
Made in Feltham: Aston Martin's early masterpieces

10 May 2013 | Joe Breeze

Although the Feltham factory was Aston Martin's post-War HQ for little more than a decade, some of the most important cars in the marque's history came to life there. We review some Feltham-era Astons currently up for sale.

1953 Aston Martin DB2 Drophead Coupé





The arrival of the DB2 in 1950 brought with it a switch from four- to six-cylinder power – ironically via a 2.6-litre unit which W. O. Bentley had helped to design. Come launch time, interest was already high thanks to the success of the ‘VMF’ team cars at the 1950 Le Mans race, and the anticipation was soon amplified by the motoring press’s enthusiasm for the handling capabilities offered by the four-wheel coil-spring suspension (not seen on Jaguars or Ferraris for another decade).

Later that year, Aston revealed a ‘Drophead Coupé’ convertible version. Just over a hundred were produced, with a handful sent to coachbuilders for unique bodies.

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1955 Aston Martin DB2/4



Three years after its debut and the DB2 was in need of a refresh; the resulting DB2/4 of 1953 saw small rear seats added - effectively turning it into a 2+2 GT - while the roofline was raised to accommodate the new row of passengers. (The extra seats came in handy when a [DB2/4 Drophead Coupé](#) was used in 'The Birds' to escape from the feathered threat.) Preceding widespread application by a decade or two, the be-roofed DB2/4 was said to be the world's first hatchback.

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1956 Aston Martin DB3S



Aston Martin smartly cashed in on the racing triumphs of the 11 DB3S works cars by offering the model for sale to privateers. Despite their high price, 20 were sold; three of these being Fixed-Head Coupé variants.

This customer DB3S was sent to America and painted in the relevant white-with-blue-stripes livery. After competing in many events in period, it's more recently been seen racing at the Goodwood Revival.

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1958 Aston Martin DB MKIII



Now with a 3.0-litre six-cylinder engine developing up to 195bhp, the DB2 entered its twilight years as the 'DB Mark III' (note the dropped 2/4 nomenclature). It inherited the svelte grille and bonnet of the DB3S, while front disc brakes were made standard; quite welcome, considering the pounds the DB2 had piled on since its 1950 launch.

As had become his custom, David Brown took ownership of the first to leave the production line. The example seen for sale here is one of the earlier Mark IIIs, distinguished by its retention of the DB2/4 Mark II's rear wings and light cluster. Later models had rear lights 'borrowed' from the Humber Hawk, as did the subsequent DB4.

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