

ASTON MARTIN MAGAZINE





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WELCOME

Dear Reader,

Welcome. In this issue, our focus has been on extraordinary design, exceptional engineering and, of course, remarkable craftsmanship. In May, we revealed the V12 Zagato to the world at the annual Concours d'Elegance at Villa d'Este in Italy. Then just a few weeks after its unveiling I was proud to be part of the team that took two race-prepared V12 Zagatos to participate in the ADAC Nürburgring 24-Hours race, where once again both cars finished well – a testament to the reliability and durability of our cars, two qualities also highlighted by our epic road trip through Alaska's unforgiving wilderness at the wheel of a Rapide, which you can read all about from page 40.

The Nürburgring 24-Hours has been a special race for Aston Martin for many years – one reason why we established our Test Centre on the ultimately challenging Nordschleife – and 2011 was no different. I am especially proud of our achievement with V12 Zagato, demonstrating our philosophy of subjecting prototype cars to the most arduous possible test, under global scrutiny.

V12 Zagato made a more relaxed debut in North America in August. To coincide with the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance at Monterey, California, Aston Martin set up a splendid automotive retreat, The Aston Martin Estate in Monterra Woods, where the new model was joined by its legendary forebear the DB4GT Zagato, and at the other end of the spectrum our formidable, ultra-modern supercar, the One-77.

You are advised to move fast if you have your eye on the V12 Zagato, by the way, as just 150 individual road-going examples will be hand-built here at Gaydon in 2012. Around the world, our dealers currently face high demand for pre-owned Aston Martins. We are of course proud of this, as it speaks highly of how our cars retain value over time. It is therefore an ideal opportunity to get in touch with your local Aston Martin dealer and explore the possibilities this could bring for both new and pre-owned cars.

High technology and hand-craftsmanship are, of course, a big part of the Aston Martin story – along with design, engineering and heritage. From hand-sewing leather interiors to fitting the delicate headlamp assemblies to tiny, precise tolerances, skilled hands work in perfect harmony with the latest cutting-edge processes. Echoing these particular strengths of Aston Martin, this issue features a showcase of our cars' precisely crafted details, followed by three articles on three very different forms of high-end hand craftsmanship: the art of the modern chocolatier, the new names in haute couture and the little-known English tradition of hand-made cricket bats.

Aston Martin is constantly evolving and our range reflects the changing demands, aspirations and lifestyles of our customers, from Cygnet through to One-77. Our ability to go the distance, on road and track, is testament to world-beating quality and design. As we edge ever closer to the company's 100th year, Aston Martin stands proud at the head of a long automotive tradition.

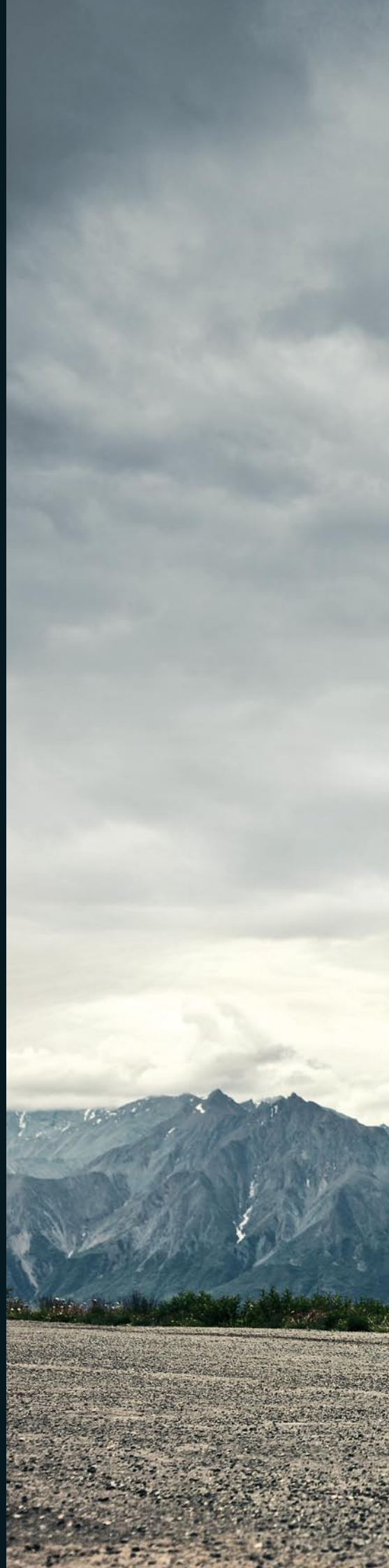
I hope you enjoy the magazine.



DR ULRICH BEZ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



ASTON MARTIN



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Our regular product catalogue at the rear of Aston Martin Magazine gives you a taste of Aston Martin's full range of models, including the ultra-sophisticated Virage and the new Cygnet city car, both of whose customer deliveries have now commenced.





ASTON MARTIN



COVER: Aston Martin's factory-entered line-up at June's Nürburgring 24-Hours endurance race: two V12 Zagato prototypes and a Vantage GT4

ISSUE 16 CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTIAN HOUGH

Christian is a professional freelance photographer and writer based in southeast England – the author of our feature on Hasselblad. Christian is an established resource for photographic lighting techniques, working closely with several professional bodies. Christian's own artistic nude photography has a gathered a global following, becoming highly sought-after amongst art collectors as far away as Dubai and Singapore.

MATT RENDELL

Explaining how teamwork helps the lone sprinter cyclist from page 65 is writer, broadcaster and linguist Matt Rendell, who has covered 15 Tours de France and commented on bike races in countries as diverse as Colombia, Malaysia, Qatar and Oman. Three of his books have won British Sports Book awards, and his best known work, 'The Death of Marco Pantani', was shortlisted for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year prize. Between bike races he lives in Bristol and Medellín, Colombia.

NANCY MACDONELL

Writing on the revival of haute couture from page 78 is Nancy, a fashion journalist and style commentator based in New York. She has written about fashion and style for Style.com, the 'New York Times', 'Harper's Bazaar', and many other magazines and is the author of 'The Classic Ten: The True Story of the Little Black Dress and Nine Other Fashion Favorites' (2003) and 'In the Know: The Classic Guide to Being Cultured and Cool' (2007).

PATRICK C. PATERNIE

Piloting a Rapide to the Arctic Circle in our most extreme drive story yet is Patrick, a Southern California-based freelance journalist who travels the world covering automobiles, motor racing and the high-speed lifestyle that surrounds them. He has authored seven books and his articles and photographs have appeared in over 100 publications, books, and websites. He has an avid interest in racing history especially the Indy 500 and European road racing.

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ASTON MARTIN LIFE

ENDURING PRAISE

Aston Martin's Munich dealership invited race-enthusiast customers to view the stunning new V12 Zagato in-store, on 7 July – the same car that had successfully proven itself in the Nürburgring 24-Hours endurance race just two weeks earlier. Hosted by Wolfgang Oswald, Munich Dealer Principal, and Jeffrey L Scott, Managing Director of Aston Martin Lagonda of Europe, 150 guests – including Aston Martin CEO Dr Ulrich Bez, pictured right, who drove 'Zag' in the notoriously challenging event – were delighted to witness the red Zagato in all its race-worn glory. After a veil-lifting presentation, Dr Bez recalled anecdotes from the race and answered questions from guests. What's more, the event was made all the more poignant by the fact Aston Martin had announced that same day that there would be a strictly limited production run of 150 examples made for the road – news that proved very popular with guests.



STIRLING WORK

On 12 July at the prestigious Royal Automobile Club, motorsport legend, Sir Stirling Moss took delivery of one of the first Aston Martin Cygnets off the line – a surprise birthday present for wife, Susie. Sir Stirling and Lady Moss had planned a private celebratory dinner on the eve of her birthday, but on arrival they were greeted by the sight of the new luxuriously appointed city car, displayed in the RAC's magnificent rotunda – the culmination of six months' secret correspondence between Sir Stirling and Aston Martin.

Sir Stirling Moss said: 'Since seeing a pre-production Cygnet in January I knew that it was the perfect car for Susie; a proper little piece of British luxury and perfect for our life in town.' Specifications for Lady Moss's car include Sir Stirling's choice of an Aston Martin Racing Green paint, harking back to the Aston Martin sports cars that Sir Stirling raced in the 1950s.



GOODWOOD A GO-GO

The greatest celebration of car culture welcomed a record number of Formula 1 drivers, car enthusiasts, classic vehicles, planes and bikes galore this year – and Aston Martin played a starring role. The Festival of Speed, the world's largest motoring garden party took place from 30 June to 3 July in the immaculate grounds of Goodwood House in West Sussex, and proved a true celebration of motorsport and all things automotive. Blessed with glorious sunshine, especially lucky VIP guests were offered passenger rides in the One-77 (pictured above) and Virage. The new V12 Zagato, driven by Aston Martin Design Director, Marek Reichman, also wowed spectators on its UK debut.

ASTON MARTIN LIFE



OPENING UP

Having opened its first South American dealership in Santiago on 16 August 2010 and in Sao Paulo, Brazil only three days later, Aston Martin is still a fairly new concept to the continent's car enthusiasts, and therefore a detailed introduction to the brand was in order. Gaydon opened its doors and welcomed 10 South American journalists on a private tour of the Aston Martin Headquarters. Over a whirlwind two days, they toured the factory floor, One-77 production facility, Design Centre and Works Service at Aston Martin's spiritual home of Newport Pagnell. They also got to experience, first hand, six different models at Millbrook Proving Ground: the V8 Vantage S, V12 Vantage, Rapide, DBS, Virage and DB9.



HONOURING A LEGEND

German publishing house Motor Presse Stuttgart celebrates a special milestone this year: Paul Pietsch, founding publisher of *Auto Motor und Sport* and keen racing driver turned 100 on 20 June. Motor Presse Stuttgart honoured the occasion with a classic car rally, affectionately named 'The Paul Pietsch Classic'. The two-day event from Freiburg through the Black Forest to Stuttgart was attended by more than 100 cars, all braving the adverse weather conditions. Aston Martin went along to honour the occasion, with CEO Dr Ulrich Bez behind the wheel of a DB3, accompanied by his son, Fabian Bez (pictured).

GRACING THE LAWNS

An exquisite line-up of rare and beautiful cars, old and new, stunning lakeside surroundings, fine cuisine – all set against the backdrop of a grand house; it could only be the annual Salon Privé Concours d'Elegance. The biggest yet, with 5,300 attendees, held for the first time at Syon Park, London from 22 to 24 June, the event played host to many motoring, luxury and lifestyle personalities, all admiring exciting new product launches, wonderful classic cars and indulgent glamour. Aston Martin impressed visitors with the new Virage, the V8 Vantage S and Cygnet. Champagne, a lobster luncheon, and traditional afternoon tea all added to the experience, whilst luxury brands such as Boodles and Vertu offered some fabulous non-automotive distractions.



MORE AND MORE GT4

The Aston Martin GT4 Challenge proved so popular in 2010 that its keen participants requested the Challenge – which exclusively races the V8 Vantage GT4 – increase the number of events in 2011. Happy to oblige, the organisers have added two more circuits for the new season, including a rare opportunity to travel to Europe and race on the famous Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium. The weekend in June comprised of two one-hour races preceded by a practice and qualifying. Karsten le Blanc and Dan de Zille and Aston Martin Racing's Phil Dryburgh and John Gaw all took podium positions in both races.

Back in the UK on 6 August, after a very tense battle, Alan Bonner and Tom Black took their first win of the series at Oulton Park for Vantage Racing, followed closely by Stuart Hall and Chris Kemp. Aston Martin's Marek Reichman and *Auto Italia* journalist Lorenzo Facchinetti celebrated coming a solid third.

ASTON MARTIN LIFE



ADVENTURES IN VIRAGE

It has been a busy few months for Aston Martin, with a flurry of glamorous launches around the globe, all in honour of the marque's new, sophisticated high performance sports car, the Virage. A tour that has already taken in Germany, Japan and South Africa



First stop, the London Hilton Park Lane Ballroom on 7 June, for a joint launch with the Knightsbridge branch of Aston Martin's audiovisual partner Bang & Olufsen. A Coupe and convertible Volante Virage took centre stage in positively stunning Morning Frost and Apple Green paint finishes respectively. Champagne and canapés were on hand whilst the 250 attendees browsed the new cars, and Aston Martin merchandise. The recently opened store on Munich's Odeonsplatz was the first to debut the Virage in Europe, with 150 Aston Martin owners and guests admiring the beautifully trimmed interior of a Volante model.

Two hundred guests, including Aston Martin Marketing Director Markus Kramer, attended Happa-en in Tokyo on 30 June, for the unveiling of a Virage Coupe in its launch colour of Madagascar Orange, while intimate numbers of 25 and 40 visited the Osaka Hakko on the 16 July and 23 July at the Nagoya Hakko showrooms.

A Daytona Group function on 21 July debuted the Virage to the South African market. A huge turnout of 400 guests all enjoyed having their photographs taken and printed on a cover of a *TopCar* magazine as a souvenir.

TOP LEFT: Osaka, Japan
TOP RIGHT: Mayfair, London, UK
BOTTOM LEFT: Cape Town,
South Africa
BOTTOM RIGHT: Munich, Germany

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ASTON MARTIN LIFE



PICTURE PERFECT IN PARIS

This July, Aston Martin officially introduced Aston Martin's fabulous new Cygnet city car to the cosmopolitan fashionistas of France, with a fun-infused media driving event throughout the streets of Paris. Twenty French lifestyle journalists were given their first introduction to the fully customisable little Aston Martin in a technicolour convoy, weaving in and out of the Latin Quarter, Montmartre and everywhere between.

Teamed in pairs, and with many participants being Parisian themselves, the routes were left to them to decide. To document their unique journeys, all of the Cygnets were kitted out with a journal, to be filled with pictures snapped on a retro Polaroid camera. After a busy few hours manoeuvring with ease around the narrow streets, everyone had worked up a thirst, and congregated at the world renowned Le Royal Monceau, recently revamped by Philippe Starck, for a lunch and champagne tasting with the legendary house of Louis Roederer.

LA CYGNET, CONÇUE PAR COLETTE!

