

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Aston Martin DBS V8FI prototype: English ice princess](#)

Lead

All classic Aston Martins are valuable, let alone unique factory prototypes. Therefore, the decision to photograph this early DBS V8 prototype on a bed of snow was certainly a brave one...

Many will be familiar with the story of the late 60s DBS. Somewhat larger than the DB6 it replaced – and now a full four-seater – its coachwork had the sharper lines in vogue at the time. But beneath that atypically square Aston grille lay a very familiar six-cylinder engine, as the planned V8 was behind in its developmental schedule.

Life after testing



While the first customers were enjoying their six-cylinder DBSs, Aston added a 5.0-litre V8 to this burgundy test mule, making it one of the first road-going Astons to be fitted with an eight-cylinder engine. Once its testing duties were complete, the car was sold to a private owner who replaced the test engine with the 5.3-litre production-spec V8 – sacrilege some might say, but it's worth remembering the 5.0-litre was a development of that used in the Lola T70 Mk III and hardly the most reliable, as shown by its early retirement from the 1967 Le Mans 24 Hours.

Factory-fitted flourishes



Perhaps the last place you'd want to take a race-bred prototype would be a post-blizzard forest, despite the factory-fitted, non-production flourishes which included aluminium sills – perhaps providing better salt protection – and a pair of snow-snorting bonnet nostrils (no 80s banker jokes please) for improved cooling. But you must surely agree that the burgundy hue (or 'Dubonnet' in official terms) provides an amazing contrast against the white backdrop?

Photos: [Tim Wallace](#) for [Aston Workshop](#)

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