
Aston Martin opens new Design Studio and unveils V12 Vantage RS concept

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12th December. The 100s of VIP guests invited to the launch party of the latest offices at Gaydon had an extra surprise last night, when Aston Martin's CEO Dr Ulrich Bez revealed a new model. Officially a 'concept', but already looking very production-ready, the new car will be the fastest-ever roadgoing Aston.

First things first, the new 2700sqm styling facility at Gaydon, a result of a design by the Weedon Partnership made into reality by Austrian pre-fabrication specialist Holzbau Saurer, has been built using the latest environment-friendly construction technology. Aston Martin proudly states that it 'is a showcase for environmentally sustainable design'.

One side of the building is totally glazed, allowing natural light to flood into the styling bays that can accommodate several projects, as well as colour development work and a specialist trimmer. Director

of Design Marek Reichman has an office overlooking the open area, accessed via a gallery in the manner of the main Aston Martin offices in the existing building.



The use of a gallery allows projects and colours to be viewed from overhead, as well as enhancing the facility's capability as an events venue for VIP launches and private viewings.

The Studio is fitted out with a Bang and Olufsen projection and speaker system, just one result of the new partnership announced during the evening between the great audio-visual company and Aston Martin. B & O's audio equipment will, no doubt, see service in future Aston Martin road cars.



The studio has taken just six months to build and only twelve months to complete from its design conception to realisation.

The Aston Martin V12 Vantage RS concept

Held under wraps until later in the evening, the 'reveal', er, revealed a V8 Vantage with a motorsport-derived version of the Aston 6.0-litre V12 under its multi-louvred bonnet. Named V12 Vantage RS, the new car is surely a 'concept' in name only and will see production in 2008.

The official line from the company is that 'If there is sufficient demand then we will seriously consider a low volume production run in the near future with a price that will reflect the exclusivity of the car'.



A horsepower figure of 600bhp clearly shows Aston's intent to put the car firmly in 430 Scuderia territory. It's equipped with CCM brakes, a six-speed manual gearbox and an interior in Alcantara and extensive carbonfibre. The switchgear appeared to be a variation on the DBS's, as were the lightweight racing bucket seats. The exterior of the car blends the familiar shape of the small V8 Vantage with skirts from the N400 car, a boot spoiler, composite front splitter and louvred bonnet à la DBRS9.

With its light weight and a heavily tuned motor, the new car should be the fastest-ever production car from the British company, who are already quoting a 0 - 62mph (100km/h) time of 4.0 seconds and 100mph (160km/h) from rest coming up in just 8.5 seconds. Peak power is achieved at 6250rpm and peak torque of 690Nm is at 5000rpm. Its kerb weight will be less than 1600kg (DBS 1695kg).



Performance and exclusivity is unlikely to come cheap. Company spokesmen on hand at the launch would only intimate that the new car (should it see production, of course...) is likely to be the most expensive car in the range, comfortably eclipsing the recently launched DBS.



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