The colette edition of the Cygnet pictured above is a special edition produced through the Aston Martin Works Tailored program in league with the Parisian fashion authority. With only 14 being made, each of the cars is finished in Lightning Silver with blue styling and quirky finishes including a race-inspired front bumper decal and

diamond turned wheels. The luxurious interior of Bitter Chocolate leather upholstery and leather cushions, together with a selection of goodies ensures every trip is one to remember – a Wallpaper Paris travel guide, retro style Lomography camera – all add up to a quirky piece of automotive fashion for the busy, fun-loving city dweller.*



ASTON MARTIN LIFE

A BRIT ABROAD

Recently recognised for its international growth, winning The Walpole Award for British Luxury Overseas, Hackett London, the official partner to Aston Martin Racing, has had a lively season. Having established the brand's charming Britishness in two new Frankfurt and Hamburg stores, Jeremy Hackett attended the openings on the 26 May and 8 June in classic style – arriving in an Aston Martin Rapide. The themed parties of 'Cocktail' and 'Gentleman' saw guests served Chapel Down wine from Sussex, specially created Hackett cocktails and quintessential British nibbles of roast beef and fish 'n' chips.



TOTALLY WORTH IT

This spring saw Aston Martin The Americas participate in a series of glamorous events in conjunction with *Worth Magazine*, the prominent wealth management and lifestyle publication.

Worth was pleased to partner with Aston Martin on its dynamic drive tour in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Beverly Hills, California, to introduce the Virage and the V8 Vantage S to more than 200 *Worth* subscribers, wealth advisors and special guests.

On 9 June, *Worth* co-hosted drives for the new Aston Martin 2011 line-up at the Michael Beaudry Salon at the Montage in Beverly Hills. With the chic Beaudry Jewelry Salon as a backdrop, more than 100 guests enjoyed sipping on 'Aston-tinis' (post-drive of course!) and special desserts.



CADENAZZO COOL

Aston Martin welcomes a glamorous new addition to its portfolio. Igor Pasta is the Dealership Principal of the Tarcisio Pasta showroom in Cadenazzo, Ticino, Switzerland. With a sales area of 532 square metres, over two floors, along with an underground storage facility, customers are offered secure long-term parking. Guests at the official opening ceremony browsed the display which included the One-77, and Cygnet, as well as the new Virage and V8 Vantage S models.

HEART FOR JAPAN

This June saw Aston Martin CEO Dr Ulrich Bez present a cheque for £100,000 to Toyota Motor Corporation President, Akio Toyoda, in aid of charities providing relief to victims of the recent earthquakes and tsunami in Japan. The funds were raised thanks to a very special consignment to the Aston Martin Bonhams auction held in May: the Rapide once used by Dr Bez to travel on business. The presentation of the funds took place at the Nürburgring in Germany in June, where Aston Martin's new V12 Zagato endurance race cars sported a special 'Heart for Japan' dedication.



ASTON MARTIN LIFE



Joining a starting field of unprecedented variety and priceless value, Aston Martin participated in the Ennstal Classic rally for historic vehicles in July – an event made up of 225 teams from 15 nations. In all, 10 historic cars from Aston Martin lined up, with Dr Ulrich Bez, CEO of Aston Martin, leading the way in a 1956 DB6, formerly owned by Sir Paul McCartney. He was keeping good company: amongst the many attendees were racing greats Sir Stirling Moss, Jochen Mass and Nigel Mansell.

On 14 July, all set out from Gröbming on a 381-kilometre points course with 10 special challenges – one of which took place on the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg. Drivers travelled the route through Sölckpass, Radstädter Tauern and Nockalm-Straße and back to Gröbming. On 15 July, there was a 512-kilometre marathon from Gröbming to Schladming, following the roads through Aich, Bad Ischl, Bad Mitterndorf, Steyr and Rottenmann.

‘The Ennstal Classic is one of the most well known historic motorsport events’ explained Dr Bez. ‘Our commitment to this classic event is also an illustration of our close ties to the Austrian market, a market which is very important to us. This also coincides with the opening of our new Aston Martin dealership in Vienna.’



Aston Martin The Americas, in conjunction with Towbin Automotive, is pleased to announce the opening of a new dealership in Las Vegas, Nevada. With immediate effect, Aston Martin Las Vegas is officially open for business, with the construction of a new four-car showroom and service operation on West Sahara Avenue set for completion for this winter. Vegas is a vibrant, fun-loving city synonymous with world-class entertainment and style, so what better new location for Aston Martin?



ALL THAT GLITTERS

Aston Martin was delighted to host an exclusive preview evening of the Felicity Brown Spring/Summer 2011 Collection on 15 June at the Aston Martin store in Munich. Having designed for hot brands Mulberry, Lanvin and Alberta Ferretti, Felicity's silk embellished creations ooze intricate detailing and artisan design, and the Aston Martin showroom proved a most appropriate backdrop to her stylish and crafted work.

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ASTON MARTIN LIFE

V12 ZAGATO SHINES AT PEBBLE BEACH

Soft spikes and long irons were replaced with vintage treads and radiator ornaments at August's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Aston Martin were part of the famed week of automotive appreciation in Monterey debuting the V12 Zagato and One-77 to customers from around the world

The cream of the collectable automotive world convened once again at the opulent Pebble Beach golf resort on the Monterey Peninsula of California this August for the annual showcase of all that is fine, rare and immaculate – and naturally Aston Martin was there.

Connoisseurs and enthusiasts converged to celebrate the ultimate in automotive design and luxury lifestyle while enjoying camaraderie among fellow aficionados. Aston Martin kicked off the week with the American debut of V12 Zagato at McCalls Motorworks Revival and continued with the American preview of One-77 at the Quail Motorsport Gathering.

Throughout the week, Aston Martin CEO, Dr Ulrich Bez and his team hosted guests at The Aston Martin Estate, where the V12 Zagato, One-77 and Aston Martin's award-winning line-up were showcased alongside glittering luxury products from partners, including Vizio Electronics, Lugano Diamonds and Zino Platinum.

The Estate had a very busy few days, hosting several evening receptions, including the exclusive V12 Zagato launch party on Friday 19 August where guests viewed the very latest Aston Martin while sipping Louis Roederer Cristal, Far Niente wines and hand-crafted cocktails by mixologists Snake Oil, inspired by the rich flavors of Gin No. 3, The King's Ginger and Stoli Elite.

During the day, guests signed up to test-drive the full Aston Martin line-up. While waiting to experience the Virage, V8 Vantage S and four-door Rapide on the beautiful roads of Carmel Valley, they also had an opportunity to hone their driving skills on CXC simulators at the Thermal Motorsports Track & Club garage. Out of the driving seat, guests could relax in the Flexjet Lounge courtesy of Voyena furniture and enjoy exquisite chocolate creations from Emanuel Andren. All in all, a perfect weekend for fans of Aston Martins and the world of beautiful automobiles in general.

Prior to the Finale, Aston Martin The Americas had charmed guests throughout Monterey Auto Week at the exclusive Aston Martin Estate with driving experiences, a historic vehicle showcase and VIP brunch, followed with evening entertainment of champagne receptions and cocktail parties.

Thirty VIP couples gathered at Spanish Bay for the Welcome Reception on the 18 August. The 19 August saw all guests attend the Quail Motorsport Gathering at The Quail Lodge, where One-77 took centre stage. On Friday evening a champagne reception hosted by Louis Roederer prior to the Aston Martin VIP Party, was held at the Aston Martin Estate and saw Dr Bez, his Americas team and their guests enjoying live music and gourmet cuisine well into the evening.

The following morning's Ride and Drive Brunch gave guests the opportunity to enjoy a refreshing drive, winding through the roads of Monterey and Carmel Valley in the new V8 Vantage S, Virage, V12 Vantage and Rapide, capping a fine weekend for all.



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ASTON MARTIN LIFE



MANPOWER

Three teams of employees from Aston Martin took place in the world's largest 24-hour mountain bike endurance race at Eastnor Castle in Ledbury, Herefordshire. The Original Source Mountain Mayhem took place over the weekend of 18–19 June and saw upwards of 2,600 riders endure an 11-mile course with over 1,400 ft climbing per lap. Team Vantage completed 17 laps coming 107th in class with Team Virage completing 15 laps coming 150th and Team Vanquish finishing 153rd with 14 laps. Examples of the V12 Vantage, Virage and Cygnet also went along for the ride, generating a huge amount of interest from spectators. Team Vanquish also entered the sister 24-hour mountain bike race 'Sleepless in the Saddle', which took place in August.



ROAD TO GAYDON

Inspired by tempting footage from popular TV show *Top Gear*, the Dutch Aston Martin dealer Kroymans Hilversum took 33 of their clients (otherwise known as the 'Power Beauty Soulmates') on a five-day tour of Isle of Man and the UK in their Aston Martins.

On the morning of 18 June, after a memorable and energetic drive from Hull to the ferry in Liverpool, all 18 cars and crew arrived in Douglas, the capital of the Isle of Man.

While it rained heavily almost everywhere else in northern Europe, the weather favoured the Isle of Man with plenty of sunshine. The ever-changing scenery, the well-spirited inhabitants and the plentiful roads (without speed limits) made for the ideal driving experience. What's more, the final leg took the tour to Warwickshire where the group enjoyed a tour of the Gaydon factory.



OPEN DOORS IN ISTANBUL

Aston Martin has opened its first sales point in Istanbul, at the Süzer Plaza. Esref Biryıldız, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Borusan Otomotiv hosted the grand opening on the 7 June and was joined by press and guests, all of whom browsed display models of Cygnet, V8 Vantage S, DB9 (pictured above) and Rapide. Bill Donnelly, Aston Martin's Regional Director of After Sales, Mark Kenworthy, Middle East and North Africa General Manager and Adham Charanoglu, Middle East and North Africa CEO of Aston Martin were all present.



BIG IN CHONGQING

Chongqing, to many, is an unknown city, but to car enthusiasts it is one of the globe's emerging hubs for the luxury car market, with a population of 28 million supporting its now-annual Motor Show. Having grown into one of the professional exhibitions with great influence in China's auto industry, contributing greatly to the development of the automotive industry in west China, this year Aston Martin was honoured to be invited to display a range of models at the the Chongqing Motor Show, between 9 and 13 June.

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ASTON MARTIN DRIVING EXPERIENCES

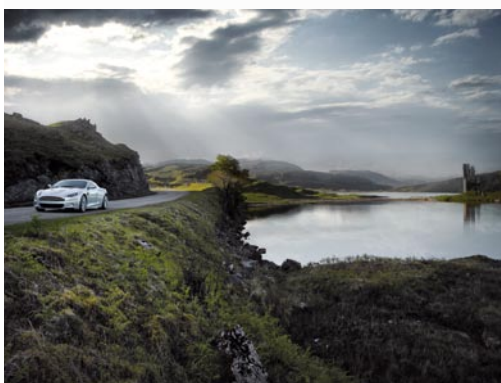
MONZA & BOXBERG



Having checked in at the charming L'Art de Vivre Hotel Victoria on 21 May, guests attended the Driver's Dinner at the extraordinary Michelin-Star Zirbelstube restaurant, sampling haute cuisine created with the region's delicious produce. Arriving at the Testcenter Boxberg the following day, guests enjoyed training which included steering techniques, braking manoeuvres, drifting and racing line. Later in the summer, 30 June saw fun-loving owners taught sectional training at the Monza track day.

ON TOUR SCOTLAND

The Highlands & Islands of Scotland tour began at Aston Martin Headquarters on 5 September with a private factory tour before heading north to enjoy Scotland's hospitality of private castles and homes set in magnificent parklands overlooking sea lochs. In addition to whisky tasting, the tour took guests across to the Isle of Skye before finishing at the historic Gleneagles Hotel with a traditional Ceilidh.



SPA ON TRACK

Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, home to the Formula 1 Grand Prix and Spa 24 Hours endurance race is considered to be one of the most challenging race tracks in the world. Loved by many racing greats and fans alike, 28 September will see Aston Martin's On Track team welcoming owners to spend a day seeing what their Aston Martin can really do.



MELBOURNE ON TRACK

The popular venue of Phillip Island features a 2.8-mile track with 12 fast, flowing turns, offering Aston Martin owners the ultimate track challenge on 3 November. It is one of the most scenic race tracks in the world and host to numerous championship races, including MotoGP and V8 Supercars.



NEW ZEALAND ON TRACK

As an international qualifying race circuit and NZDRA-approved drag strip, Taupo Motorsport Park plays host to world motorsport events including A1GP. The Aston Martin On Track team welcome you on the 27 October to the 2.17-mile track, proving why it is the 'Home of New Zealand Motorsport'. A dinner on the 26 June at The Hilton Lake Hotel is the perfect opportunity to meet with fellow participants.

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ON TOUR MILAN TO VENICE

A convoy of Aston Martin's toured from Milan to Venice, departing on 13-18 June, starting in the historic city of Milan with a champagne reception at The Hotel Principe Di Savoia. Aston Martins including the V12 Vantage, V8 Vantage, DBS, DB9 Rapide and DB7 travelled through beautiful scenery down to Lake Como and then on to Verona and Florence. With further adventures in the Pisan Hills, the culmination of the event was the arrival in the picturesque surroundings of romantic Venice, where guests enjoyed a private tour around the waterways. A glorious trip, filled with breathtaking views, truffle hunting, fine dining and sunny weather all added to the Italian ambience.



