

CLASSIC DRIVER

The 2012 Aston Martin Vanquish

Lead

It's back. For its DBS replacement, Aston Martin has chosen the name 'Vanquish', reprising a name used just once before – on the last-ever model built at Newport Pagnell.

The new Aston Martin, available as a '2+0' as well as a 2+2, has already been shown to selected customers and will be revealed as an in-the-metal production car in early July.

Perhaps 'in the metal' is not entirely appropriate, as the latest Vanquish has all-carbonfibre bodywork – a first for the Gaydon company, the million-euro One-77 featuring hand-made aluminium panels on a composite chassis.

A prototype [debuted at Villa d'Este this May](#), carrying Aston's new internal nomenclature 'AM 310'. This will be a feature of all models to come, much in the manner of '993', '996' and '997' Porsche 911s, and will – one hopes – aid buyers bemused by the many 'V8s', 'Vantages' and now 'Vanquishes' already in the current (and past) catalogue.





The previous Vanquish is now referred to as an 'AM V12 Vanquish'. We'll let you decide if that clarifies matters.

As you can see from the photographs, the 2012 Vanquish carries 'DB9-era' DNA, but has now developed a more stand-alone style, with a waisted, er... 'waist' and much heavier sill-treatment with carbonfibre skirts. The broader haunches meld effortlessly into a wide boot topped by a built-in 'Aero Duct' spoiler. (At 368 litres, the boot is more than 60% larger than that of a DBS.)

At the front, the elaborate spoiler looks much better in production than on the Villa d'Este prototype, while lighting comes courtesy of the more streamlined units first seen on the Rapide and Virage. There is an element of 'One-77 meets DB9' about it, but in the photos you see here it presents itself as another accomplished shape from Marek Reichman and the Gaydon design team.

"Assertive", not "aggressive", as the company puts it.





The car is considerably more rigid than before – 25% torsionally stiffer than the outgoing DBS – and has been given the strictest examination possible to keep any increase in weight to a minimum. It weighs 1739kg against the automatic DBS's 1740kg (and 1835kg for the AM V12 Vanquish).

From a performance perspective, maximum power from the classic 6.0-litre V12 is now 565bhp at 6,750rpm, giving a 0-100km/h time of 4.1 seconds and a maximum just shy of 300km/h (295km/h, or 183mph). Just one gearbox option is offered: the classic rear/mid-mounted, six-speed Touchtronic 2 automatic gearbox.

In addition to the all-new bodywork, the really big news is a total revision of the Gaydon car's interior – well overdue and something that is sure to filter through to other models in years to come.

A more legible, Driver Information Module (DIM) now confronts the driver and this is paired with a new 'centre-stack' first seen in the One-77. This carries the familiar glass ECU key, as well as heating and ventilation, suspension and gearbox options, navigation and entertainment system controls. These feature 'haptic feedback'. More commonly found in touch-screen mobile phones, the principle allows a degree of vibrational feedback to acknowledge a command. A neat, if possibly spooky, solution.

By 'pushing' the interior outward (as Aston puts it), the Vanquish has 140% more storage space than the DBS, with the base of the centre stack, for example, now offering two litres of storage.

The occupants also have a little more space. Legroom is up by 37mm, shoulder-room by 25mm and elbow-room extends by a very useful 87mm. Knee-room gains an extra 50mm, too.

The interior is, as you'd expect, trimmed to the usual, superlative level with swathes of Alcantara and Bridge of Weir leather cossetting driver and passenger in ways only an Aston Martin can.

All these changes make the latest range-topping Vanquish a desirable, more practical, up-to-date Grand Tourer in the best traditions of the marque, with few direct competitors in the continent-crossing, 'generous

two-seater' class.

For UK and European customers, deliveries will commence later this year. In the UK it is priced from £189,995.

Photos: Aston Martin

Gallery

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