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All-New Aston Martin Prototype to Challenge for Victory at Le Mans 2011



This is a rendering of Aston Martin's futuristic contender for overall honours at next year's Le Mans 24 Hours.

The image of an open, petrol-powered (by a "new purpose-designed race engine", according to the company) car was released during last weekend's **Silverstone 1000Km** meeting.

The event was the swansong for the **V12-powered Aston Martin DBR1-2** coupés. As expected, diesel-powered cars dominated a race which was won by **Peugeot** (a one-two, with **Audi** third). Two Gulf-liveried Astons were entered and, as has been the case for the last couple of years, they proved the fastest 'petrol' cars by some margin. '009', driven by **Sam Hancock** and **Stefan Mücke**, finished a fine fourth, while the sister '007' car (**Adrian Fernandez**, **Harold Primat** and **Andy Meyrick**) retired, having spun off into a gravel trap.

Aston Martin Racing's official partner team **Signature Racing** in LMP1 ended in sixth place (**Pierre Ragues**, **Franck Mailleux** and **Vanina Ickx**), while a strong showing in qualifying by the **JMW** team **Aston Martin Vantage** in **GT2** could well have ended with a class win had they not suffered a stop-and-go penalty. The small V8 (with **Rob Bell** and **Darren Turner** at the wheel) finished third – a terrific effort against the hordes of **Ferrari 430 GT2s** and **Porsche GT3 RSs**.



Speaking of the all-new open car for next year, **Aston Martin Chairman, David Richards**, said: "Having won the GT category twice at **Le Mans** in 2007 and 2008 and the **Le Mans Series** outright in 2009, we still want to achieve our ultimate goal of winning the **24 Hour race** overall to bring the title back to **Britain**."

"In recent years, it has been impossible for petrol cars to compete on equal terms with the diesels. However, we now have assurances from the **ACO** that, with the adoption of the 2011 regulations, they will properly balance the performance of these new cars. Under these circumstances we have been prepared to develop **Aston Martin's** first purpose-built racing chassis and engine for more than 50 years."

“Even with this new car, it will still be a ‘David and Goliath’ fight against the massive resources of our competitors, but we have become accustomed to this and relish the challenge.”

The first of a limited number of six cars will run in early 2011, with work on the chassis and engine proceeding apace at **Aston Martin Racing’s** headquarters in **Banbury**.

Dr. Ulrich Bez, CEO of Aston Martin, commented: “Racing is a fundamental part of **Aston Martin’s** heritage and **Le Mans** is the race that every true sportscar-maker aspires to win. While every aspect of this new **LMP1** car has been built purely for racing, we also remain committed to developing race-winning **GT** cars based on our road cars. We are the only manufacturer to offer a race car for every category from **GT1** to **GT4**.”

Text - Steve Wakefield

Photos - Aston Martin

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