


# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1961 Aston Martin DB4GT

Lot sold	<b>USD 1 049 208 - 1 180 359</b> GBP 800 000 - 900 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1961	Condition	Used
Chassis number	DB4/404/R	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	249	Engine number	370/432

### Description

1961 Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato Re-creation  
Coachwork by Bodylines  
Registration no. TBA  
Chassis no. DB4/404/R  
Engine no. 370/432

Fashioned in the style of the legendary DB4GT Zagato, this is a no-expense-spared project designed to re-create one of the 1960s' most beautiful and desirable cars. Of the many models in Aston Martin's 90-year history, and of the DB series of six-cylinder cars in particular, the DB4GT Zagato is arguably the best loved and most respected. The original collaboration between Aston Martin and Zagato of Milan resulted in a production run of only 19 constructed between 1961 and 1963 out of a total of 75 DB4GTs, although the factory did in fact set aside 23 chassis numbers. It is an indication of the affection felt for these beautiful cars that all 19 are still in existence, many in the UK.

The DB4GT Zagato made its racing debut at the Goodwood Easter meeting in 1961 in the capable hands of Stirling Moss, who brought the car home in third place. Two months later two DB4GT Zagatos, registered '1 VEV' and '2 VEV' and destined to become the most famous of them all, were entered at Le Mans by John Ogier's Essex Racing Stable. Regrettably this attempt at a second Le Mans victory for Aston Martin ended in less than three hours, both cars retiring with gasket trouble. The Tourist Trophy at Goodwood in September of that year proved far more successful when the two

cars, driven by Roy Salvadori, one Aston Martin's Le Mans-winning drivers of 1959, and the legendary Jim Clark came home third and fourth, scooping the Team Prize.

With so few cars produced, future demand exceeded supply to such an extent that the Newport Pagnell company authorised the construction of six more official DB4GT Zagatos in the late 1980s: the Sanction II/III cars, themselves highly prized by discerning collectors. Nevertheless, even this additional limited series came nowhere near meeting demand for the DB4GT Zagato; in any case, their prohibitive cost placed them well out of the reach of all but the wealthiest enthusiasts. It is, therefore, not surprising that certain enterprising individuals have turned to converting original DB4s, DB5s and DB6s to Zagato-style coachwork.

This DB4 Zagato re-creation started life as a standard DB4 sports saloon, chassis number 'DB4/404/R'. It was purchased in 1998 and subsequently completely stripped of every component, and the chassis sent away for sandblasting. On return the car was entrusted to renowned Aston Martin restoration specialists Bodylines of Olney for conversion to DB4GT Zagato specification. The aluminium body was built to lightweight specification with the 'deep nose' considered by many to be the best looking.

Entrusted to the highly respected and world famous engineers Crosthwaite & Gardiner, the engine was built up around a newly cast cylinder block, topped by a 'new', correct, twin-spark cylinder head supplied by Aston Martin. The unit was assembled by ex-Aston Martin Lagonda engine builder Alan Shackell, a craftsman with over 50 years of experience at AML, who worked on and built some of the original GT engines in the 1960s. All the correct manifolds, carburettors, etc were supplied and fitted.

An original David Brown WR gearbox was purchased for the car and fitted together with a modified Borg & Beck clutch and an up-rated prop shaft, while the rear axle was fully rebuilt by renowned specialists BPA, incorporating a limited-slip differential.

The front suspension has been fully rebuilt, using up-rated springs, new Koni shock absorbers and an up-rated anti roll bar, while the rear suspension has been fitted with up-rated springs and telescopic rear shock absorbers. Original DB4 GT brake callipers have been fitted to ensure that stopping power matches the straight-line performance. The wheels are new Borrani wires.

All trimming was carried out in-house at marque specialists Desmond J Smail Ltd, the seats being exact copies of the original design. The trimming was carried out by Joe Dorrill, who trimmed the original cars at AML in the 1960s, so with over 40 years of experience he knows how it should be. Final finishing was completed by long-term AML employee Paul Hodgkinson, another man with 40 years experience of building Aston Martins, who is also an AMOC concours judge. Clearly, only the most experienced people were used for this project.

Built to the highest possible specification, the Zagato took several years to construct and on its completion in 2010 was sold to a gentleman in New York, who used it sparingly. The car was then sold and scheduled for return to the UK, but while on its way to the docks was sold to a collector in Tokyo where it has resided in a private collection for two years. It has only recently been repatriated to the UK and is expected to be MoT'd, taxed and to possess a V5C registration document by time of sale.

Stunning to look at and exciting to drive, this unique car combines timelessly elegant coachwork in Zagato style with sensational road-ability and performance. A truly versatile classic equally at home on the Grand Tour or in the concours enclosure, it is capable of excelling in either role and worthy of the closest inspection.

**Bonhams 1793**

# Bonhams

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