
Airtime with Concorde, an Aston Martin DB4 and Historics at Brooklands

22 September 2017 | James Bannister

It's not every day two milestone feats of design come together — one, the Concorde, renowned for conquering the skies, and the other, the Aston Martin DB4, for adding inimitable style to our roads. Thanks to Historics at Brooklands, we spent a morning with the pair at a most appropriate location...

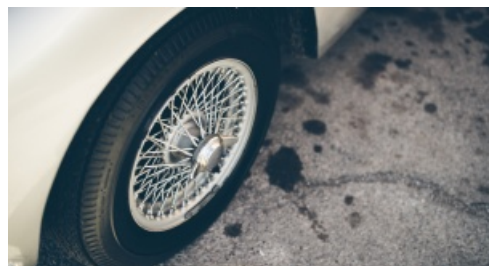
Rule Britannia





Arriving at Brooklands Museum on a quiet weekday morning before the public enters is an immersive experience, as the assembly of charming paraphernalia is prepared and attended to by devoted staff — themselves somehow managing to mirror the period the museum celebrates. With the vintage petrol pumps, smatterings of classic pieces of engineering, and, of course, the legendary banking, it's easy to understand why Historics at Brooklands takes such pleasure in holding its auctions here. Aside from these sales and the fascinating museum, however, there is one 202-foot, quad-engined supersonic star Brooklands is also well known for...

Best seat in the house



For those who haven't come nose to nose with a Concorde, its effect is quite hard to describe. Perhaps it's the epitome of glamour or the fabled — and ultimately flawed — history of the aircraft that forms its endearing and charming character, in contrast to its towering and imposing appearance, which, quite simply, stops you in your tracks. Indeed, even the sight and sound of a gently purring Aston Martin DB4 gliding into position below the undercarriage couldn't steal any of our attention, and there seemed only one appropriate place to talk shop with Historics at Brooklands Auction Director Edward J. Bridger-Stille.

Queen of the skies



“Concorde is a fascinating feat of engineering,” comments Bridger-Stille, rather enthusiastically. “It’s remarkable how tiny it is when in the cabin — the seats are as small as those on today’s economy airlines, and there were certainly no portly pilots in the cramped cockpit. Your Champagne was served in proper glasses, too, and there were salt and pepper shakers. It’s funny, I used to live in Putney, beneath the flight path of the Concorde, and you could set your watch by it. Now, I auction cars next to one.”

Behind the wheel





“Quality really is paramount, and we like to include a wide range of cars in our auctions, for both established collectors and first-time buyers,” says Edward. And a glance at its latest auction catalogue confirms this, with 160 lots to be offered in the shadow of the Concorde. Ranging from ideal starter classics to collectors’ favourites, the variety of vehicles available is extensive and, above all, inclusive. “We like to have something like a Mini or a Triumph Stag among the big collector cars, such as the DB4, but they must be great examples.” As said DB4 waits patiently beneath the wings for us, it’s time to get behind the wheel, after a few obligatory imaginary landings and toggle switch flicks — it’s not often you’re afforded an interview in the cockpit of a Concorde, after all.

Engineering excellence



Equally captivating, but somewhat more inviting, the cockpit of the 1959 Aston Martin DB4 possesses that tangible charm of an original 1950s interior, the wear on the Moto-Lita wheel no-doubt fashioned by the hands of a series of stylish suitors previously at the helm. Sold new from HWM Aston Martin, located just a few miles away from the museum, this DB4 wears its past with pride, with faded paint alluding to its unrestored status. One can only hope that the winning bidder of this example thinks twice before shipping it off for a full restoration, at the risk of removing the infectious charm oozing from the car.

A jaunt around the surrounding country roads sees passers-by light up at the sight of this British legend, with expressions not too dissimilar to our own when we first spied the Concorde. Although the great plane is sadly stationery (at least for the foreseeable future), there’s still a chance to obtain a

rolling piece of British design majesty in the DB4, even if it is *somewhat* slower...

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