

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## Aston Martin DB9 Volante: Celebrating in style

26 July 2013 | Joe Breeze

*With Aston Martin holding centenary celebrations a few days and several hundred miles apart, Classic Driver took the opportunity to acquaint itself with the stunning new DB9 Volante...*

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It's long been an Aston Martin tradition to produce machines which make you ache with desire. The first meeting with our Mako Blue DB9 Volante confirms little has changed over the last century in this respect - it's utterly gorgeous, and if for some reason you weren't aware of that fact, you'll soon be duly notified by onlookers.

Inheriting the visual updates applied to the short-lived Virage (including more purposeful headlights), the DB9 remains a design masterpiece. Some might complain about the lack of styling differentiation between the current range and that of a decade ago, but as the old adage goes, "if it ain't broke..."



Fair enough, the ageing rear lights could do with a makeover, but the aft has been sufficiently modernised with a 'tail-flip' to accentuate the car's sporting nature. Slot the 'Emotion Control Unit' into place, and the bark emitted from the revised 6.0-litre V12 completes the theatrics.

Most important of all, Aston's identity remains undiluted

Few manufacturers nail the combination of theatre, pedigree and beauty quite as well as Aston. The marque remains the only mainstream (albeit low-volume) luxury car manufacturer to be independently owned – and this has both positive and negative implications. Financial clout might be reduced, but it means that – for the time being at least – the engines breathe naturally and an awkward switch from hydraulic to electric steering has not yet occurred (though the 6-speed gearbox could do with a couple of extra ratios). Most important of all, Aston's identity remains undiluted.

## **The DB9's driving manners**



The DB9's driving manners suit its intended role as the sophisticated GT in the range almost perfectly: the ride and steering are excellent (bar some slight wriggles over tired road surfaces), and the way in which its 510bhp is delivered is smooth and swift, but never overly aggressive.

It arguably fits the 'gentleman's GT' brief better than a Continental GT or V12 AMG, which maybe need to impress their parent company's supervisory boards even more than their intended customers. You can feel a certain magic in the air while driving an Aston; there might be more well-

rounded options out there, but few come as close to playing a symphony on the heartstrings.



The DB9 Volante might not be dynamically flawless, but arriving at Aston's Kensington Palace centenary merriments (after watching over a DB3S being prepared for the event at Fiskens) made it clear – it doesn't need to be. It's a hugely capable machine with the unique emotional appeal of its forebears; Astons have been winning hearts with this recipe for years now. Here's to the next 100 years.

Photos: Jan Baedeker

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