

CLASSIC DRIVER

Classic Driver Dealer: The Aston Workshop



In 1988, Bob Fountain decided on a bit of a career change - from sheep-farming to restoring Aston Martins: "I had a 300-year-old cottage in County Durham with two acres of land which I'd bought when I was 27, along with 100 sheep. After three years of farming and renovating the house, a friend rolled up his drive in a DB5. It was my first encounter with the marque and I immediately knew that Aston Martins would become a major part of my life."

Fountain converted the sheep shed into a garage and started renovating DB5s and DB6s. As the business grew, he set about building a workshop - and sold the sheep.

Today, the Aston Workshop employs 21 staff and attracts sales of £3.5 million from customers spanning five continents. The workshop itself extends to 35,000 square feet while the business has one of the largest showrooms of new and used Aston Martins in the North East, with some 60 models on display. Fountain is also about to open a new, state-of-the-art paint and body centre in a £500,000 extension: "We will now have the capacity, skills and knowledge for anything from rectifying minor blemishes or resprays through to a complete restoration of a 'barn-found' classic, with a full range of facilities from painting to jig work to full crash repair."



There are plenty of plans for the future, too - such as a comprehensive online parts service for Aston Martins, enabling the business to distribute parts to clients worldwide. But as if growing the Aston Workshop were not enough of a challenge, Fountain recently bought a pub at the end of his garden - The Black Horse at Beamish. Along with friends and colleagues, he's restoring the 300-year old coaching inn to its former glory and creating a two-storey gastro pub. "We try to keep things as organic as possible at the Black Horse, as good quality home cooking is really important to me," he says.

Between managing the Aston Workshop and the Black Horse, Fountain is also gearing up for the Peking to Paris endurance race in May, a trans-continental competition covering the greatest distance between two capital cities. He'll be running a specially-restored 1934 Aston Martin Lagonda and, as Fountain admits: "It's going to be tough. There's a stretch through Mongolia that will take 10 days with no place to stop for fuel and water."

Best of luck, Bob.

Please click [HERE](#) to see all **The Aston Workshop's** cars for sale in the **Classic Driver** car database.

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