Bosch sequential fuel injection system. With each supercharger feeding its own cylinder bank and each bank with its own throttle body, it was like having two 2.75 litre engines running a common crankshaft and the developed 550 bhp made it the most powerful road car Aston Martin had ever produced. Driving through another first for the company, a six speed gearbox, which helped deliver a top speed of 300 kilometres per hour – a youthful Jeremy Clarkson reviewing the car for Performance Cars, described the Vantage as "the most wonderful car in the world". This eulogy was based on the ability of the engine to induce wheelspin while being driven at over 90 mph.

To accommodate the power, there were all new 18 inch spoked alloy wheels and the wheelarches were adapted to accommodate these and to create airflow to the huge disc brakes. The brakes were controlled by a Bosch ABS system and helped this massively powerful car stop safely. Aston Martin never forgot that they were still in the business of luxury and 10 Connolly hides covered the seats, burr walnut veneer the dashboard, door cappings and centre console while the occupants' feet sank into the best Wilton carpets.

Chassis 70093 (pictured) is a wonderful example of this model with an important modification. One of two V8 Vantage Supercharged Aston Martins bought by a wealthy Thai businessman, it had an automatic gearbox fitted by the factory on behalf of the supplying dealer, Stratstones. The automatic gearbox goes some way to taming the enormous power of the car and makes it a more tractable proposition.

The Vantage Supercharged also marked the end of one era and the beginning of another – with Walter Hayes' invitation to Sir David Brown to become Life President of Aston Martin, the return of the DB prefix – not seen since the DBS, reflected a true understanding of the heritage of the Aston Martin marque.