The Aston Martin DB7 - Grand Tourer

A long wheelbase Grand Touring derivative of the Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Volante providing spacious full four seat accommodation has been developed by Australian automotive company Director, Peter Malone utilising the skills of a specialist team of Midlands based craftsmen project managed by RDS Automotive Limited (Rig Design Services).

This specially commissioned long wheelbase derivative of the best selling Aston Martin of all time offers rear seat passengers an additional 150mm of leg and kneeroom without compromise to the comfort and accommodation of either the driver or front seat passenger.

The increase of 150mm in the wheelbase of the Aston Martin DB7, so that adult rear seat passengers can be accommodated in comfort, has been engineered by RDS without detriment to the structural rigidity of the convertible body or product quality. In the opinion of a number of design critics the extended wheelbase enhances Ian Callum’s original international award winning design.

This long wheelbase process can be applied to all new and existing Aston Martin DB7 Coupe and Volante models – both six and twelve cylinder. In addition to the initial cost of a DB7 the extended wheelbase derivative attracts a price premium in the region of £75,000, depending on specification. This makes it very competitive with similar, 150 mph plus exclusive high performance products.

Working in close cooperation with a small team of specialist contractors based in the Midlands, RDS engineers used the early weeks of the project to evaluate the design and construction of this long wheelbase DB7 using sophisticated computer controlled measuring equipment, specially designed test rigs and computer aided design programmes to determine key operational decisions ahead of manufacture.

The total operation including the styling, design, engineering, development and manufacture was completed in just five months. The engineered body modifications were undertaken by Park Sheet Metal in Coventry and the specialist paint work was completed by QCR Motors in Nuneaton. The complex new hood frame was developed by RDS and Park Sheet Metal with the frame and new interior being trimmed by Tove Trimming in Towcester. At the conclusion of the programme the finished vehicle underwent a full programme of static and dynamic validation at the Leyland Technical Centre in Leyland, Lancs where it passed the Centre’s rigorous monsoon water test with flying colours.

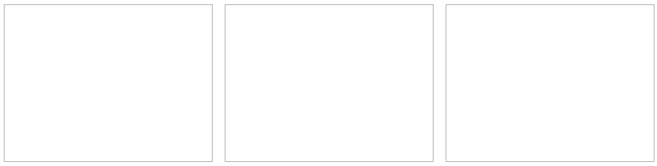
The additional length in the wheelbase is achieved by increasing the floor area between the door centre pillars and the rear hood mounting points. No changes are necessary to the location of the fuel tank or rear suspension mounting points. However a completely new design hood mechanism and hood cover has been engineered together with new rear quarter glasses, composite outer body sill panels, door and hood seals.

In addition the exhaust system has been extended using Aston Martin approved materials together with a new increased diameter drive shaft and extensions to the regular longitudinal bracing tubes which are incorporated in the underbody. The rear bench seat has been redesigned to accentuate and maximise the benefits from the additional rear legroom.

Commenting on the project Steve Whatmore, Commercial Director of RDS said ‘ We would regard this project as an appropriately engineered solution which satisfied the specific and exacting demands of our customer. It has enabled us to engineer and produce a vehicle which in every way compliments the regular Aston Martin DB7 by offering a genuine four seat ‘Grand Tourer’ without compromise to structural rigidity, exterior design or product quality.

Thanks to the skill, cooperation and enthusiasm of our team of craftsmen we were able to complete this

project on time and precisely in line with our customer’s wishes”.



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