

CLASSIC DRIVER

Aston Martin DB7GT launched at British International Motorshow 2002



Aston Martin used the British International Motorshow 2002 to launch a more dynamic variation on the DB7 theme; the DB7GT. Based on the DB7 Vantage Coupe the car features many small improvements to make it a machine more suited to harder driving. Dr Ulrich Bez, speaking at the show, forecast that in 2003, when deliveries come on song, at least 50% of DB7 production would be the enhanced model in both its manual (GT) and automatic (GTA) forms.

The changes run throughout the car, both mechanical and aerodynamic. Subtle modifications to the wheel arch liners, the undertray and most noticeably the rear boot-lid have meant a reduction in lift by almost 50%. Speaking to one of the factory personnel present they referred to the rear spoiler as 'the DB6 boot'. Changes to the airflow management under the bonnet, resulting in two distinctive bonnet vents, have reduced heat build-up as well as contributing to the aerodynamic effects. Also visible externally are the totally new, exclusive to this model, 5-spoke 18" alloy wheels with 245/35 front, 265/30 rear low profile Bridgestone tyres.



Mechanically the engine has been 'breathed on' to produce an extra 15bhp as well as increasing the torque from 400 lb/ft (DB7 Vantage) to 410 lb/ft. These changes plus the significant reduction in final drive ratio on the manual model from 3:77 to 4:09 give the GT model more of a kick in the back; whilst still producing a maximum speed of 184mph, (165mph limited for the GTA). The adoption of the Vanquish style active sports exhaust system with rear

muffler by-pass valves means not only is more power released – it sounds better too.

The braking and suspension has also been fine tuned to match the increased performance potential of the car. A combination of racing-style grooved 355mm (front) and 330mm (rear) Brembo disc brakes and uprated Pagid RS 4-2-1 front pads will give more sustainable braking under severe driving conditions, whilst small changes to damper settings, bushes and wishbone geometry tidy up the already fine handling car's behaviour 'in extremis'.



All in all the changes are aimed at wooing some 911 and AMG customers who relish driving hard over long distances, perhaps enjoy some track-day work, but still want the peerless understated image of an Aston. The price in the UK is likely to be in the region of £105,000 - depending on extras.

Dr Bez also took the opportunity of announcing a special 'roadster' DB7 for the US which will debut at the LA show next January. Fresh with the success of the DB7 Zagato (200 confirmed orders for a production run of 99), Aston want to give America a special model, likely limited to 1500 cars only, when for type-approval reasons the Zagato could not be sold into the country. Aston will also be increasing their worldwide dealers to over 100 next year (from 82) and aiming for a total of 130 by 2005 when the Gaydon factory's production of new models will be in full swing.



Text & Photos: Steve Wakefield. Copyright Classic Driver 2002

Gallery

