

V 8 V a n t a g e

Return of the two-seater sports car



The production version of the AMV8 Vantage concept car was publicly unveiled on 1 March 2005 at the Geneva Motor Show. It was the culmination of Aston Martin's five-year plan and completed the company's new three-tier line up, which included the Vansquish S, DB9 and DB9 Volante. Like the DB9 range, the V8 Vantage was produced at Aston Martin's new factory in Gaydon, while the 4.3-litre V8 engine was assembled at the new engine facility in Cologne, Germany.

The V8 Vantage took Aston Martin into uncharted territory and up against new rivals, most notably the famed Porsche 911. With a younger customer in mind, it was the most affordable model in the line up and took Aston Martin into unprecedented production numbers. Around 3000 cars were slated for production per year; by far the most of any Aston Martin in its long history.

While the 4.3-litre V8 engine was unique to this car, it had its origins with the Jaguar 4.2-litre V8 used in the XRR. Most of its internal parts, however, were unique to Aston Martin, including the bore and stroke. 'We share expertise within the PAG organisation but this design is totally new and not a shared engine,' declared Jeremy Main. 'Every significant part of it is unique, from the specification of the cylinder block, to the cylinder heads, crankshaft, connecting rods, pistons, camshafts, inlet and exhaust manifolds, lubrication system and engine management. The V8 engine is unique to Aston Martin.'

The engine was located behind the front axle and as low under the bonnet as possible. Coupled with a rear-mounted manual (a Sportshift 'paddle' system was announced in late 2006) transaxle gearbox, this provided a near perfect 49:51 weight distribution for ultimate balance and handling. The new car was endowed with high performance, too, if not in the same league as the heady figures quoted for the concept car. Aston Martin claimed a top speed of 175 mph and 0-60 mph in 4.9 seconds.

The production car was Aston Martin's second built on the VH architecture of aluminium extrusions, castings and pressings. The body was made of composite, aluminium and steel panels glued to the supporting frame, much the same as the DB9. The use of high-technology materials and processes meant the car weighed just 3461 lb; the lightest Aston Martin production car for some time, but still heavier than the Porsche 911.



While lacking some of the DB9's elegance, the V8 Vantage was fiercely styled