

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Aston Martin Cygnet - Tony Dron at the London Launch](#)



It's here. It's really happening. Aston Martin's luxury bespoke Cygnet city car will enter full production in April. At first, it will be available in two special launch-edition models, White or Black, which are available with manual or CVT transmission. These launch-edition Cygnets will be produced for an unspecified brief period, with the full Cygnet range to follow very soon.

The metropolitan chic surroundings of Meza Bar and Grill Restaurant in London's Wardour Street provided an ideal backdrop for the launch of Aston Martin's bold venture into this completely new section of the market. While some Aston diehards will undoubtedly grumble, the addition of Cygnet to the range has obvious advantages. Apart from the emissions factor, CEO Dr Ulrich Bez is keen to point out that the age of the super, high-quality city car has arrived.

As Dr Bez says, "I don't want to drive a 500HP sports car into the city every day." It's a convincing argument. However, when venturing into the Congestion Zone, he and his customers still want the same luxurious motoring experience. Cygnet has left every existing trendy little city car standing, at a stroke; and at a price, but we'll get to that.





With a selection of Aston Martin's more powerful models lined up outside, the launch models displayed within Meza's accommodating surroundings were anything but ugly ducklings. Cygnet White is finished in Snow White paint with a mix of silver mesh, chrome brightwork and White Diamond turned alloy wheels. Inside, the seats are hand-trimmed in Pearl white leather with perforated Alcantara inserts, complemented by satin chrome. On the exterior, the Aston Martin wings badge appears in matching white.

Cygnet Black has Magic Black metallic paint, featuring a subtle, deep sea-green effect, offset by matt-black louvres and chrome brightwork. Inside, the seats and dash are finished in pure black, full grain leather, perforated in a unique diamond pattern. Cygnet Black has dark chrome accents inside, with the wings badges rendered in black throughout.



Both Cygnet launch editions come with a bespoke Bill Amberg five-piece luggage set, especially designed for and tailored to Cygnet. Available in a contemporary combination of black leather with technical fabric, the set comprises glovebox bag, removable door pocket bag, hold-all, garment bag and a collapsible tote bag.

Don't forget that the base vehicle, Toyota's innovative iQ, is itself a very fine little car. Unconventional in its layout, it offers generous space across the cabin, remarkable driving dynamics and exceptional safety in a car with a wheelbase of just two metres. Aston Martin starts by stripping the iQ down to its basics before building a different vehicle, in which almost every panel is subtly altered. What emerges is pure Aston Martin, down to every last detail. You can get an iQ with a leather interior but it does not look, feel or smell like this. Ah, the smell. That's so important: as soon as you put your head inside a Cygnet, the vital difference in fragrance is immediately striking.



Is Cygnet heavier than an iQ? I put that obvious question to David King, Head of Motor Sport at Aston Martin but also the project manager for Cygnet. The answer is that it's only very slightly heavier, by about 20kg, which is insignificant. Although weight is added by all those luxurious fittings and new seats, it is offset by such costly items as ultra-lightweight wheels of exceptional quality.

Cygnet delivers everything the city driver needs, from essential equipment like ABS, nine airbags, stability control, electronic brake assist and retractable door mirrors. It's got the lot, including keyless entry and start, heated seats, and satellite navigation, all packed into a car that is just three metres long.

Cygnet is on sale now through Aston Martin's European dealership network. When first proposed, it was thought that it would be available only to owners of other Aston Martin models. Since then, the company has realised that such a restriction is pointless. Cygnet is never intended to compete for sales in the high-volume city car market. Up to 1500 Cygnets might be sold each year. That's all, and existing Aston owners will get preferential treatment. But if the owner of, say, a new Bentley wants a Cygnet, there is no reason not to sell one to that person.



And the price? Well, that's hardly the sort of thing one should be asking, is it? If you must know, it hasn't been firmly fixed but it will be in the region of £30,000 to £40,000, depending on your chosen specification. These thoughts conjure up an H M Bateman cartoon image: "The man who asked for a discount on a new Cygnet." Such people can always be directed down to the road to the nearest Toyota dealer where, in my experience, they will receive a warm welcome, excellent service and, in all honesty, a fairly decent cup of coffee.

Text: [Tony Dron](#)

Photos: Aston Martin

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