


CLASSIC DRIVER



2007 Aston Martin V12 Vantage

Lot sold	USD 550 359 - 687 949 GBP 400 000 - 500 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	2007	Condition	Used
Chassis number	AMLVANTAGEV12RS	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	356		

Description

2008 Geneva Motor show concept

2007 Aston Martin V12 Vantage RS Coupé Prototype

Registration no. KX57 AML

Chassis no. AMLVANTAGEV12RS01

'The V12 Vantage RS concept is based on Aston Martin's critically acclaimed V8 Vantage coupé, but the company's design and engineering team have fully exploited the design flexibility of their unique VH architecture and the motor sport development of their 6.0 litre V12 engine to create a dramatic and production feasible concept car focussed on extreme performance and dynamics.' Aston Martin.

Unlike most motor manufacturers, Aston Martin has consistently preserved its prototypes, wherever possible selling them on once they had served their purpose rather than sending them to the crusher, which not only explains the continuing existence of the various 'DP' (Development Project) cars of the David Brown era but also that of the historically significant V12 Vantage concept offered here.

The classic hot-rodding technique of shoehorning a big engine into a small car is a well-trodden route to increased performance, and so it was with the V12-engined Vantage RS, which combined Aston Martin's largest engine with its most compact model. Built in just four months by Aston Martin's Special Vehicle Operations department, prototype chassis number 'RS01' the car offered here was unveiled to an invited audience of more than 700 VIP guests by the company's CEO, Dr Ulrich Bez, at the official opening of the British manufacturer's new design studio at Gaydon, Warwickshire on 11th

December 2007. Dr Bez promised that a production version would be considered should there be sufficient demand; the result was a deluge of enquiries from enthusiasts eager to get their hands on what promised to be Aston Martin's fastest road car ever.

Based on the V8 Vantage Coupé, the V12 Vantage RS prototype is powered by Aston Martin's familiar 6.0-litre V12 as found in the V12 Vanquish, DB9, and DBS production models. In the Vantage RS though, this engine has dry-sump lubrication and is effectively the same as that of the DBRS9 GT racer, producing 580bhp, an increase of some 70 horsepower over standard. Getting the V12 to fit the V8 Vantage chassis involved grafting on the engine cradle from the DB9, while the resulting weight increase and more forward weight distribution (52/48 front/rear as opposed to the Vantage's 48/52) was accommodated by revised suspension settings.

Despite the presence of the heavier 12-cylinder engine, the Vantage RS contrived to be lighter than the standard Vantage V8, tipping the scales at only 1,600kg for a power-to-weight ratio of 370bhp per ton. This saving in weight was achieved in part by simply omitting many of the 'luxuries' associated with a fully finished production car, so the Vantage RS has no ABS, traction control, air conditioning, satellite navigation, or sound system. Nevertheless, the interior was a good deal less Spartan than that of many such concept cars, with many surfaces trimmed in light grey Alcantara, creating an almost luxury ambience.

The prototype's unique pale blue livery was the subject of a competition to come up with a suitable name, that chosen by the design team being 'Mako Blue'. Aston Martin's Design Director, Marek Reichman said: 'The name is taken from the Mako shark, which is the fastest and most agile shark known to man. We thought the name not only reflected the colour, but also that the nature of the shark was synonymous with the character of the car. 'The Maori translation for 'Mako' is 'Blue Lightning' which obviously is descriptive of both colour and car a very befitting name.'

Immediately after being displayed on the Aston Martin stand at the 2008 Geneva Motor Show, 'RS01' was whisked away to the Paul Ricard circuit in the South of France where assembled motoring journalists were eagerly awaiting their opportunity to experience the V12 Vantage effect. The event was Aston Martin's traditional pre-season 'Winter Test' gathering of its works and factory-supported race teams, thus affording the opportunity for the V12 Vantage to stretch its legs in the company of the DBR9 GT1 racer, V8 Vantage GT2 development car, and LMP1 sports prototype. evo magazine's Richard Meaden reported that the V12 Vantage RS was attracting more admiring glances than any of the other cars present: 'Take a look at the timing screens in each and every pit garage and it's obvious why: despite being the only non-race car present it is consistently outrunning the V8 Vantage N24s, the GT3 DBRS9s and the AMR Vantage GT2. Most impressively, its 175mph peak is identical to that of the GT1 DBR9.'

Top Gear's Bill Thomas even found it possible to stay with Heinz Harold Frentzen's DBR9 GT1 racer: 'He's running the same engine, see, but is loaded with a shedload more downforce, which equates to more drag. So I was just as fast, if not faster, in my clean, drag-free, road-going RS. What a moment, on the back straight at Ricard, slipstreaming Frentzen's Le Mans car comfortably in a road car... watching the speedo needle clock up toward 200mph.'

Testing 'RS01' at Silverstone, Autocar's Steve Copley, was just as impressed by the V12 Vantage RS's stopping power: 'The brakes are phenomenal. They simply eliminate speed like nothing I've ever experienced, squeezing the car into the road and making you hang forward on the straps.' As well as EVO, Top Gear, and Autocar, RS01' also featured in Motor Sport, Car, and Vantage magazines, and copies of all their articles are on file.

In June 2008, 'RS01' attended the Goodwood Festival of Speed and during 2009/2010 was on display at the British Motor Heritage Museum, Gaydon. Retained by Aston Martin, it was sold by them to the current vendor - a VIP client - in 2013. The odometer was zeroed at that time, since when 'RS01' has completed only some 7-8 track-days of running approximately 750 miles.

In October 2017, 'RS01' was back at the Aston Martin Special Projects (Q Advanced Operations) department at Wellesbourne where extensive re-commissioning and various other works were carried out in order to make the car road legal (via the IVA procedure). At the same time the 10-year-

old fuel cell was replaced. Details of these works are on file in the form of a factory-prepared brochure outlining the V12 Vantage RS's history, and the car also comes with current MoT and a V5C registration document and a spare's package (see list on file). The vendor has also had some of the paintwork redone by Aston Martin.

In early 2008, Dr Bez confirmed that production of the V12 Vantage would commence in mid-2009, though with the 510bhp engine shared with Aston Martin's other 12-cylinder models rather than the prototype's 580bhp dry-sump racing unit. Given that the V12 Vantage RS concept resulted in a new and highly successful production model for Aston Martin, it can only be counted as an unqualified success. Offered for sale from the vendor's private collection of important Aston Martins, 'RS01' represents a unique opportunity for the discerning collector.

Bonhams 1793

Bonhams

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