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ASTON MARTIN LIFE



THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

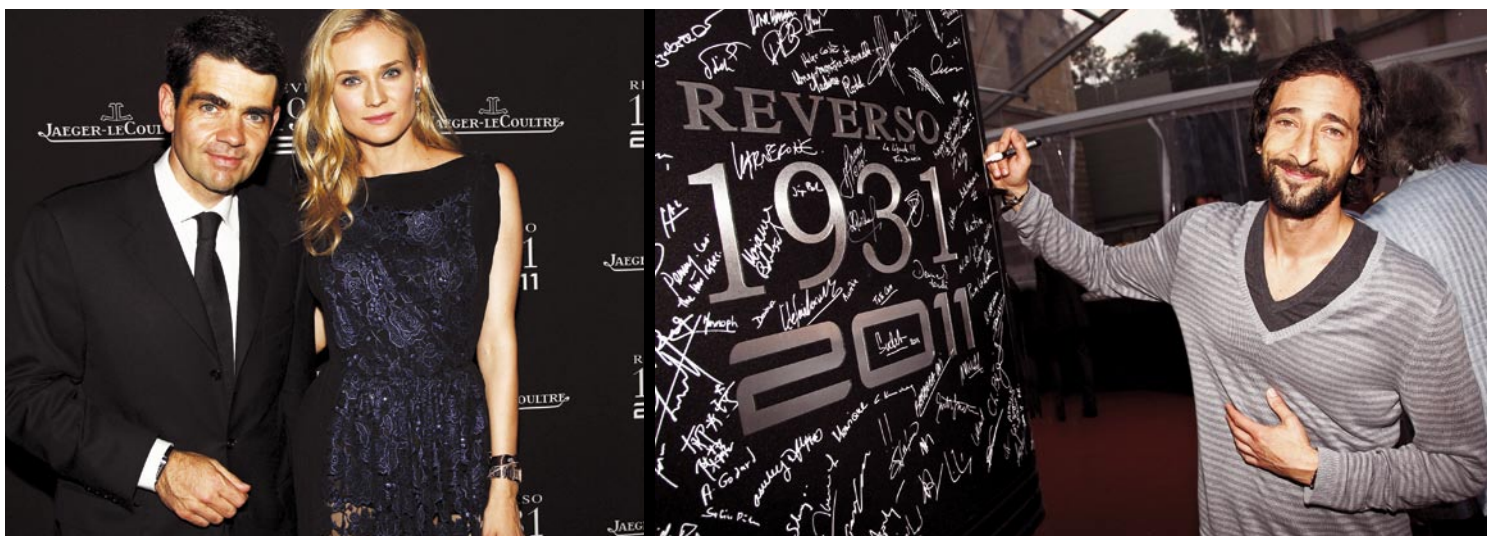
This June, l'Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris saw Aston Martin's Swiss counterpart, Jaeger-LeCoultre celebrate the 80th anniversary of its Reverso – the legendary watch born on the polo fields of colonial India. Alex Doak reports

It's not often a humble wristwatch garners such glitz, but Tuesday 28 June saw Paris's Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts positively sparkling with celebrities, champagne and conversation, all thanks to venerable watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre and its most iconic timepiece, the Reverso, which is celebrating eight decades of continuous production this year. Jérôme Lambert, CEO of Jaeger-LeCoultre welcomed no less than 800 guests to the glamorous reception, some of whom were lucky enough to be chauffeured

by a fleet of Aston Martin Rapide sports cars – an impressive cavalcade on the Palais des Etudes courtyard off Rue Bonaparte.

Notable amongst the guests were actress Catherine Deneuve, Diane Kruger (facing page top left, with Lambert), Joshua Jackson, Clive Owen, Adrien Brody (facing page top right), Isabelle Huppert, Vahina Giocante, Richard Anconina and Mohammed Al Habtoor, plus many other distinguished guests and friends of Jaeger-LeCoultre.

ASTON MARTIN LIFE



More than anything else, the evening was a wonderful opportunity for all the gathered personalities to tell the stories behind their own beloved Reverso. For Catherine Deneuve, it was to mark her presidency of the Jury of the Venice International Film Festival. For Italian skipper Giovanni Soldini, it commemorates his victorious round-the-world solo race of 1999, during which he rescued his French competitor Isabelle Autissier from her overturned yacht. For Clare Milford Haven, polo player, socialite and journalist, her Reverso Squadra Lady effortlessly straddles her sporting activities and elegant evening engagements: 'I have had a close relationship with the Reverso since becoming an Ambassador for Jaeger-LeCoultre six years ago. For me, the Reverso is the perfect watch – classic yet innovative, sporty yet feminine. It's a timeless piece with connections to polo that go way back.'

Indeed, the Reverso enjoys one of the most colourful histories of all wristwatches, even though its invention was a purely practical answer to a problem nagging wealthy sportsmen of the day. It's all thanks to the unlikely figure of César de Trey, an influential Swiss businessman who'd made his fortune selling dental products and was starting to distribute high-end Swiss watches, including the famous Duoplan watch by Jaeger-LeCoultre. De Trey was travelling in India in the late 1920s – the twilight years of British colonial rule – where he took in a polo game with some friends. A British officer trudging off the field after the final chukka flashed his watch, its glass smashed from an errant mallet, mumbling, 'Another one broken...'

De Trey instantly saw a business opportunity and turned to clockmaker Jacques-David LeCoultre and his long-term partner Jaeger SA, who in turn sub-contracted engineer René-Alfred Chauvot. His answer? An ingenious 'flippable' case that allows you to turn the vulnerable dial side over, so the steel or gold caseback bore the brunt of any knocks. Described as 'a watch able to slide in its cradle and swivel over completely', it was patented on 4 March 1931 and to distribute this unique creation, de Trey and LeCoultre founded the Spécialités Horlogères sales company – what eventually became Jaeger-LeCoultre as we know it today.

Ever since, Jaeger-LeCoultre's connection to the world of polo has proven indelible, and the Reverso's iconic Art Deco rectangular form has endured, especially amongst the upper crust, enamoured by its distinguished origins and the ability to engrave your family crest on the caseback (or 'casefront' if you like). Right from the Get-go the Reverso was far more than just a sports watch: the steel or gold back was a clean page that would make the Reverso much more than a watch; and it's become a cult object that every Reverso



owner can make unique through personalisation. It's almost rude not to personalise that invitingly blank canvas.

As Jaeger-LeCoultre's Artistic Director for more than 15 years, Janek Deleskiewicz knows the Reverso better than anyone and at the party in Paris he rightly commented, 'The Reverso is perhaps the most inspiring watch of all for a designer. Its rectangular shape invites a designer to create one, two or even three miniature theatres. The Reverso is unique, but it's also diverse, and precisely this multiplicity is what makes it so pleasurable.'

For 2011, Jaeger-LeCoultre has decided to increase the Reverso's already considerable personalisation options. Keener than ever to fulfill all wishes and ideas, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, the Manufacture is offering numerous possibilities of engraving, gem-setting and enamelling to make each Reverso as unique as the person that wears it.

www.jaeger-lecoultre.com



BRIDGESTONE ECO-RALLY 2011

TWO CITIES, TWO CYGNETS

We're more used to seeing Darren Turner behind the wheel of an Aston Martin racing car, tearing down the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans, rather than behind the wheel of a Cygnet city car in leafy Oxfordshire. But that's the beauty of the Bridgestone Eco-Rally – an event designed to challenge and refresh our views of how the motorcar fits into our modern lifestyles



On Sunday 31 July, Aston Martin entered two Cygnet city cars into the fifth annual Bridgestone Eco-Rally – an increasingly popular event that, each year, showcases the world's best eco-friendly vehicles in association with 'Start', an initiative inspired by HRH The Prince of Wales to celebrate eco-friendly living.

In the marque's debut appearance at the event, the Cygnets cemented their place as the ultimate city cars, a tailor-fit solution for urban driving. The Bridgestone Eco-Rally allowed spectators and enthusiasts alike a chance to admire the Cygnets as they passed from Broad Street in the heart of Oxford to The Mall in central London.

Handcrafted for the city with the highest quality materials and attention to detail, Cygnet is bespoke, exclusive, and offers a degree of choice not previously available in a small package, coupled with carbon emissions of just 116g/km and fuel economy of 56.5mpg.

One of the Cygnets that entered the event was dressed in Seychelles Blue, the paint colour of the Aston Martin DB6 MKII Volante recently driven by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on their wedding day. Driven by Aston Martin Racing regular, Darren Turner and David King, Aston Martin's Director of Special Projects and Motorsport, the two entered Cygnets travelled the extended route from Exeter College, Oxford to The Mall, London, both drivers accompanied by their respective wives.

'I have been a fan of Cygnet from the start. It's a great city car, easy to manoeuvre and park and a lot of fun to drive,' Darren said before the event.

David King was just as impressed with the new city car. 'To drive Cygnet in a busy city is to experience a car ideally suited to its environment. Cygnet is tiny, with impressively low emissions but with all the style and craftsmanship of the finest luxury cars.'

The event culminated with a showcase event in the gardens of Clarence House, hosted by Start, displaying ideas and exhibits on sustainable living.

Cygnet expresses a simple but fundamental idea: in the modern city, scale equates to speed and freedom. At just three metres long, the Cygnet gives the driver a new dimension of freedom, able to slot into gaps in traffic, exploit the smallest parking spaces, consume the least fuel and emit the lowest emissions, all while delivering exceptional levels of quality and comfort. 'The Cygnet is designed to support our performance sports cars,' says Aston Martin CEO Dr Ulrich Bez, 'by providing a greater degree of freedom in the urban context; it is a very special car, a premium but compact package with heart, soul and personality.'

CRACKING THE CODE

Aston Martin's unmistakable design language reached a zenith with the artfully sculpted bodywork of the One-77, and Buben & Zörweg has now decoded the supercar's key motifs into a beautifully crafted safe and watch winder



Aston Martin and the Austrian luxury brand Buben & Zörweg embark on an exciting new collaboration this year with a One-77-inspired 'Object of Time' – a limited-edition masterpiece of craftsmanship and design, much like the One-77 itself, a 200mph-plus expression of pure automotive art.

Limited to 77 examples – again, like Aston Martin's ultra-desirable supercar – this remarkable piece of furniture, standing at 1.7m high, is the latest in Buben & Zörweg's expanding line of handcrafted display cases for lovers of fine timepieces. Containing its own mechanical clock, regulated by a flying tourbillon complication crafted in-house at Buben & Zörweg's Atelier d'Horlogerie, the Object of Time also doubles as a safe in which your wristwatches can be mounted on an array of 'Time Mover' watch winders. Add to that an elite sound system, and two hefty doors bearing unerring similarities to the sculpted flanks of its sibling sports car, and you have a horological artifact quite unlike anything else created before.

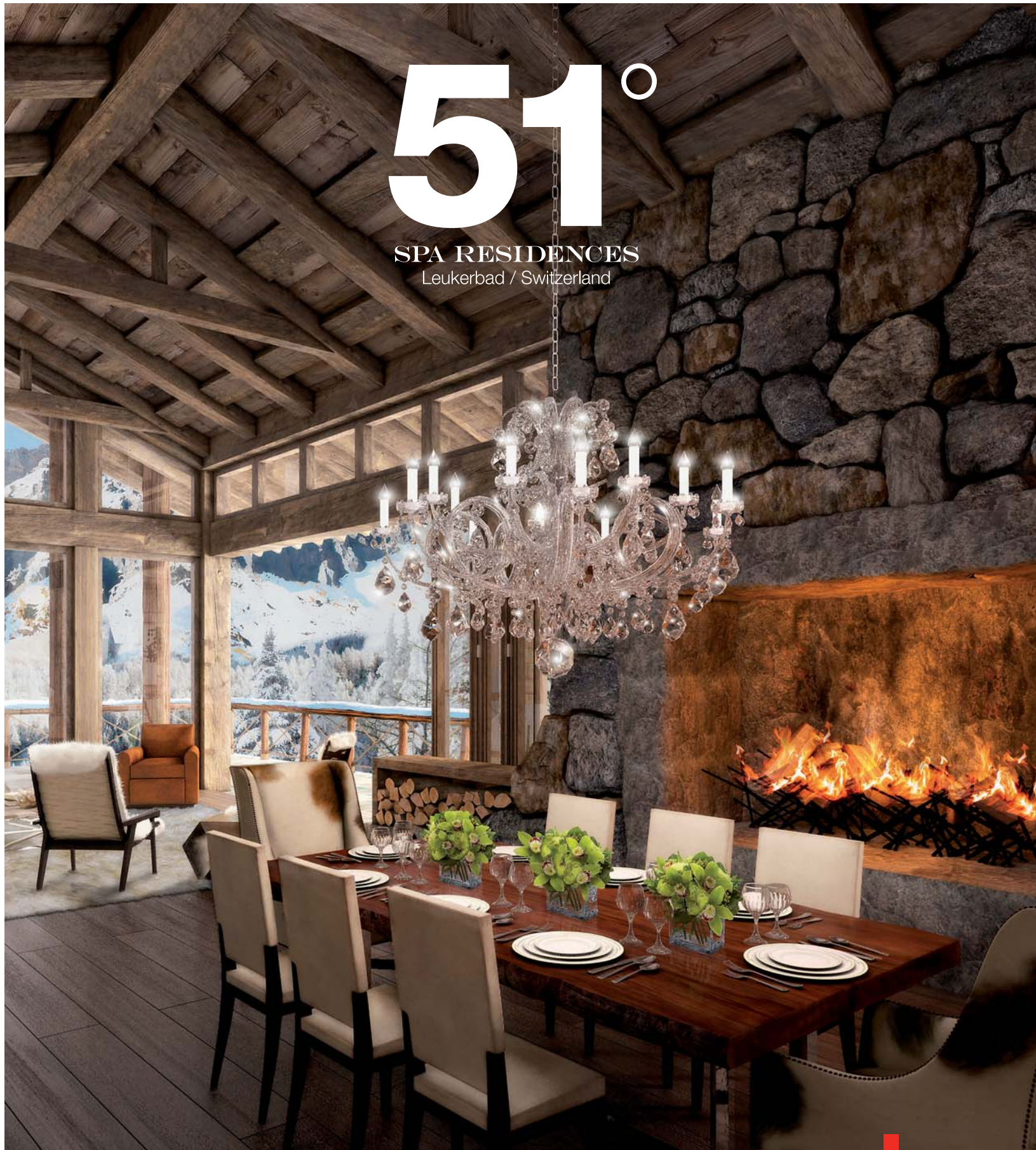
The new Object of Time is a result of a close affinity in design philosophy, and Christian Zörweg and Harald Buben, who founded their company in 1995, see strong links between the two brands: 'We are approaching this project with the same uncompromising attitude as Aston Martin. Our Object of Time "One-77" will also be unusual and unique, and will set new standards with regard to design, perfect craftsmanship and visionary innovation.'

