

CLASSIC DRIVER

Aston Martin DB4 Convertible: Never in the shade

Lead

First on sale in 1961, the DB4 Convertible offered sporting intent in an open-top configuration – but only to 70 lucky owners.

The convertible DB4 made its debut at the 1961 London Motor Show, exactly three years after its be-roofed sibling had been revealed to an appreciative crowd at the same venue.

This time, though, the styling had been taken care of in-house, with Touring's design for the coupé used merely as a starting point; a very pretty one at that.

Often serving to improve and confuse in equal measure, Sir David Brown's preference for 'constant evolution' was as present as ever in the open DB4. Though it went on sale at the same time as the 'series 4' cars (the 'series' were retrospectively defined by AMOC, the Aston Martin Owners Club), the convertible shared some features with the later 'series 5' coupés, including the extended section of the rear body. In fact, some of its characteristics – such as the opening quarterlight window – were not seen on a coupé until the DB6.





In comparison with these later cars, the DB4 Convertible also managed to retain a unique side to its character. In subsequent years, that process of 'constant evolution' meant the cars put on weight, negating the advantages of the Superleggera construction process licensed by Touring. Also, it has a fruitier exhaust note compared with later straight-six Astons: the DB4's rasp only had to do battle with two silencers, while DB5s and 6s had four.





Nestle into the short but surprisingly supportive seats and you're greeted by a thin, large-diameter wooden steering wheel. It's bordered by simple switchgear and dials inset into a body-coloured dash panel, a touch that's exclusive to the convertible: the coupé had a sombre, black fascia.



While later cars enjoy popularity through refined looks, snowballing power figures and associations with certain film franchises, it's the DB4 which offers perhaps the most honest experience of the Newport Pagnell

six-cylinder cars. With the convertible only accounting for a small percentage of production, it also provides membership of an exclusive club – one whose members thrive on the DB4's sporting intentions, and do so while basking in balmy sunshine whenever possible.



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Photos: Simon Clay

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