

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Aston Martin V12 Vantage S

### **Lead**

One-77 apart, the latest version of Aston's already mightily quick V12 Vantage is billed as "the fastest road-going Aston Martin yet offered". It packs a new 6.0-litre 'AM28' V12 and – for the first time in a regular-series V12 Aston – a seven-speed automated manual transmission.

This is going to be one very quick, very special car. The outgoing model was fast in anyone's book – a mad creation made by shoeorning the DBS's V12 into the smaller package that is the V8 Vantage.

Having driven many miles at the wheel of various V12 Vantages, I can vouch for their outright pace and somewhat over-the-top behaviour in anything less than perfect driving conditions. Spinning the wheels at 100mph in fourth gear still lives in the memory.

With the new car, which will be the sole V12 Vantage in its range, Aston has not only added 50 or so bhp, but by marrying the latest engine to a semi-automated gearbox it has solved a major problem with all manual Gaydon Astons: that of the gear lever being too far back for comfortable changes.





Also, manual gearshifts, *in extremis*, were never that quick. So, now the big metal knob is no more, let's say a welcome "hello" to two carbonfibre paddles mounted behind the steering wheel. The new set-up, with seven gears now (first seen on the V8 Vantage S, but radically revised for the V12 S), is also 25kg lighter than the outgoing six-speed manual.

Other new features on the 205mph coupé include faster steering, a new exhaust system derived from that seen on the One-77, and three-stage adaptive damping.







Carbonfibre abounds, with the black material replacing aluminium for the bars of the grille – a feature seen on the recent CC100 concept. Bystanders will recognise a V12 Vantage S by its new 10-spoke wheels, various external graphics and a black-painted roof panel.

And if you say this all looks a bit ‘shouty’, we say, “Why not?” With this car, the fastest road-going regular Aston Martin by some margin, the Gaydon company has much to raise its voice about. Not the least of which is the price, a reasonable-considering-the-performance £138,000 in the UK.

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*Photos: Aston Martin*

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