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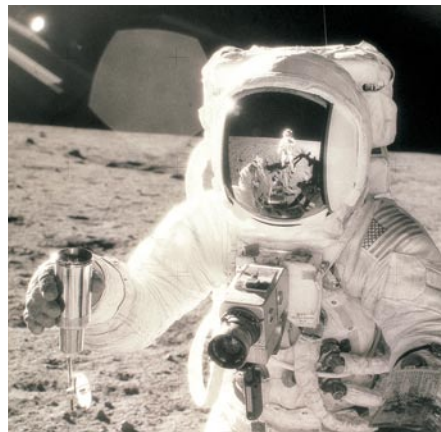
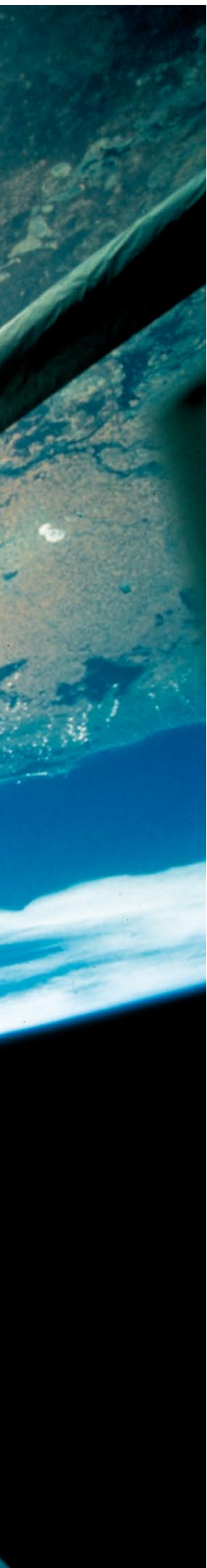
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THE CAMERA OF ALL CAMERAS

Every product has its iconic, thoroughbred marque and in the world of photography, it's Hasselblad. The Swedish firm's cameras and lenses have captured some of the most famous images in history – from the last sitting of Marilyn Monroe, to the Lunar Landings, to David Bailey's various muses of the Sixties – and they remain, quite simply, synonymous with the best imaging quality money can buy. Christian Hough explains why he and most of the world's other top photographers won't use anything else





PREVIOUS PAGE: The iconic 1000F, which improved on Hasselblad's very first consumer camera of 1948, the 1600F. In 1952, the camera truly came into its own: the American magazine *Modern Photography* field-tested the camera and reported spectacular results. The magazine's testers ran 500 rolls of film through the camera – and even deliberately dropped it. Twice.

THIS PAGE LEFT: Hasselblad has been on every one of NASA's manned missions into space. Here's a Hasselblad in use on the Moon, during the Apollo 17 mission.

FACING PAGE: A spectacular shot taken in 2001, when NASA equipped the space shuttle *Discovery* with a focal-plane shutter camera based on the standard 203FE.

Most people appreciate that skill, time, preparation and equipment goes into every photograph, regardless of commercial value or artistic merit; however, very few consider the relationship between the photographer and their equipment. Like a musician with their instrument, the photographer forms an intimate relationship with a camera system that enables them to capture the images as they visualise them. It isn't purely about megapixels or manufacturer's statistics, but a tight kinaesthetic interaction between human and machine. Something that every Hasselblad photographer experiences.

Whether you're the future Ansel Adams or Annie Leibovitz you cannot fail to sense, whilst clutching a Hasselblad, that you're engaging with an engineering thoroughbred – something that regardless of talent or means, inspires you to create and, like every good tool, enhances your own skill beyond all expectation.

It would have been hard to imagine at the time that the small Swedish trading company F. W. Hasselblad & Co. established in 1841 would flourish into the most prestigious of camera manufacturers. However, when Arvid Viktor Hasselblad said, 'I certainly don't think that we will earn much money on this, but at least it will allow us to take pictures for free,' it couldn't have been further from the truth. It is a potent reminder of how an individual's passion can lead to great things.

Victor Hasselblad was born in 1906, the great grandson of Arvid and raised as the heir to the family business. Victor grew into a precocious teenager with a passion for photography and eventually began work in Dresden, Germany gaining experience of the camera industry and optics manufacturing from the ground upwards. Victor eventually opened his own photo shop in Gothenburg 1937, aptly named 'Victor Foto'.

The outbreak of World War II changed the fortunes of Victor (who had established himself as a camera expert) and he soon found himself being approached by the Swedish military with a recovered German surveillance camera. When asked if he could make one, he responded, 'No, but I can make a better one.' Through this he established his own small factory, producing the first Hasselblad Camera the HK7. Once war ended, Victor turned his attention to the consumer market and in 1948 introduced the Hasselblad 1600F, a 6cm x 6cm camera with interchangeable Kodak lenses, film magazines and viewfinders, which met with great critical acclaim. It was a true feat of engineering at the time. With its larger negative, it produced substantially more detailed and better quality photographs than 35mm-based systems and was the beginning of consumer medium-format photography; eventually leading to the instantly recognisable Hasselblad 500C and the motor operated 500EL in 1965, which formed the base of the Hasselblad product line for over 50 years.

The Hasselblad name was etched forever in the photographic world when a Hasselblad 500EL 70mm model found its way into the hands of Buzz Aldrin, who took some of the most iconic images the world has ever seen: men on the surface of the moon. The Apollo 11 Lunar Landing marked a long collaboration with NASA, with huge technological leaps to reduce weight, cope with zero gravity, extreme temperature variance, difficulty of operation wearing thick gloves – every new innovation having a downstream benefit to the core consumer range. Indeed, Hasselblad has been on every manned NASA space flight mission, starting in 1962 when a still-unknown Walter Schirra entered

BELOW, TOP TO BOTTOM:
HK7, the first camera ever designed by Hasselblad after the Swedish government asked a 34-year-old Victor Hasselblad if he could produce an aerial surveillance camera identical to one recovered from a downed German aircraft in 1940. Legend has it that Victor responded, 'No, but I can make a better one.'

EDC (Electric Data Camera), a specially designed version of the motorised 500EL for use on the surface of the moon, where the first lunar pictures were taken on 20 July 1969 by Neil Armstrong.

500 ELM Grey, a camera manufactured in 1982 to mark 20 years of Hasselblad's participation in the US space programme.

HTS 1.5, from the modern Hasselblad collection, which adds five different 'tilt and shift lenses' to the HC/HCD lens range.



a Houston photo supply shop and purchased a standard consumer Hasselblad 500C. Schirra was a prospective NASA astronaut, one of the brightest and finest pilots of his time. He stripped the leatherette from the body of the Hasselblad and painted its metal surface black in order to minimize reflections, then took it with him when he climbed aboard his Mercury rocket – the only product in the space capsule that had not been custom-built for the mission. NASA had not recognised the importance of photographic documentation but after seeing the quality and unreal beauty of the photographs that Schirra brought back to Earth, was clearly apparent how vital such images were to the space project as a whole.

Since this time, the photographic industry has seen a huge advance, moving away from film to digital. Hasselblad too has been busy embracing, developing and refining this cutting edge technology to produce the finest DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) camera system to date, known as the H-System, whilst retaining its prestigious square format heritage with the instantly recognisable digital V-System (see boxes on page 38).

As with the original Hasselblad 1600F, the modern Hasselblad digital system is designed from the ground upwards as a complete system, made and designed by Hasselblad for Hasselblad. The concept of a closed system appears alien to many 35mm photographers who have the option of purchasing lesser-quality peripherals. However, the reasons behind this become all too apparent when you begin to consider the extremely fine engineering tolerances and exacting quality of every component. Herein lies the guarantee, in that everything produced retains full compatibility, doesn't compromise the exacting standards and operates as designed; flawlessly.

This new standard and expectation has become increasingly important in an age where we are subject to visual overload from all types of media. It has become a prerequisite for any photographer to distinguish themselves and captivate the viewer with all disposable means. I am a great exponent of the Hasselblad system; it is the tonality and sharpness of the images that make all the difference. The Hasselblad medium-format sensor and the True Focus system produce tack-sharp images with incredible dynamic range and clean shadow detail. And compared to a standard DSLR, the Hasselblad's larger CCD sensor and pixel pitch will collect over 50 per cent more data than the standard 35mm CMOS sensor, affording much greater flexibility and creativity during post-production processing.

But most importantly, beautifully transcending tones expose every nuance and retain every tiny, intimate detail for all to appreciate. That's what makes it so easy to tell if a photo's been taken on a Hasselblad.

TOP: Fashion editorial shot taken by the author, Christian Hough, using an H3D-31 body and 50-110 lens.

RIGHT: *The Tetons and the Snake River* by Ansel Adams, taken in Yellowstone National Park in the Forties, during his commission period for the Department of the Interior. In the famed landscapist's honour, Hasselblad introduced the 205 FCC in 1995.





V-System

AS USED BY COLIN PRIOR

It is important not to forget the roots of the Hasselblad system and how different photographers find solace in different cameras. Take for instance the talented landscape photographer Colin Prior who uses a V-System Hasselblad, which has retained the classic medium-format appearance that so many people recognise. Prior's work is a step away from the refined and precisely engineered photographic world, instead delving into the raw and untamed natural wilderness (see above). Prior states, 'The V-System's lenses are like fine wines, each with its own special characteristics, from St Emilion to Margaux. The progression of the H-system, with its latest 50 and 60 megapixel sensors has on encouraging me to push my work towards ever more demanding levels.'

H-System

AS USED BY RIPLEY & RIPLEY

When you speak to Hasselblad photographer Ripley of Ripley & Ripley, who produced the awe-inspiring image of the V12 Zagato below, it becomes clear that every inch of the Zagato was considered and lit to bring out a myriad of shapes and textures. 'When commissioned, I set a mandate to produce the best photographs imaginable, which is why I utilise the very best equipment available. I shot this with the Hasselblad H4D-200MS – a work of genius that allows a single 50 megapixel sensor to make six separate captures to produce a 200 megapixel image. The amount of data captured by the camera allows the final image to be composited and manipulated without the introduction of digital artefacts. It takes one great piece of engineering to capture another.'



ABOVE: Teufelsschloss, Kaizer Franz Joseph Fjord, East Greenland, taken on a V-System Hasselblad by Colin Prior.

LEFT: Aston Martin's V12 Zagato, shot in a studio using the H-System H4D-200MS by Ripley & Ripley.



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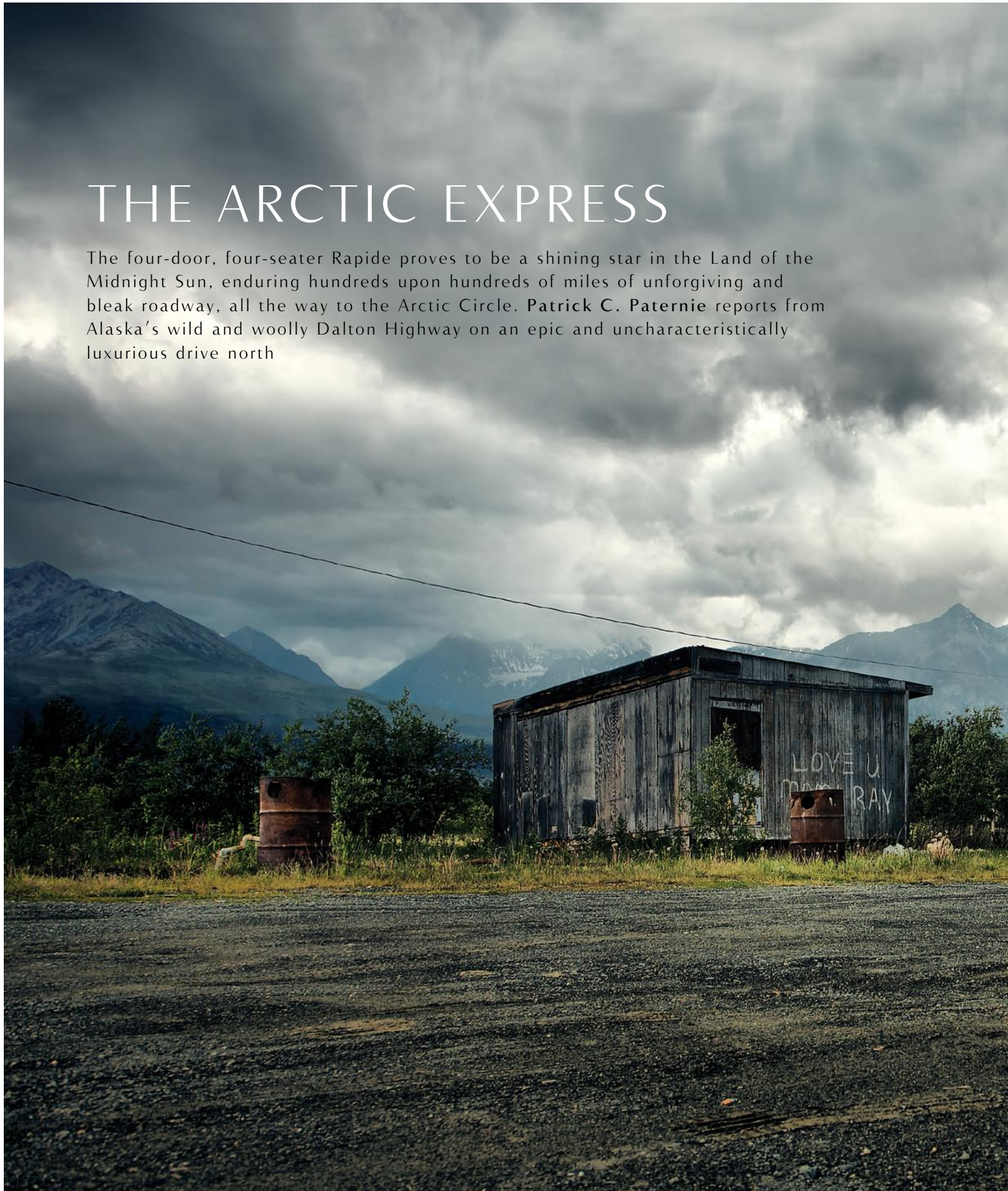


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THE ARCTIC EXPRESS

The four-door, four-seater Rapide proves to be a shining star in the Land of the Midnight Sun, enduring hundreds upon hundreds of miles of unforgiving and bleak roadway, all the way to the Arctic Circle. **Patrick C. Paternie** reports from Alaska's wild and woolly Dalton Highway on an epic and uncharacteristically luxurious drive north





Snowstorms, even in summer, can shut down the road and rain can turn parts into a mud bog. Steep gradations have spawned colourful nicknames such as the 'Roller Coaster' and 'Beaver Slide'





A grimy, mud-spattered big rig slowly rumbles up to the fuel pump, the grizzled driver warily eyeballing our glistening Titanium Silver Rapide as if he had pulled off the road into a truck stop on another planet. 'What the heck kind of car is that and what in the world is it doing up here?' he growled, a smile breaking out as the dusty, mud-cratered lot surrounding him verified that he was indeed in the Coldfoot service area of Alaska's Dalton Highway.

