

CLASSIC DRIVER

Sports Car Project HBH: Men on a Mission



Denmark is not a country that normally brings sports car manufacture to mind, but Jesper Hermann, Christian Brandt and Torben Hartvig could soon change all that. Their company, [HBH](#), is planning a series of one-off supercars. The first project: a mid-engined version of the Aston Martin V12 Vantage.

As the established sports car brands such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche and Aston Martin increase their production and extend their market power, so a counter-trend develops: the desire to own a more individual sports car. Hence avid collectors commission high-cost, one-off projects such as the New Stratos, or the Glickenhaus Ferrari. Northern Italy, blessed with the tradition of the great design houses and carrozzeria, is the centre of such activities, but even in northern Europe there are enthusiasts who want to turn the dream of a one-off sports car into reality. In the Danish Vedbæk, an idyllic location on the famous panoramic coastal road north of Copenhagen, the design and development firm HBH is doing exactly this.

HBH stands for Hermann, Brandt and Hartvig. All three are automotive professionals: designers, producers and developers of special car projects. While they do have some history of producing highly specialised cars (think Kleemann GTK, Sondergard and Zenvo ST1), the new project focuses even more strongly on the concept of a specific car for a specific customer. Yet traditionalists might baulk at their choice of a first project: based on the Aston Martin V12, one of the most impressive front-engined GTs on the market, the Vedbæk-based team aims to create a superlative mid-engined sports car. It certainly raises some questions.



Such as – why build a mid-engine supercar based on an Aston Martin? “We wanted to create a tribute to Aston Martin unifying the timeless beauty of the road cars with the full-blooded racing pedigree of the LMP1 Le Mans race cars,” explains Torben Hartvig. But why a mid-mounted engine, when Aston Martin itself has not adopted this idea? “Aston Martin has a history and tradition of building fantastic front-engined GT cars. This heritage obliges them to keep the front-engine layout – which is, of course, why the One-77 also has a front-centre layout. However, the idea of a mid-engined Aston was brought to life once before in the 1979 Bulldog. At the time the styling of this car was state of the art – today you see that it has little consistency with Aston’s design heritage. We wanted to create a car that has the Le Mans racing pedigree but at the same time, from a styling viewpoint, is in complete harmony with Aston Martin’s design heritage.”

At the heart of the project is the magnificent 6.0-litre V12 engine – used, with very few modifications, for both Aston’s road cars and racers. To provide additional power, HBH has designed a one-off twin supercharger, inspired by the system used in the 1997 Aston Martin V8 Vantage.

Currently, the developers are talking to potential clients – perhaps an enthusiast who already has a collection of sports cars and is looking for an exceptional alternative to the mainstream models on the market. The HBH team will be at Villa d’Este this month: exactly the sort of environment where they could meet an appropriate individual. Just one example of the car will be built, and the client will retain 50% of the design and production rights. If, at a later date, the client and HBH decide to produce a small series of cars, then that would be possible. HBH’s aim is – ideally – to sign a contract within the next 3-4 months and, following a 12-month production schedule, to present the car in 2012.

Text: [Classic Driver](#)

Photos: Martin Bubandt, HBH

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