

CLASSIC DRIVER

Business profile - Nicholas Mee

Advertorial

□ **Brackenbury Village is a highly desirable residential area between Hammersmith and Chiswick in West London, made famous in recent years by the local estate agents. Nestling happily at number 12, Wellesley Avenue, just off Dalling Road (itself once the home of "B Bira's" White Mouse racing team), is a totally refurbished 1930s-style garage establishment which now houses Aston Martin Specialist, Nicholas Mee.**

Ten years ago, Nicholas took a big gamble: after 16 years of employment with Aston Martin Lagonda he struck out on his own as an independent specialist in the marque. Now in a position to provide a full service to the Classic Aston Martin owner and buyer, Nicholas Mee and his staff have the wealth of knowledge to advise clients, find the best cars and offer maintenance to the highest standard.

They work to official Aston Martin Heritage guidelines, specialising in all the Classic models from the Feltham cars and the DB4/5/6 ranges to the recent supercharged Vantage. They see themselves as particular champions of the V8 cars which have been the mainstay of Aston Martin operations for the past three decades.

In this, the first of new series looking at the people behind the leading Classic car specialists, we visit Nicholas Mee and gain an insight into his background.

Born in Leicestershire in 1953, Nicholas Mee was educated at the Royal School, Wolverhampton. Impatient to get out into the world of work, he moved to London at the age of 16 and joined the Henlys organisation as a trainee at The Hyde, Hendon. The excellent Henlys sales training scheme took its young employees through fitting, parts management, accounts and service reception - an ideal all-round motor trade apprenticeship.

Nicholas went on to work with AFN and Follett in London before moving for a couple of years to Datsun in Miami and, later, Subaru in New York. In 1974 he was tempted back to H R Owen in London's South Kensington, dealers in Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Ferrari, Jaguar and Rover cars.



Two years later, he joined Aston Martin, a personal association which has continued ever since. His first appointment was at the then new sales outlet in Sloane Street. In 1984 he was promoted, taking over responsibility for running Aston Martin's Knightsbridge establishment. Life at Aston Martin was very different in those days. The company was making some of the world's greatest supercars but it was very much an under-funded private operation.

Under Nicholas Mee the Knightsbridge operation was moved to larger premises in Cheval Place, not far from Bonhams showrooms opposite Harrods. The showroom grew to secure 60 per cent of new British Aston Martin sales but also handled personal exports and dealt in used and Classic Astons.

The Ford Motor Company took its controlling interest in Aston Martin Lagonda in 1987 but chose not to take a very active role until the early 1990s. Despite the recession, Nicholas Mee then decided on his gamble to go it alone as an Aston Martin specialist. Ford's commitment to the future of the marque was obvious, so Nicholas set up his own Classic sales operation in a nine-car mews garage in South Kensington, dealing exclusively in Astons.

His instinct was right and the Aston Martin name forged ahead, enabling him to expand recently into the 22-car garage in Brackenbury Village. A recent initiative has seen Nicholas Mee team up with Bonhams for the annual sale of Aston Motor Cars and Automobilia at the factory in Newport Pagnell. The next of these will be held on May 11, 2002. Nicholas Mee is a partner with Bonhams in this sale. He does not place cars in it himself, instead providing the essential expertise required to select the best entries and ensure that the catalogue is authoritative.

For more details of Nicholas Mee and Co Ltd visit their website www.nicholasmee.co.uk or [CLICK HERE](#) to see all their stock on Classic Driver.

Interview by: Tony Dron

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