Truth be told, we were a bit as amazed as the trucker that our remarkably stouthearted Aston Martin sports car had transported us to this remote way station (population 13 full-time residents) in the foothills of Alaska's 9,000-foot Brooks Range of mountains. Considering the 21 hours of daylight and minimally darker three-hour 'night' during our early-summer visit, you couldn't blame the trucker for wondering if he had stumbled into the Twilight Zone.

A more contemporary television show, however, was partially responsible for our presence. *Ice Road Truckers* highlights the perils of transport drivers delivering supplies over the frozen Dalton Highway during the winter. It plays on the image of the USA's 49th state as an untamed wilderness populated by isolated colonies of rugged individualists and even larger numbers of moose, grizzly bears and caribou. Not that far fetched, as Alaska's population density works out to one person per square mile.

So when the Aston Martin press office was seeking an endurance driving challenge in North America to demonstrate that the Rapide – which had shown its mettle at the Nürburgring 24-Hours endurance race – could also endure harsh challenges on public roads, tackling the infamous Dalton Highway with the Arctic Circle in our sights emerged as the obvious choice for an extreme driving adventure. Choosing a route proved fairly easy, having studied a map of the state's highways. All of Alaska's main routes conveniently join into an oval-shaped loop running north from Anchorage to Fairbanks (where the Dalton Highway begins) and back. We began on Route 3, which provides the most direct route (360 miles) to Fairbanks and skirts the edge of Denali State Park home of Mount McKinley, which, at 20,320 feet, is the tallest mountain in North America.



Driving to Alaska was not feasible, as the driving distance from Seattle, Washington is nearly 2,400 miles. Our 2011 Rapide, with barely 500 miles on the odometer, was instead trucked to nearby Tacoma, Washington from California and loaded on a ferry for its five-day voyage to Anchorage. The car had no modifications and retained its standard ride height and 20-inch alloy wheels and tyres. Because food, fuel and repair services are extremely limited on the Dalton Highway, along with mobile phone coverage, authorities advocate having at least two mounted spare tyres and extra gasoline. Although the back seat and luggage compartment of the Rapide could have easily accommodated these items, we opted to keep the upholstery pristine and employ a support truck with two technicians.

While the abundance of daylight hours and warmer temperatures during the summer months do make road travel a bit less intimidating, these conditions hatch aggravating hordes of pests in the form of black mosquitoes, with tourists serving as their primary nourishment. Having a 470-horsepower, 6.0-litre V12 under the bonnet proved useful in escaping the tour buses, motorhomes and minivans of the latter on the mostly two-lane, twisting highways.

The mosquitoes, on the other hand, turned photo stops into arm-flapping sting fests. With every mile or so following a stop, the dashboard quickly resembled a leather-covered battlefield littered with tiny, crumpled bodies, not least thanks to the Rapide's precise steering and directional stability, which freed up at least one hand to exterminate another horde of tiny, buzzing hitchhikers.

Which, truth be told, wasn't as much a nuisance as you might think. Steady showers obscured much of the scenery along Route 3, including Mount McKinley, which made battling mosquitoes the most adventurous aspect of our first day's journey from Anchorage to Fairbanks. For lunch we stopped at the Denali Doghouse where we dined on local delicacies of reindeer sausage and buffalo bratwurst. The former has a spicy, kosher salami style flavour while the buffalo brats were tender but a bit bland.

Excitement picked up as we rolled down the dirt road on the edge of a valley overlooking Fairbanks and the Tanana River. This was leading us to the Aurora Express B&B, our lodging for the next two nights. Not a rustic cottage in the woods, but in another Twilight Zone-style episode, the incongruous planting of a striking blue and yellow ex-Alaska Railway passenger train, complete with a huge diesel locomotive, still perched on 700 feet of track amidst the spruce trees.

Our amiable and colourful hosts, Susan and Mike Wilson made us feel at home in the former sleeping compartments that were now decorated in an eclectic, 'gold rush' period style to match names such as Can-Can, Bordello, and Immaculate Conception. Can-Can featured a table perched on 'legs' wearing mesh stockings, hangers mimicking the legs of the can-can girls, and lace 'curtains' consisting of silky underwear.

It was still raining the next morning as we arose early for our date with destiny, aka the Dalton Highway. It's known as the 'Haul Road' by the locals because the narrow, primarily gravel-covered 414-mile trail was built in 1974 to support the construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline, and it still serves today as the primary supply route to the oil drilling operations at Prudhoe Bay. Flat tyres from sharp stones are a common





Despite reaching the Arctic Circle, it was the reception we received at Coldfoot that truly made our journey. Hardened truckers greeted us with wide grins, astonished that we had come so far totally unscathed in a luxury sports car





occurrence, along with windscreen chips and paint damage from stones kicked up by the large trucks. Snowstorms, even in summer, can shut down the road and rain can turn parts into a mud bog. Other challenges include steep gradients that have spawned colourful nicknames such as the 'Roller Coaster' and 'Beaver Slide.'

Our goal was to reach the Arctic Circle at milepost 115. We took our first moose encounter just before the official start of the Dalton to be a good omen. A few miles later the pavement ended and we were officially on the Haul Road. The Rapide comfortably soaked up the bumps of the washboard surface as if it were rolling along the Champs-Élysées. Shortly thereafter we got our first view of the pipeline, a wondrous silver snake that winds its way through the trees, passing up, over and occasionally through the low-lying hills. Far from diminishing the natural beauty of the area, the pipeline accents its incredible surroundings.

Just past noon, we crossed the narrow, wooden bridge where the highway and the adjacent pipeline cross the Yukon River at milepost 56. It's the only place to refuel until Coldfoot, which is 120 miles further on. Lunch provided our first encounter with the truckers and the locals, who were friendly and outgoing with a keen interest in the performance of the Rapide.

The weather had turned sunny and warm and the scenery during our climb toward the Arctic Circle transformed from forest to Alpine tundra with incredible vistas under seemingly endless blue sky. We crested a twisting series of bends to reach the aptly named Finger Mountain at milepost 98, battling high winds briefly until finally we pulled into the parking area delineated by a marker indicating we had reached the Arctic Circle. Good thing the marker was present as this proved to be the warmest (73°F) and sunniest point of our journey. Buoyed by our success in reaching what, admittedly, we had conceded to be an almost-unreachable goal, we pressed on further toward Coldfoot at milepost 175.

Despite reaching the Arctic Circle, it was the reception we received at Coldfoot that truly made our journey. Hardened truckers greeted us with wide grins, astonishment we had come so far virtually unscathed in a luxury sports car, and plenty of requests to pose for pictures with the Rapide. But with all this bonhomie also came strong words of warning not to press on too much farther – apparently the road surface ahead was slicing up thicker-skinned big-rig tyres.

Deadhorse was still 240 miles away and it had already taken us nine hours to reach Coldfoot. The drive back from here, albeit in Alaska's perpetual summer daylight, would put us back in Fairbanks around 11pm and we had come much farther than expected without a problem. Trusting the advice of our new compatriots, we turned back with pride, knowing we had taken an Aston Martin somewhere an Aston Martin had never ventured before.

The Rapide must have shared our sense of accomplishment, as the drive back was fast and smooth despite the return of the rain. The long, steep descent and ascent of the Roller Coaster was the most memorable part of the journey. The dirt highway, which had become moist and tacky in the rain, provided incredible grip allowing the Rapide to motor along without a slip or a slide. The road and the sky seemed to stretch out forever and both the driver and the Rapide wished it would.

The next day's drive back to Anchorage provided the most incredible scenery of the trip, but it was anticlimactic after our successful taming of the Haul Road. In three days, we had rolled up nearly 1,500 miles with not so much as a blemish on the Rapide or its tyres. And we had averaged just shy of 17 miles per gallon. We also made Aston Martin a part of the legacy of the Dalton Highway. Maybe next trip they will have valet parking waiting for us in Coldfoot.



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Into the Wilderness

With our author Patrick C. Paternie at the wheel, photographer Joe Windsor-Williams in the passenger seat and three Aston Martin Lagonda The Americas representatives following in a four-wheel-drive SUV support vehicle, the Rapide embarked on its 1,230-mile-round 'Arctic Express' roadtrip on Monday 27 June. However, this particular Titanium Silver car, in standard specification, had already clocked up over 2,500 miles just getting from Irvine, California to Anchorage, Alaska in the first place: 1,100 miles by truck and 1,405 nautical miles by ocean ferry. And those were just the first of many logistical challenges facing the crew on this, the most extreme driving adventure ever undertaken for the magazine.

The US Government's Bureau of Land Management warns that significant portions of the Dalton Highway are gravel (where washboard or corrugated road can be very severe) and that the paved sections vary in condition depending on the time of year and recent maintenance, with flat tyres a common occurrence. Services such as food and fuel are also far and few between, with no cell-phone coverage beginning 35 miles north of Fairbanks. Hence the jam-packed support vehicle (pictured left), complete with full spare sets of brake pads, wheels and tyres, plus jerry cans of petrol.

It was tough for the crew as well as the car, and Joe in particular had many considerations to deal with: 'The main hardship was leaving the cars to shoot from the woods – not only were the biting insects unbearable, but there's the ever-present threat of hungry bears and moose, who can kick with any of their four legs apparently!

'The erratic weather meant I was shooting on a Canon 1DS body and lens, which offer particularly good protection against humidity, dust and grime. And, of course, the Alaskan summer means the sun is very high for the majority of the day – you have to wait till either very late at night or very early in the morning to get a good, low light. Very disorientating for the bodyclock.'

If you fancy tackling the notorious 'Haul Road' in your Aston Martin, make sure you visit www.blm.gov/ak/dalton first, for advice and information.



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POTENZA

FLAMINGO'S EYE VIEW

The annual Serengeti Great Migration between Kenya and Tanzania is the greatest movement of animals on Earth, involving 1.5 million wildebeest and zebra, with lions, cheetahs and crocodiles in hot pursuit. Witnessed from the air, it is an epic spectacle, making jeep safaris seem small-fry by comparison. Hopping from five-star camp to five-star camp, **Gareth Rubin** experiences the new bucket-list phenomenon with genuine frontier thrills





Crocodiles get a bad press. It's undoubtedly something to do with the gaping jaws and rows of glistening teeth that puts people off our reptilian friends. But when a couple of crocs start to hungrily eye up a few stray wildebeest warily crossing a river in an attempt to rejoin the herd, I find myself inwardly cheering for the reptiles. As the scene plays out beneath me, I can't help hoping one or two of the wildebeest will become a feast fit for a crocodile.

We are in the plains of Kenya's Masai Mara reserve watching the Great Migration, where more than a million wildebeest (not all visible at once, mind) trek north from Tanzania into their Kenyan summer home, with greener pastures in their sights. Tagging along for the ride, or in pursuit of an instant meal, are zebras, lions, cheetahs, vultures and other creatures of the land and air. The migration lasts a thousand miles in one direction, only to be reversed six months later, and it is an exhausting journey for all concerned. Except for me, because I have chosen to do it by plane.

As we fly low over the terrain we view the sort of scene that most people only ever see in National Geographic – massive herds of wildebeest thundering across the hard earth. The shadow from the plane passes over them but they do not stop or deviate from their path, they are focused on reaching the lush grass on the other side of the border.

These days, the intrepid traveller has no need for ant-infested sleeping bags, painful backs after wakeful nights on the hard ground and clothes you have not taken off for three weeks. These days the intrepid traveller takes a five-star flying safari, hopping between camps to track the beasts from the air and relaxing at night in soft beds with gourmet food prepared by friendly staff.

Back at the river, the wildebeest (or gnu, if you prefer) have spotted the crocs, and the crocs have spotted them. It's a tense time for all concerned. The wildebeest seem to take a quick, silent conference on the issue and immediately conclude that their best weapon is the element of surprise. So suddenly, and as one, they leap into the water and start swimming as quickly as these huge, ungainly beasts can.

The previously calm waters become a raging torrent as scores of the animals splash huge walls of water into the air. And that's when the crocs realise that there could be something in it for them. Unlike the wildebeest, crocodiles are designed for the water and slip off their riverside sunning position a couple of hundred metres away, silently and malevolently into the river. They make very rapid progress and although most of the wildebeest have made it back onto dry land by the time of the reptiles' arrival, there are still a few stragglers. One of them is unlucky.

The two crocs swim rapidly towards this individual and clamp on to its rear, attempting to drag it away. But the herd instinct is strong and its distressed bellowing brings its friends to the rescue. They turn around and start menacing the crocodiles, which decide to cut their losses and return to their patch of mud to rest, a little embarrassed I like to think. The score lies at wildebeest 1, crocodiles 0.



'You are lucky,' says Anders, our South African guide. 'Not as lucky as the wildebeest, but lucky. It is not often that you see a sight like that. Now the crocs will have to wait for their dinner.' It won't be a long wait, you suspect. The spectacle over, we drive back to our lodge, spotting a pride of lions on the way. Lions are a lot more like your domestic moggy than you would think. They spend most of their time asleep or sitting about looking pretty. They ignore us and continue to doze. As we arrive at our home for the next couple of days, elephants trundle past as bored by our presence as the lions.



'It is an incredible sight, isn't it?' says Anders. 'There is so much to Africa. You know, I am 30 and I have never been outside Africa. One day I will, but there is still much to see here. And you do not see this in Paris.' I ask him for his best safari tip. 'Make sure you go to the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania. You can see black rhino – very rare, very endangered.'

The lodge is made of dark, heavy wood, but festooned with bright, floating drapes and linen. It has a perfectly decent shower and comfortable deck in front where we sit and watch the orange sun dip below the horizon. Perhaps like those crocodiles, we are feasting on impala tonight, the small and abundant antelope. They are quite cute, very dim and extraordinarily tasty, knocked up as a stew by the local chef. I try to get him to teach me the Kenyan national anthem. 'I am sorry,' he says in a whisper, a huge smile playing across his face. 'I do not know it.'

The next day we are up at dawn to drive out with the hope of seeing the lions doing something – preferably hunting. We sit for an hour in the jeep watching them but all we are treated to is a shameless display of mating, with the cats watching us afterwards as if asking for comment. Some of the lionesses might be off somewhere hunting (the boys leave the shopping to the girls) but if so we do not see them. More crowds of impala jump about the place, demonstrating that our lunch table will never be empty.

The Great Migration is not a single event. The animals usually cross north into Kenya in July, and return in November, reaching the Serengeti's southern plains in December, ready for the calving season and with it a new cycle. But they work to a natural calendar based on how green the grass is, not a paper one pinned to a wall.



