

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Lagonda V8 Series 1

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**The shape looks familiar, however, the addition of two doors and 12" in its wheelbase means the William Towns-designed Aston Martin V8 is now more of a rival for Bentley than Maserati. Only seven such cars - carrying 'Lagonda' badges - were built in period, and this one, chassis V/540/2007, will be sold at the forthcoming Bonhams all-Aston Sale at Newport Pagnell.**

**Classic Driver** was invited to drive this 1976 example, packing a 7-litre R.S. Williams-converted engine under its bonnet. In fact, it was at the marque expert's premises at Cobham that I learnt more about the car's 'money-no-object' re-engineering and enhancements, as well as having a short spin around the Surrey lanes.











At the time of its launch in 1974, the big car cost a whopping 24% more than the equivalent Aston V8. The model was catalogued until 1976, being bought by discerning customers looking for an alternative to products from Bentley and Rolls-Royce. This particular car was purchased as a 'company flagship' in more recent years, when the Aston-owning chairman saw Williams' own Lagonda V8 and decided he wanted one too.



Richard Williams then located the car and converted it to meet his client's exact needs: replacing the five-speed manual ZF gearbox with an uprated Chrysler Torqueflite, enlarging the engine to 7 litres, and



embarking on a comprehensive enhancement programme to make it the ultimate Q-car. And, with a chassis commonly referred to as '007', it's something that **the** 'Q' would certainly have approved of...

From a driving perspective, it's a typical 'RSW' car; beautifully presented, with hardly a creak or rattle and, although we didn't have a chance to hit the motorway, the subject of much attention to detail in the gutter area, resulting in a far quieter ride at speed than normal. The 7-litre V8 is high-on essential in a car of this size.

Stamping on the accelerator results in instant acceleration - courtesy of the 550lb ft of torque and 480bhp available on demand and the much-refined automatic 'box. The chassis and steering can handle it, too. Williams has uprated the suspension in line with the increased power and, given a little room, the big car can be hustled along surprisingly quickly.



Inside, it needs one of Williams' engineers to explain what has been done to the dark blue Lagonda to make it so special. There's a new dash, for starters. All-new, electrically adjustable, front seats are finished in Elephant Grey hide to match the rest of the re-trimmed interior. A tilt-adjustable steering wheel (as fitted to later V8s) has been fitted, as have new window switches and an upgraded air-conditioning system. To keep the sparks flying - so to speak - a high-output alternator and dual battery pack has been installed.



Fitted in the boot is componentry to power the state-of-the-art Alpine Sat-Nav/DVD/TV system. Twin screens (front and rear) can keep the occupants in the rear updated with the latest news from Wall (or Ramsay...) Street, while up front the driver won't miss a turning, thanks to the satellite navigation nestling just forward of the gearlever.

And to make this car truly unique, there's a Kamm tail (as fitted to later-model V8s) and powerful Cibie driving lamps in the grille.

The car carries an estimate of £140,000 - £180,000. You can see further details [HERE](#).

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**Classic Driver** has previewed the 17th May sale. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to read about the rest of the entries.

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