

CLASSIC DRIVER

Aston Martin DBS TT: the Look of Love



Perhaps it was the 'DBS1' plate, or possibly the Aston Martin Racing paintwork, that made most bystanders' faces as green as the svelte two-seater from Aston Martin. Whatever the reason, I can think of few cars that turn heads as fast as this, the Gaydon company's flagship.

It is a terrific-looking car. Still a rare sight on the roads, the DB9-like lines that have been teased, tweaked and pumped into a more muscular take on Aston's super-successful GT are just as dramatic and desirable. It was 18 months ago that the car was launched as a manual-only, strict two-seater.

Since the **Paris Motor Show** last year, however, the DBS has been available with not only the two occasional seats of the DB9, but also a modified version of the **Touchtronic** (six-speed, torque-converter) automatic gearbox.





So, while the populace of England and Wales was '*Cor, Mister!-ing*' DBS 1's gorgeous lines, it was blissfully unaware that the driver had but two pedals to control the 510bhp supercar.

I was knocked out by the [dynamics of the DBS at launch](#). If you consider – as I do – the [manual Sports Pack DB9](#) to be the best of the lot, the manual DBS was that; and more. Adding the **Touchtronic** (TT) 'box was a logical step to allow daily-driving Aston owners to enjoy the car all round the clock. It was also a way of making the gear changes smoother and more fluent, as the rear-mounted **Graziano** manual's change is a little 'meaty'.



Having said that, however, I seem to remember a trip back from the [Goodwood Revival](#) last September that ended in two colossal traffic jams virtually all the way home. I survived, as did the car, and I can think of worse places to spend a couple of hours...

Back to the DBS TT. Simply placing the car in 'D' doesn't get the best out of it. I'm not saying you have to wring its neck but, as the most dynamic drivers' car of the range up until the shortly-to-be-launched V12 Vantage, it needs some firm instructions from the driver to give of its best.





Not only has Aston Martin fitted a re-engineered version of the DB9's automatic, it's also dropped the final drive ratio from 3.15:1 to 3.46:1. The car matches the manual's 0-62mph time of 4.3 seconds and top speeds are identical, too: 191mph. Two settings are available for the gearbox and engine management characteristics. On start-up, the car defaults to a configuration designed for swift but smooth driving, while selecting 'Sport' allows the press-on driver dynamics *just* close enough to those of the manual car - with smooth changes available at the click of a '+' or '-' paddle.



Unlike many automatics, or sequential 'boxes in 'automatic' mode, the DBS TT's transmission will hold the gear, right up to the rev-limiter, without changing up. It also stays in 'manual', only reverting to full-auto when the 'D' button is pressed again.

So, once out in the open - in 'Sport', please - click it out of 'D', into 3rd or 4th gear and enjoy yourself.



This is the operating range in which the car excels. The 5935cc V12 will swing its tachometer needle from 2000rpm to well over 6000rpm with vim. Both power (510bhp at 6500rpm) and torque (420lb ft at 5750rpm) kick in relatively late in the rev-band, but depress the long-travel accelerator all the way in these middle gears and the car is intoxicatingly quick. The engine has a hard, tingling, metallic howl at full revs – quite different from the familiar growling around town.

It stops well, too, courtesy of the ventilated carbon ceramic discs (398mm front / 360mm rear) – one of the best set-ups out there, with massive stopping-power and superb ‘bite’. The suspension is definitely ‘sporting’, and my suggestion would be to leave the ‘Track’ control well alone as on broken roads in the UK it makes the ride uncomfortably harsh.





That said, the overall set-up of the DBS is a fine one and despite its lower ride-height and massive, 20in alloy wheels and 30-, or 35-series Pirelli tyres, it rides better than a regular '9. This is due to the more pliant **Adaptive Damping System** allowing more controlled wheel-travel via five-position dampers, computer-controlled according to road speed, throttle position, brake position and steering wheel rotation.

The DBS introduced Aston Martin's simpler cabin architecture to other cars in the range. A year and a half from launch, the interior is still a modern, classy place to conduct the serious business of driving. Our car was a '2+0', i.e. it was a pure two-seater. That worked well for me with the rear shelf useful for maps, coats and overnight bags. This car was also fitted with the standard seats: good, but my preference would still be for the optional lightweight versions.



Fitted as standard to the DBS is the amazing **Bang & Olufsen BeoSound DBS** sound system. This is also an option on the DB9 so pay a little attention here, potential DB9-buyers. If you think it's pretty cool sitting behind the wheel of a DBS anyway, the sucker-punch is the two motorised acoustic lenses, mounted on either side of the dashboard, rising silently and smoothly every time the system is switched on. These have

the effect of projecting high frequencies well into the cabin. Down at your feet, two 140mm woofers are set on either side of the centre console, while six other speakers add to the orchestral effect and handle the 1000W output with devastating clarity.



It's impressive - and well worth considering on a regular '9. But you do, of course, have to crank it up **L O U D** to get the most out of it.

And that's not bad advice, too, I suppose, on obtaining maximum performance from the DBS TT.

*The **Aston Martin DBS Touchtronic** costs, as tested, £162,071 in the UK. The only cost extra was the auto-dimming rear-view mirror.*

*The fantastic **Bang & Olufsen BeoSound DBS** sound system is standard on the DBS and a cost-option across the DB9 range.*

*The test car was finished in **Aston Martin Racing Green** with **Obsidian Black** semi-aniline leather interior.*

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