Some of the travellers' camps, such as the Governor's Camp in the Masai Mara, have become famous for their luxury and unimpeded proximity to the action. But there are many small camps favoured by those who prefer the atmosphere of the old safaris where hunters would walk out into the bush and make their camp where they could.

The third day we pack up and get ready to fly on to another camp. We squeeze into the little six-seater aircraft and sit on the airstrip waiting for more dimwitted impala to get out of the way. Our pilot turns on the engine to scare them, but they gaze back at us with looks that only suggest mild curiosity. They are in no hurry and the pilot has to switch everything off, get out and shoo them away with language so strong that it makes me blush. It's too dangerous to try herding them away with the rotor blades, given that impalas are liable to investigate the spinning metal things just a bit too closely. 'Stupid animals,' comments our pilot. 'But delicious.'

As we fly low over the terrain we view the sort of scene that most people only ever see in *National Geographic* – massive herds of wildebeest thundering across the hard earth. The shadow from the plane passes over them but they do not stop or deviate from their path, they are focused on reaching the lush grass on the other side of the border.

We land at another camp as fine as the first. In this one, the wooden lodges are mere skeletons, their sides being canvas curtains that can be raised or lowered to turn your chalet into an open viewing deck. There is more impala on the menu, but also a host of other meats that I have never tried (sometimes never heard of). And this camp has a pool.

So as the sun sets once more, we soak in the pool with a cocktail. And try not to think of crocodiles.



chocks away!

For a custom-crafted African Air Safari, Bushtracks Expeditions (www.bushtracks.com) provides access to the best wildlife reserves, knowledgeable guides and five star comfort. From Kruger and the southern savannahs to rarely-seen rainforests of the Central African Republic, a deeper African experience is just a short flight away.

For a short trip, Bushblazers (bushblazers.com) does a two-night Great Migration flying safari in the Masai Mara. It departs from Nairobi and stays at the Ilkeliani tented eco-camp (Ilkeliani.com). The camp is a favourite with elephants who wander through to drink at the river beside it.

If you want to combine wildlife with relaxation, the Safari Club (safari-club.co.uk) has a flying safari and beach holiday combination. There are seven nights in two camps in the Masai Mara, including three at the famous Little Governors' Camp (governorscamp.com) then five days at the Pinewood spa resort on Kenya's south coast (pinewood-beach.com).

If you want to visit both Kenya and Tanzania by plane, Africa Safari Specialists (tanzania.safaris.com) has a two-week trip visiting Kenya's Meru National Park, as well as the Masai Mara, the Serengeti and Tanzania's fascinating Ngorongoro Crater, a collapsed volcano.

For a trip taking in the migration but also many other sights in southern Africa, try Springbok Flying Safaris (springbokflying safaris.com) which has a nine-day excursion visiting Lake Malawi, Zanzibar and Victoria Falls as well as the Serengeti.

For the really adventurous, try a self-fly safari – pilot's licence permitting, of course! Then you can go literally wherever you want. You can join a group self-fly safari complete with guide from Hanks Aero Adventures (selfflysafaris.com)

[NÜRBURGRING 24 HOURS]



TAKING ON THE 'RING

Barely off the podium at Villa d'Este's Concours d'Elegance, two examples of Aston Martin's new V12 Zagato took on the mighty, notorious Nürburgring 24-Hours endurance race in June and came out the other side race-proven and ready for production. **Richard Meaden** was behind the wheel of 'Zig', and reports from what surely qualifies as the most rigorous prototype sign-off in the industry



Five years ago Aston Martin came to the Nürburgring 24-Hours with a stripped-out but essentially standard road-going V8 Vantage and finished 24th overall. Every year since, the marque has returned with a new point to prove, and every year the factory Aston Martins have finished the race. 2011 presented the greatest challenge yet with the Aston Martin factory entering a pair of V12 Zagato prototypes in this punishing race, just weeks after a prestigious win in the Prototype and Concept Car category of the Villa d'Este concours.

It's a daunting prospect for the 50-or-so team personnel and squad of eight Zagato drivers (plus a four-man crew in the factory-entered V8 Vantage GT4), for not only are these cars the very first prototypes, they are precious sculptures with painstakingly hand-formed aluminium bodywork. Each front wing alone is worth £26,000 in materials and labour, and so short has been the build schedule that there are no spare panels for either car. In a race defined by its chaotic traffic, high attrition and dizzying speed differential between the fastest and slowest cars, racing these works of art is audacious. Yet that's what makes the occasion so special.



Despite the proliferation of native Porsches, Mercedes and BMWs the Nürburgring 24-Hours crowd has warmed to Aston Martin over the years, not least because it was the British brand that embraced the gruelling German endurance race as an integral part of its product development. The two V12 Zagatos certainly make a spectacular sight. To be here as a driver is an amazing feeling, for in years to come this race will be looked back upon as a small but significant piece of the V12 Zagato's story. Whatever the outcome of the race the next 24 hours is Aston Martin history in the making.

The V12 Zagatos are entered in the SP8 class, along with the pair of Gazoo Racing Lexus LFAs, an RJN Motorsport Nissan 370Z, Jim Glickenhaus's one-off Ferrari F430-based P4/5 Competizione and the fearsomely quick Farnbacher Ferrari 458 amongst others. Given the Aston Martin's road-going roots our strategy is more conservative than the out-and-out race cars, but still we believe the Zagato has good pace, which when combined with canny driving means we should also be good on fuel. We qualify without a hitch; the green Zagato (nicknamed Zig and driven by myself, Oliver Mathai, Peter Cate and Aston Martin's Chris Porritt) qualified 5th in class and 46th overall; the red car (nicknamed 'Zag' and driven by Aston Martin's CEO Dr Ulrich Bez, Aston Martin Nürburgring Test Centre Director Wolfgang Schuhbauer and journalists Horst von Saurma and Matthew Marsh) 7th in class and 65th overall.

Despite being held over the last weekend in June the Nürburgring's notoriously fickle weather still plays tricks. Heavy rain before the 4pm start means everyone fits wet tyres, and as the three groups of 70 cars power across the line to start the race a dense cloud of spray hangs in the air. Chris Porritt and Wolfgang Schuhbauer are the nominated start drivers in the V12 Zagatos. I'm due to take over the green No.5 car from Porritt, so I see the start from the pitlane, then wait nervously for him to complete his opening stint.

The poor weather makes for treacherous conditions, but the track soon begins to dry so after a couple of laps Porritt pits for slicks and a full tank of fuel, which is enough to see him complete a full 8-lap stint. It means I have to wait a little longer for my first go in the car, but he's going well, pushing No.5 well inside the Top 30.

In a flash of green and white Porritt makes his pit stop. I open the door and help him out, before ducking through the tight aperture between roof and side impact bars of the roll cage and dropping into the Recaro race seat. As you'd expect the Zagato is fabulous to drive. Featuring an extensive aerodynamic package, including a massive rear diffuser and a full-length flat-floor running beneath the car to maximise the diffuser's effectiveness the V12 Zagato is a serious racer, yet remains road legal. Beneath the bonnet is a bellowing 6.0-litre V12 with a little more power (approx 540bhp) and torque, but a much bigger voice. Even by Aston Martin's high standards both Zagatos sound magnificent. The transmission is a version of the One-77's six-speed paddle-shift ASM single-clutch transmission, while the suspension also borrows technology from the One-77, featuring fully adjustable Multimatic DSSV dampers.

The race wheels are two inches smaller than Zag's amazing twenty-inch Villa d'Este show rims. They don't fill the arches quite as dramatically, but GT racing slicks are made for 18in wheels, so that's what Yokohama supply to the team. VLN rules don't allow carbon discs, so the V12 Vantage ditches its standard brakes for giant cast iron rotors and calipers courtesy of Brembo.

The noise is outrageous; a fierce, animalistic snarl that fills the cockpit and penetrates the shell of your crash helmet like a hammer blow. Through the 'screen a heat haze shimmers from the huge bonnet vents. It's hot in here too, although the car itself isn't too physical to drive thanks to power steering and that paddle-shift transmission, not to mention ABS brakes and the same 3-stage stability control system as Aston Martin's road cars. We switch the system off completely in the dry, but it's a welcome safety net if there's a sudden downpour.

'The family of Aston Martin will be what I remember about this trip and the enjoyment I felt the whole time I was with the team. I owe you all a big thanks'

ROB THOMSON (AUS), DRIVER,
V8 VANTAGE GT4





'It took a long time to recover from this year's 24-Hours. Not because of sleep deprivation or sore muscles, but because Monday morning meant leaving behind what has become more than just a racing team, more than simply a group of like-minded professionals and enthusiasts, more than just the most comfortable, friendly and inspiring environment I have encountered in 25 years of racing. Monday morning meant leaving very special friends and heading back to reality. As David [King] said in one of our briefings: "If team spirit counts for anything we were winners before the race started."'

MATTHEW MARSH (HK), DRIVER, V12 ZAGATO 'ZAG'

‘So many images and sounds stick in my mind: the glow of Zig and Zag’s exhausts in the pit lane at night; the sound of them coming across the finish line; watching six hands working on one small part of Zig’s engine in perfect harmony; the “never give up” attitude of the whole team; the enthusiasm and encouragement of our guests and fans. Every single person played their part and demonstrated the very best of Aston Martin in our actions and attitudes. There were also many people not present who played a crucial role in designing and building the cars, and in planning for the event. Thank you all on behalf of the company, I look forward to doing it again next year.’

DAVID KING, HEAD OF MOTORSPORT, ASTON MARTIN





Years of road car development mean most Aston Martins know their way round the 'Ring, and despite this being the first time the V12 Zagato has run in anger it feels confident and assured through the Nordschleife's countless curves. On the endless Döttinger Höhe straight it pulls an easy 175mph with more to come, despite the additional drag that comes with the large rear wing.

My stint – 8 laps, or around 120-miles – is over all too quickly. I love racing at the 'Ring, and the V12 Zagato is running brilliantly. Mathai and Cate complete their first stints without incident, and as night falls over the Nürburgring we're making excellent progress, with Zag shadowing us a few places behind in the SP8 class. I get back into the car at 11pm or thereabouts, by which time the circuit is cloaked in darkness. It's a magical feeling to power out of the brightly lit pitlane onto the wide-open space of the modern GP circuit, then just a few minutes later plunge into the inky blackness and relentless twists and turns of the Nordschleife. This old circuit plays sensory tricks at night, for nothing yet everything has changed. All the bends and kerbs are in the same place, but it takes a little while to feel your way round and to build-up your confidence. It's a tremendous challenge and a real buzz.

When things are going right there's no more satisfying feeling than being part of a 24-hour race team. That's exactly how I feel when I get back to the pits and climb out of the car to see that we're now 20th overall just 8-hours into the race. I grab something to eat then head back to my hotel for a short sleep before returning to the pit garage around 3:30am in readiness for my next stint.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE 'RING

With nine consecutive entries in the Le Mans 24-hour race (including GT1 class wins in 2007 and 2008 behind the wheel of a DBR9) and numerous other international endurance racing victories, it's been a long time since Aston Martin Racing's Darren Turner has been regarded as a rookie driver. Yet this year was the first time the 37-year-old Englishman had ever raced at the legendary Nürburgring Nordschleife, in the orange factory-entered V8 Vantage GT4 car, partnering customer drivers Jurgen Stumpf, Australian Rob Thomson and Japanese journalists Shinichi Katsura. So what did he make of it?

'It's by far the best race I've done this year. In fact I'd rate it amongst the best motorsport events I've ever done. From the formation lap immediately before the start, where the massive crowd come right up to the car like a sea of people, to my final stint just a few hours from the end I was blown away by the atmosphere, the scale and the relentlessly challenging nature of the driving. My first laps at night were also incredible. The whole place comes to life in a way no other circuit does. During my first night stint fans were lighting barbecues, and I could smell the food cooking. I wanted to get the window down and grab a sausage!

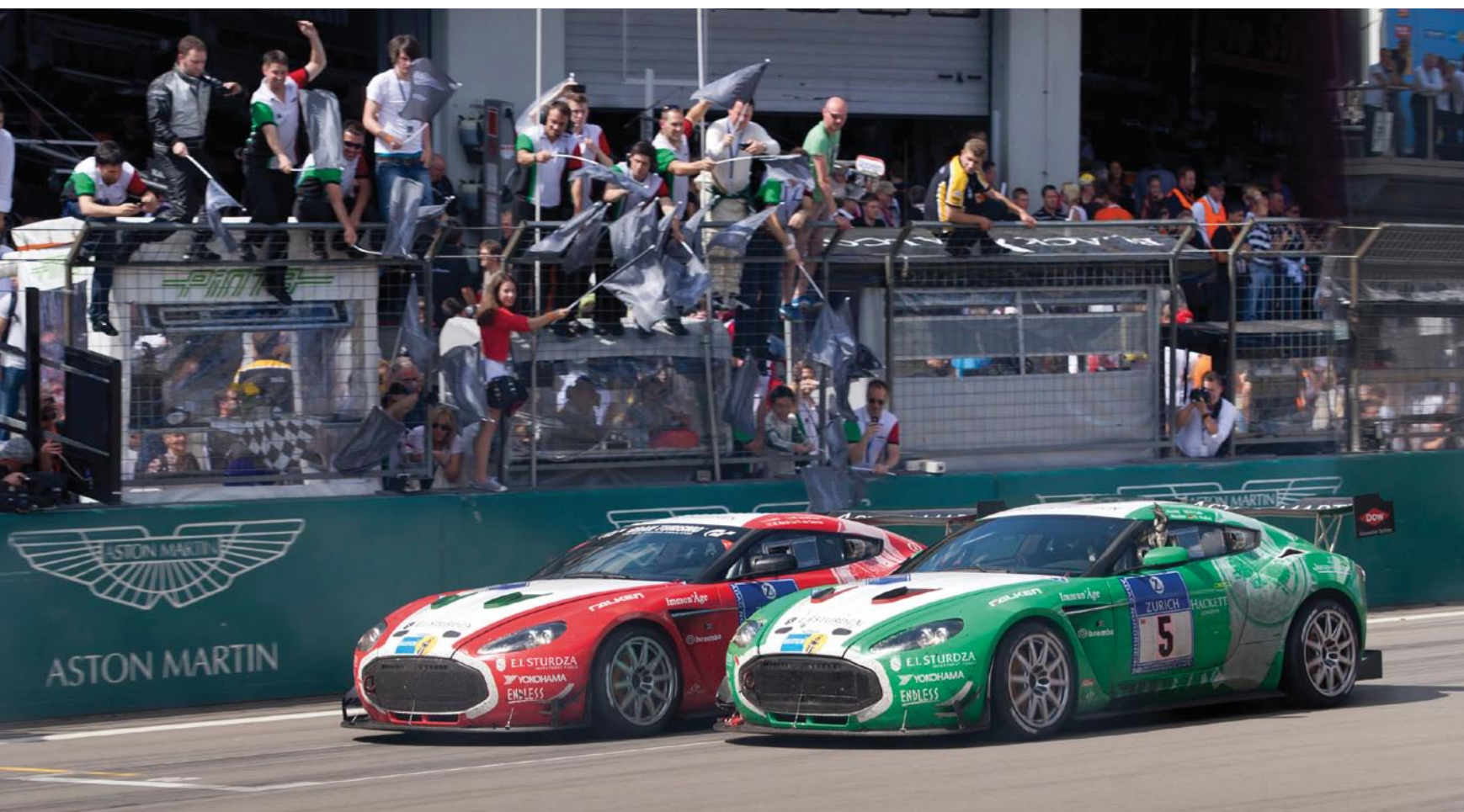
'I was also genuinely amazed by the GT4 V8 Vantage and how it soaked up such relentless punishment hour after hour. The guys I shared the car with were of mixed experience, but because it doesn't have a sting in its tail I think we all got the best from ourselves on what is an awesomely challenging circuit.

