

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Driven: Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato Sanction II](#)

### **Lead**

With the possibility of this genuine Aston Martin Zagato being in new ownership after the annual Bonhams all-Aston sale this Saturday, it was too good an opportunity to miss a short, sharp 'round the block in a Zag' just 48 hours before the big day.

So, given the short time frame, let's get straight on with the driving impressions – aided by the short video above. The car is the headlining lot in this year's auction at Aston Martin Works, one of only four Sanction II DB4GT Zagatos ever made, and an honourable addition to the original 19.

You can read the [full description of this car elsewhere on Classic Driver](#), as well as an overview of the entire sale, but this feature is all about what it's like to swing a leg under the wide-diameter, studded wood wheel and turn that key.







I'm sure I've read somewhere that the lightweight, cutaway and quaintly buttoned Zagato seats are uncomfortable. Not these, they are perfect for me, and the driving position is in the traditional David Brown Aston mould: the best of the period, no question.

The big wheel is there for a reason. I didn't count how many turns from lock to lock, but there must be quite a few. No wonder even Jim Clark tied himself in knots grappling with the Essex Racing Team car at the Goodwood TT. But the upside is that the turning circle is good, and that you can 'think' the car through bends via your fingertips.

Clever being able to do that, I know, but true.







As a 'Sanction II' car it's benefited from all the experience of the master of DB4 improvement, Richard Williams, a Zagato-owner himself, and one tasked with managing the entire project in the late-80s.

The engineering improvements are apparent. This is one beautifully sorted car, so easy to drive with no vices apparent to me in albeit a short stint at the wheel. It rides bumps well, steers, stops and accelerates with precision.

Part of that is due to its inherently superior set-up (wider, lower-profile tyres, revised suspension geometry, very careful chassis alignment) and the rest is on account of its superb preparation.

With around 4,800 miles on the clock since 1991, it's probably 'nicely run in', and Aston Martin Works has just carried out extensive service work on it prior to the sale. So, while the cabin has a nicely lived-in, comfy jacket feeling, the mechanicals are in top-notch condition.

Performance-wise, it feels quite a light car, so the addition of a wonderfully smooth and punchy 4.2-litre (my preferred capacity; I think going up to 4.7 litres spoils the character of these cars) makes it really fly at the slightest prod of the nicely weighted accelerator. And I love David Brown gearboxes when they are in fine fettle. This one is.





With coldish oil, a £1.2m - 1.5m estimate and the sale only hours away, I didn't really want to stretch the engine much over 4,500rpm. With a nice bit of woofling from the big Webers and a crackly exhaust, it did sound magnificent.

Luggage space is only really the back shelf, as the boot is filled with both the big racing tank and spare wheel. Do we care? No, not really, as this is the perfect machine either for an early Sunday cobweb-clearer or an event such as the Ecosse Tour, where a couple of soft leather overnight bags will suffice.

You can debate the merits of the additional four DB4GTZs all day long, but there's no denying - £4.5m savings aside - that the Sanction II cars are not only true Aston Zagatos, they are superbly engineered, very much in the spirit of the original cars Aston Martin built itself - and they are extremely good to drive.

Photos: Classic Driver

## Gallery











