

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## The British International Motor Show - London Docklands 2006

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Returning to the capital after many years in Birmingham, the Motor Show opened today (19 July) at the hi-tech Docklands venue right by the River Thames, near the City's financial district at Canary Wharf. The major debutante was Jaguar's XKR, although BMW also officially launched the M6 Convertible and Aston Martin were showing the highly-acclaimed Rapide concept to the general public for the first time in the UK.

Perhaps best described as on the start of a learning curve (the Show lacked representation from Audi, Lamborghini, Ferrari, Maserati, Porsche, and Maybach) there was nevertheless still something to interest the Classic Driver reader.

**BMW** had several examples of its newest 'M' model, the **M6 convertible**, and at the launch were at pains to emphasise the importance of the company to British manufacturing (via MINI and Rolls-Royce at Goodwood) and also the fact the UK is the second largest export market in the world for 'M' motor cars.

**Aston Martin** were showing the **Rapide** and on a separate stand two **V8 Vantages**, one having completed the 24 Hours of the Nürburgring Nordschleife, the other (signed by Dr Bez) the car the company has recorded 30,000 miles in 30 days to celebrate its 30,000th production car - a significant milestone in the company's history. At the end of the day Dr Bez announced that the company **would** build a [limited run of production versions](#) of the successful Nordschleife car for track days and Club competition.



**Bentley Motors** had its two luxury convertibles, the **Continental GTC** and **Azure**, as well as the '**Diamond Series**' limited editions of the **GT Coupé** and **Arnage**. For fans of 'bling', **Hummer** had the new mid-size **H3** on show as well as the original **H2**, while **Corvette** had a yellow **LR06** - the road version of the car that has caused traditional European manufacturers such grief on the race tracks this year.

Apart from **Astons**, **Ford's PAG** division had all members present and correct with **Jaguar** presenting the new **XKR** directly after **Land Rover** showed the latest **Freelander**, imaginatively titled '**Freelander 2**'. The **XKR** looked nice, although I'm not so sure about the air-dam - the only real styling fault with this model - and the company also has a new **XJR** titled '**Portfolio**' with styling elements from its 'lounge' 2004 **Concept Eight** show car, and a LWB XJ diesel.



There was not a lot new at **Mercedes**, although British buyers will now have an opportunity to view the facelifted **E-Class**, as well as a superb **300SL 'Gullwing'** and modern **SLR**.

**Rolls-Royce** formed part of the BMW group's extensive external display, showing the **LWB Phantom** and **101EX** prototype, while the UK's oldest motor manufacturer **Morgan** had a new four-seater on display.



The show will be open to the public from 20 -23 July 2006 at London's ExCel centre in Docklands. For more information please visit [www.britishmotorshow.co.uk](http://www.britishmotorshow.co.uk)

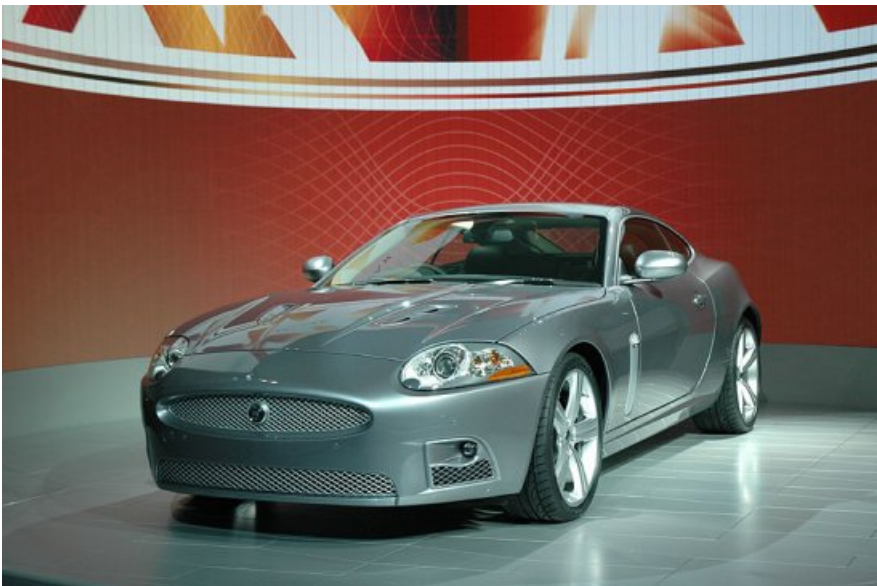
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