'My only regret is that I've not raced here sooner. I think the Nürburgring 24-Hours deserves to gain even more significance for car manufacturers, but I hope the race doesn't lose its rawness. That edge of danger and chaos is what makes it such a unique challenge and I really hope I'm back next year. I love it!'

On my return to the pits I walk in on a heartbreaking sight. Both V12 Zagatos are up on their air jacks in the midst of major repairs. 'Zag' is having its gearbox replaced, while 'Zig' is being repaired after a collision with another car. Apparently at around 2:00am a car leaving the pits locked its brakes and drove into the front right wheel of the green No.5 Zagato, breaking the steering arm and crumpling one of those precious front wings. The car was recovered and fixed, but then a few laps later the transmission locked in 3rd gear. Upon inspection the Aston Martin technicians discover the impact from the earlier incident has sheared the engine mounts, which moved the engine and the torque tube connecting it to the rear-mounted transmission. This shifted it closer to one of the exhaust pipes, overheating a clutch sensor and causing the transmission problem. David King, Aston Martin's Head of Motorsport hits the nail on the head when he says, 'It's hugely frustrating that an incident beyond our control has caused a cascade of problems and lost us hours in the pits.'

The Aston Martin guys have a never-say-die attitude and get the Zagato back into the race, but with around 3.5-hours lost in the pits we've fallen to the back of the field. It's always dangerous to think about a result before the race has finished, but still we were realistically looking at a top 20 position, perhaps even 15th with a bit of luck. Now all that matters is to complete the race and maintain Aston Martin's 100 per cent finish record in the Nürburgring 24-Hours. We do just that, with Chris Porritt and Dr Bez crossing the line in formation (for 5th and 6th in SP8), thereby completing the first chapter in the V12 Zagato's life story. Speaking after completing the race in the red V12 Zagato, Dr Bez said: 'All our cars finished today, and two out of the three customer teams also crossed the line. This includes our two V12 Zagatos – two brand-new cars, which we launched only four weeks ago.'

'With a little more luck we could have finished higher up the order, but coming first wasn't the goal, we aimed to have the cars running at the end – I am really pleased with the team who did such a great job keeping the cars running throughout.'



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THE PULL OF THE PELOTON

As Aston Martin's Nürburgring 24-Hours drivers know all too well, endurance racing comes down to teamwork as much as individual talent – a fact that applies to cycling just as much as motorsport. With Mark Cavendish having just secured the coveted green jersey on the 2011 Tour de France – the first Brit ever to do so – **Matt Rendell** examines the little-understood role of his team members: the pacemakers who get their star sprinters to those last, critical yards



Paris, Sunday 24 July 2011, 5.28pm. Drenched in late-afternoon sunshine, the Tour de France is drawing to a close. As an old joke says, it's the only sporting event during which you need a haircut. Three weeks long, it's the biggest race in the world, with the best riders in their best form, all under pressure to win. Of 198 starters, 31 have fallen by the wayside – many of them quite literally. Those who have made it round have raced for nearly 90 hours, and covered nearly three and a half thousand kilometres.

But when the greatest sprint finisher in the history of the sport chooses his moment to perform the extraordinary feat that makes him simply unique, less than 10 seconds of the race remain. In the most aerodynamic of tucks, the 26-year-old Mark Cavendish from Douglas on the Isle of Man suddenly delivers full power downwards. In the course of five, maybe six colossal turns of the pedals, he accelerates from 57.5 to 68.35 kilometres per hour (about 36 to nearly 43 miles per hour). He instantly hits the front of the race.

The almost dazzling change of speed is caught by a motorbike-camera riding parallel to the riders and displayed on the big screens at the roadside. A vast collective intake of air swooshes up the Champs-Élysées. A gap opens behind him, and he darts along the final 150 cobbled and slightly uphill metres through a tunnel of crowd noise. Those behind him – the very cream of world sprinting – struggle vainly to get back on terms. Then it is over; he rises above the handlebars and throws his head back in joy, gripping his racing jersey with both hands to exhibit the logo of his team sponsors, the mobile phone manufacturer HTC and the cycling management company Highroad. It is his fifth stage win of the race, his third consecutive win on the Champs-Élysées and, staggeringly, his 20th Tour de France stage win in the last four Tours.



Yet, despite his singular skills, Mark Cavendish insists he hasn't achieved those statistics alone. 'OK, I cross the line with my hands in the air, but that's the goal of cycling: to display your sponsor. We've got to figure out the best way to do that, which is normally in a bunch sprint.' Meticulous preparation lies behind his phenomenal hit rate. To understand, it helps to think of a much purer, more controlled style of racing.

A million miles from the Champs-Élysées, the air is still and the environment controlled, almost sterile. The pine surface is so smoothly planed, so warmly lit that it is almost imperceptible to the touch. Your fingertips simply glide over it. Four cyclists are circling the track at speed. Smothered in silence, they move so aerodynamically, they scarcely cause the air to ripple.

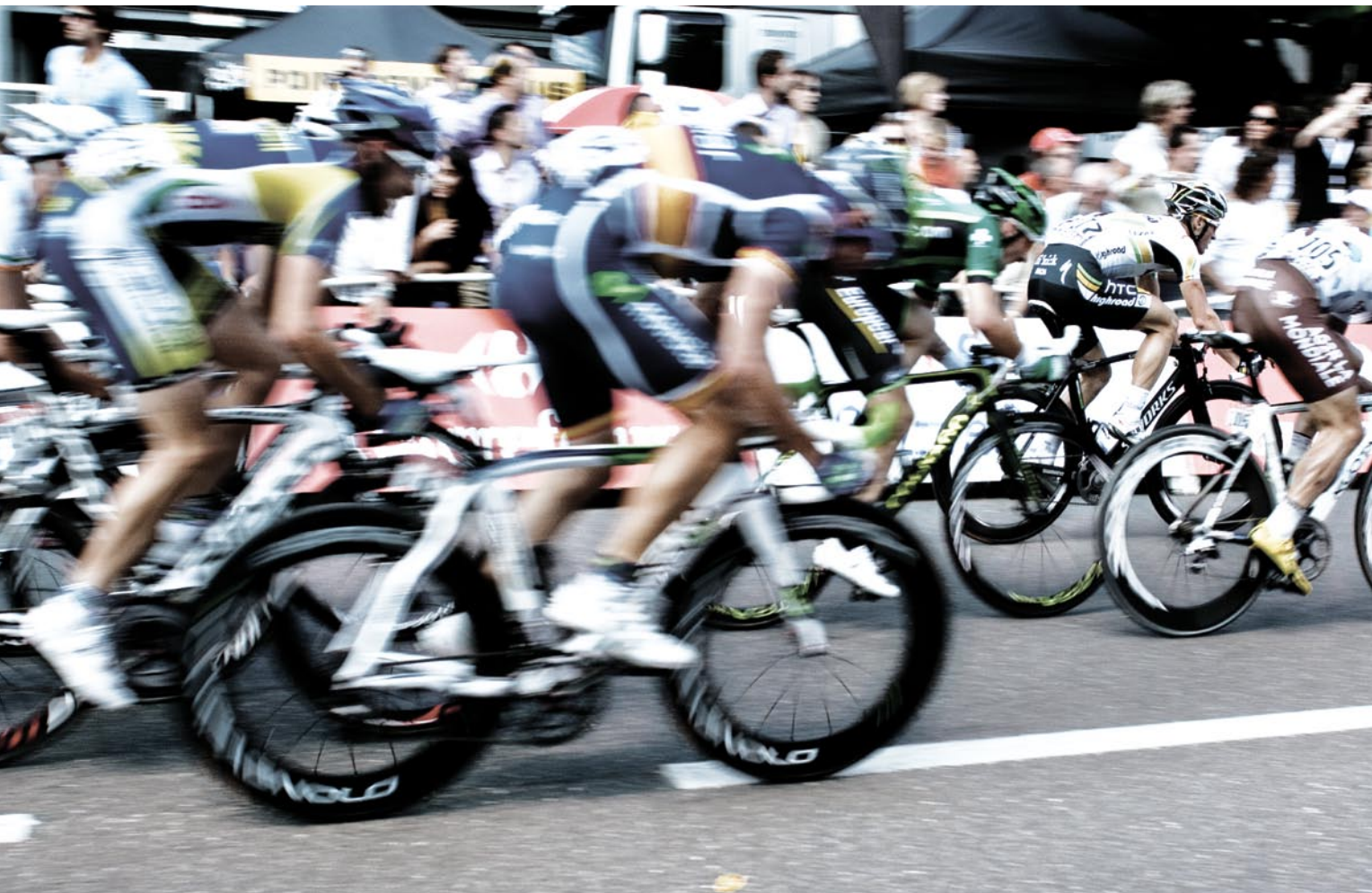
The team pursuit, the most aesthetically pleasing of disciplines among competitive track cyclists, displays in their purest form tactics used on the road in events like the Tour de France. There are no mountains in a velodrome. Instead, the riders take turns to grapple with the invisible enemy, air resistance. One study shows that the rider at the head of a single file travelling at 60 kilometres per hour must generate 607 watts of power to do so. The rider in second position has only to produce 71 per cent of the first rider's work to maintain the same speed. Carried along by riders One and Two, riders Three and Four can keep up on just 64 per cent of the first rider's power output. So powerful is this slipstreaming effect that the following rider feels as if he is being towed: cyclists even call their turn at the front a 'pull'.

And since the closer you are to the rider in front, the greater the suction effect, the professionals ride millimetres away from each other. With each rising rear-wheel arc a hair's

breadth from the descending arc of the next rider's front wheel, a moment's inattention could spell disaster for all. It is a study in poise, stability and trust, and there is as much hand-eye coordination here as on a tennis court. Like high-wire walkers or mountaineers roped together, the riders form a single object of fate. Their interdependence is total.

And that's why Cav's remarkable kick is so devastating: it allows him to open a gap of a metre or two on the sprinters behind him. This loosens the slipstream effect and allows still air to descend between them. Road racing isn't team pursuing. The Tour is not a synchronised piece of bike-bound choreography but a free-for-all between bruising athletes. There is wind, rain, attrition, and the distances covered are immense. Flexible, quick-witted teamwork is the way through – and HTC-Highroad's tactics are impeccable.





The Champs-Élysées provides a spectacular backdrop but its jolting, uneven surface is hell to ride on. For much of the stage, a small group of attackers fought to hold off the larger group of sprinters and race favourites. HTC-Highroad had infiltrated the group with one of their riders, a strong Dane named Lars Bak. He was under orders to do no work at the front, so that, if the group had stayed away, he would have had the freshest legs and been the favourite to win. That placed the onus on chasing to the teams with no rider in the breakaway, which, in turn, allowed Cav's teammates to save their legs for later. That fundamental, energy-saving strategy helped the team keep four or five lead-out men fit and strong throughout the race.

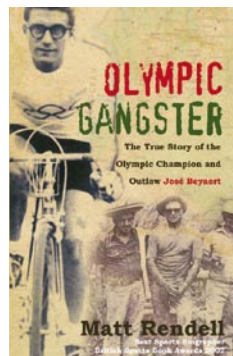
As the peloton speeds beneath the inflatable marker that signals the final kilometre of the final stage, a yellow-and-white line of four teammates stretches out ahead of Cav, in his brilliant green cycling shirt. The speed is high: it will take him just 61 seconds to reach the finish line.

His Austrian teammate Bernie Eisel leads the peloton, grimacing with exertion. When he peels away, the formidable German time-trial specialist Tony Martin takes over. Martin is instantly out of the saddle, head low, burrowing through the air. The winner of yesterday's long time trial, Martin is still recovering and can sustain the pace for just 12 seconds. By the time he pulls aside, 700 metres remain.

The Tasmanian Matt Goss is next. Asked which sprinters he feels can rival him, Cav cites his teammate Goss as among the top three or four fastest in the world: 'I'm lucky I've got Gossy on my team,' he attests.

Goss displays his strength for an astonishing 350 metres, in and out of the saddle, before pulling aside. Which leaves Mark Renshaw. Says Cav, 'A lot of the fatigue in the Tour de France doesn't come from physical exertion, it comes from the mental pressure of having to concentrate. I've got a pretty good race head – I can see spaces, I can make decisions – but I trust Mark Renshaw's judgement over my own. I'd follow him even if I thought initially he was wrong. That's the thing about Mark. He just takes so much mental stress off me. It just saves so much energy that allows me to go better at the finish.'

Protected by this tactically perfect team, the unique sprinting talent is delivered to the pre-arranged point. The speed has been so high, no one else has been able to attack or break up the HTC-Highroad line. With 170 metres to go, Mark Cavendish launches his unanswerable sprint. It's only going to get faster still.



