

(sometimes called X-pack) specification engine. Changes to the previous version include four 48mm Weber carburetors, Cosworth pistons, larger inlet ports and higher lift camshafts. With the air pumps needed to meet EEC emission regulations, peak power is in the range of 410 to 420 bhp. With an optional conversion from Works Service, which included big bore airbox and manifolds, straight-through pipes at the back and the carbs meticulously opened up to 50mm, power was increased to 432bhp.

Produced to satisfy demands from the USA, the Volante convertible debuted in 1978, but it was not until 1986 that it became available to Vantage specification, which by this time meant around 400bhp. Along with the Vantage engine and bonnet came flared wheel arches, boot spoiler (a feature the Volante had previously lacked) and extended front spoiler, while glassfibre extensions replaced the model's hitherto characteristic chromed sill covers. The result was a muscular, aggressive-looking car that could justifiably claim to be the world's fastest convertible, all the more so when it came with the optional 432bhp 'X-Pack' engine like this example. A total of 166 Vantage Volantes had been completed by the end of production in December 1989.

D600 CPY (chassis number 15506) is an Aston Martin V8 Vantage Volante 'X-Pack' and was hand-built in 1986 but registered in 1987. It transpires that this was the actual 1986 'Earls Court Motor Show' car, as clearly depicted by the plaque on the centre console, making this a bit of a special find. The car was retained by the factory for a while before subsequently being sold to a couple of private owners in succession with our vendor taking ownership in 1990 and proudly adding this dramatic Aston to his private collection.

Times move on, however, and recently our vendor reached the conclusion that a few of his cars had to go. The Aston was one of them and so this rare car is about to reappear on the open market for the first time in 28 years. Delightfully finished in Chichester Blue with a matching soft-top, and a classic eighties Aston interior featuring Magnolia hides piped in Blue with Burr Walnut veneers and lots of switches and instruments and little Aston Martin touches.

D600 was serviced three times by Aston Martin at the Newport Works, including the 900 miles running in first service, and the last one is recorded as being in late 1989 just prior to our custodian purchasing the car. The car was purchased from Reg Vardy of Houghton-le-Spring by our vendor and they enrolled it into their special service (in partnership with Car-Tech Prestige of Hartlepool) whereby they monitor the health of valuable classics in storage, carrying out routine maintenance, and refreshing the car when required. A new clutch was installed at one point along with a large service in more recent times, and £9,000 was spent on the car in 2008 to refresh the paint, not that it really needed it. D600 will come to the sale with a fresh MoT and a once over to make sure that any prospective purchaser can simply jump in and enjoy this wonderful piece of 'Eighties Astonry'.

The Volante X-pack was certainly not for the faint-hearted. Its styling is undoubtedly over the top, but its whole 'raison d'etre' was completely in accord with the fashion and music from the late eighties. Oddly, the music of Spandau Ballet, Go West, Ultravox and Depeche Mode etc has survived well, however, pleasingly, the Mulletts, shoulder pads, and the New Romantics have not. The Vantage Volante X-Pack in 1987 was hugely desirable, the Boss, the 'Daddy' and whilst tastes have changed, there will always be a demand for the best of anything in period, whether it's French Impressionist paintings, 18th Century furniture, or simply the most dramatically powerful, in your face, piece of automotive sculpture that Aston Martin could produce.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire an 'Old Master' with an MOT and 432 bhp.

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