*Olympic Gangster:
The Legend of José Beyaert*
by Matt Rendell is out now
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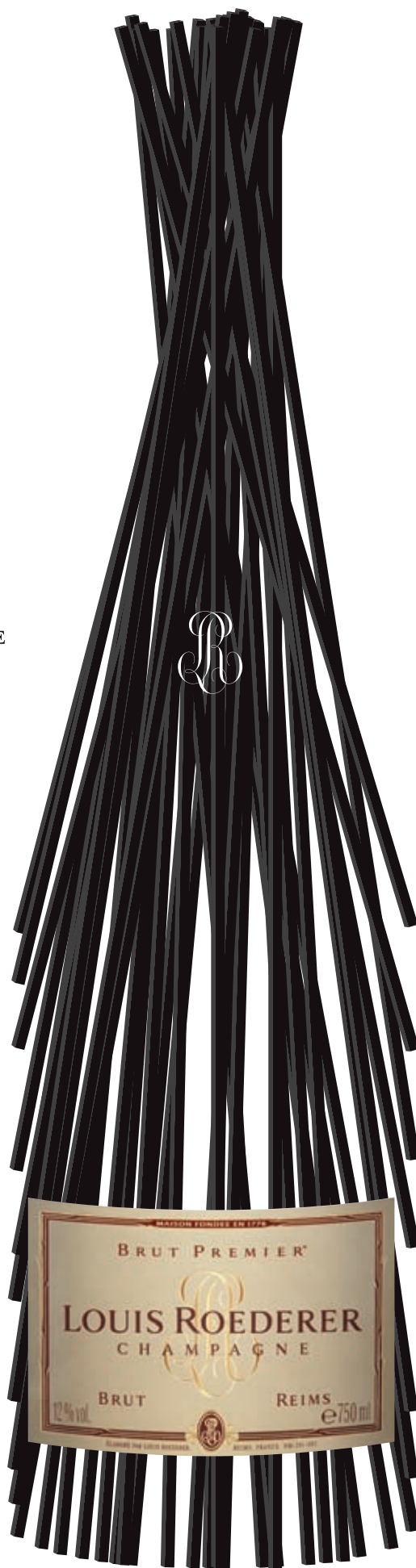
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HI-TECH AND HANDMADE

Aston Martin is a company that blurs the boundary between art and automotive engineering, priding itself on beautifully honed surfaces created by skilled designers and craftsmen. Marrying traditional and cutting-edge processes and materials, every single component in an Aston Martin must be special – a culture that makes Aston Martin genuinely unique. From the breathtaking One-77 to the mould-breaking Cygnet, each and every car enjoys this attention to detail, whether the part is fashioned from alloy, leather, wood or carbon fibre. Here, we take a closer look at the peerless craftsmanship that's practised at Aston Martin's manufacturing facility in Gaydon



ABOVE: Individually extruded fins formed from solid aluminium billet. The radius of each fin is designed to perfectly reflect light.
RIGHT: Singular headlamp aperture maintaining 1.5mm precise gap. Individually machined LED light blades.

'Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort'

JOHN RUSKIN



INTEGRITY

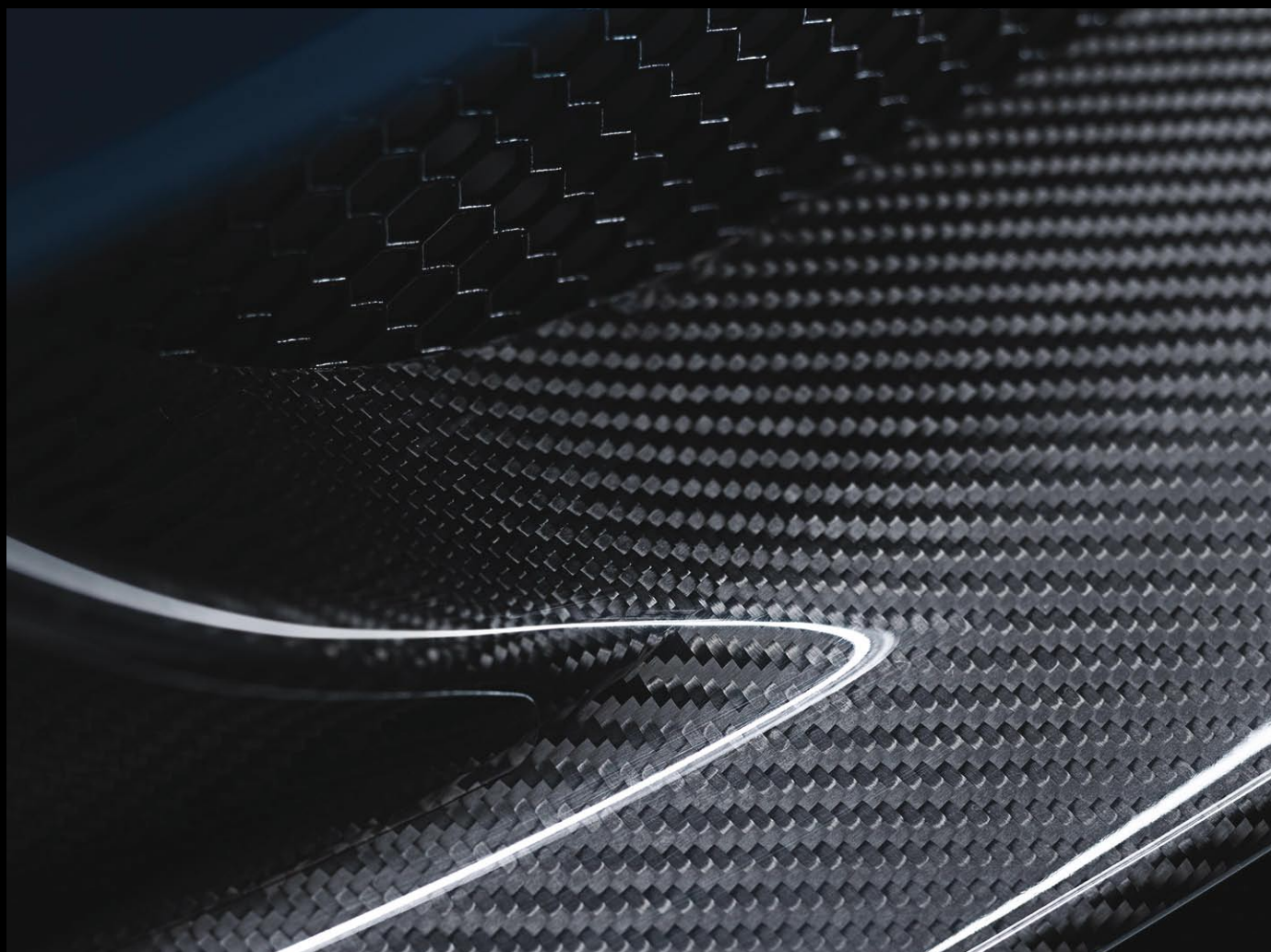
The face of an Aston Martin is defined by its aluminium grille, a prime example of design integrity and authenticity of material at Aston Martin. Every one of the horizontal fins across the grille is fashioned from lightweight aluminium. Billets of solid aluminium are extruded into delicate shapes to match the smooth styling curves. Aston Martin is unique among sports car manufacturers for equipping all its models with metal grilles.

DESIGN FOR MANUFACTURE

The front-end styling of an Aston Martin is a smooth blend of curves and details, the headlights, grille and sheet metal melding into a handsome whole. The bodywork of an Aston Martin is designed for elegance of manufacture to ensure that no unsightly join lines, where body panels, bumper and headlights usually come together, impair the elegance of the design. To achieve this look Aston Martin creates a precise aperture in each front wing so that the headlamp fits accurately. To maintain the integrity of the design, the manufacturing process has to be sufficiently precise to maintain a 1.5mm gap all around the perimeter of the headlamp.

HONESTY OF MATERIALS

The use of the best materials has always marked out Aston Martin from its rivals. Exquisitely shaped alloys and the finest soft British hide leathers are joined by high-tech materials like carbon-fibre composites and lightweight metal castings. Until now, carbon fibre has been used in cars in its rawest form, the sheets of carbon weave arranged for maximum engineering integrity. But Aston Martin's design team wanted more. Working with our engineers, they have now perfected a method for 'matching' the weave of the carbon-fibre mat on components so that they present a unified herring-bone pattern, just as the best tailors cut material for the perfect match on a hand-made suit.



ABOVE: Perfectly finished herring-bone weave carbon fibre.

RIGHT: 3mm contrast pinstripe (no join lines) with race-track inspired stitching.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Why decorate a leather-trimmed door panel with linear stitching? Why not try something unique? With 'race track' stitching, the shapes carved out by the thread describe curves inspired by the bends on a circuit. Different stitching is used throughout Aston Martin's range: 10 gauge is a heavier thread used to strong effect on the multi-panel seats to make the stitching a major feature of the design; in contrast 20 gauge is a thinner thread and is used more often, a more subtle look that puts the thread more into the background of the seat design. Each seat can be trimmed with a contrast pinstripe. Not to be confused with more common piping, pinstripe is a thinner trim detail, 3mm thick compared to 5mm. The pinstripe is produced in one continuous piece, so there are no unsightly joins, requiring a two-metre long run of leather to be cut carefully from a hide. Now that's attention to detail.

FUNCTIONAL DESIGN

For the finest cars, you get the finest instruments. Every Aston Martin is equipped with a four-dial instrument pack, each dial individually assembled from handcrafted aluminium alloy rings. The outer rings are 'drafted' – shaped with a sloping inner edge – to which individually lit 'chaplets' are fixed to mark the increments on the speedometer and rev counter. The inner ring, which carries speed numbers in mph or km/h or rpm, are individually engraved. The dials are illuminated by 'light pipes' that channel illumination from LEDs sited behind the dial faces. Like the glass control switches pictured on page 71, Aston Martin's dials are closer in concept to a designer watch than the conventional instrument panels of our rivals.



ABOVE: Individually LED-lit 'chaplets' with hand-crafted precision aluminium alloy rings.

FINEST MATERIALS

It is rare for the outside of a car to feature high-quality metal trim, where plastic is usually the accountant's preferred material, even on many rivals' cars. It would be easy to mould Aston Martin's hallmark side strake in glossy plastic, but that's not the Aston Martin way. Its designers know that solid metal looks and feels more authentic, so the side strake is cast in zinc alloy, which gives a beautiful cosmetic finish, but also allows the design to be hollow, saving weight. It also allows the side-repeater lights to be designed in an elegant, thin LED strip, which neatly integrates.

RIGHT: Side strake cast from zinc alloy to give perfect finish.





LES PETITES MAINS

In a world of increasing homogeneity and anonymity, it was perhaps inevitable that the 'little hands' of traditional, labour-intensive haute couture would become obsolete – especially in the fickle world of fashion. But despite everything, and thanks to a new breed of clientele and designers, the supposed demise of haute couture has turned into a revival. Nancy MacDonell explains how Azzedine Alaïa, Boudicca, Erdem, Fitriani, Margiela, Giambattista Valli and House of Worth are all bringing genuine craftsmanship back to the (strictly private) catwalks





Not so long ago, haute couture had a gloomy prognosis. 'Haute Couture Faces Uncertain Times' was the title of a 2009 article by the influential fashion critic Suzy Menkes of *The International Herald Tribune*, who held the not atypical view that the select métier perched at the very top of the fashion pyramid was on its last legs. In the piece, Menkes lamented that the couturier Christian Lacroix, 'the incarnation of frivolity and joie de vivre in high fashion,' was only able to show his collection that season because the artisans he worked with supplied their services free of charge. A mere 120 women were regular couture clients, she dolefully estimated. Her message was clear: The end is nigh.

But as anyone who follows fashion is aware, three years is a long time in an industry that zooms through four collections a year. Since Menkes' article appeared, haute couture has experienced a resounding revival. Fresh talent, including Giambattista Valli and Alexis Mabille, have made the leap from prêt-à-porter to its rarified heights, garnering glowing reviews – and perhaps more to the point, fresh clients – in the process. In July, Azzedine Alaïa, whose work is generally regarded as the closest in spirit to that of the original Paris couture, returned to the haute couture catwalk after an eight-year absence. As an indication of how seriously this event was taken, Alaïa's guests included Frédéric Mitterrand, the French minister of culture.

Even designers who do not create haute couture per se (the rules that lay out how a house can gain official status from the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* are extremely precise) are responding to client demands for uniqueness and exclusivity by incorporating handwork and traditional haute couture techniques in their designs. And despite the high price tags associated with such clothes, business is booming.

Martin Margiela's handmade '0' line, for example can only be ordered from flagship Margiela stores. Sophie Théallet, who spent 10 years as Alaïa's right-hand woman and who works in a thoroughly European tradition despite the fact that she's based in New York City, has trained her seamstresses to sew the way the 'petites mains' of the Paris couture houses do. Erdem, the Canadian-born, London-based designer who's lauded for his courtly sense of luxury, regularly incorporates painstaking handwork into his collections, as does Boudicca, another London-based label.



Since launching Boudicca in 1997, Zowie Broach and Brian Kirkby have insisted on stitching every last detail of their quietly dramatic, sui generis clothes at their east London atelier. 'We're such an old-fashioned brand in many ways,' says Broach. 'Everything is done in house. We don't overlock; we use French seams. I was talking with my grandmother recently and she was delighted that I was using sewing terminology that she understood. We have quite a traditional way of doing things.'

Broach links the renewed interest in couture to shifting perceptions of quality and authenticity. 'When you're learning about good food and restaurants, for example, that has an effect on other aspects of your life. You don't separate out your choices when you realise the importance of them. There's a reason a garment is expensive, but when you understand why that is, it changes the way you look at it.'

To this end, she and Kirkby work tirelessly to explain what sets their rigorously tailored, impeccably researched clothes apart. Last year, the pair travelled to every Barneys store in the US to meet with salespeople and educate them in the ways of handmade clothes. 'We say look how this seam is finished so it won't scratch and will be comfortable against your skin, look at how this button is plaited and not plastic. When they understand the clothes, they can explain them to the customers – that slowly filters down,' Broach explains.



‘Everything is done in house. We don’t overlook; we use French seams. I was talking with my grandmother recently and she was delighted that I was using sewing terminology that she understood. We have quite a traditional way of doing things’

Ultimately, haute couture is all about this relationship with the customer – something that bespoke cocktail dress and gown maker Fitriani knows all too well. Its new in London boutique has been designed to create a relaxed and intimate shopping experience, ensuring the experience is just as special as the garments.

One of the most symbolic developments in the haute couture renaissance is the revival of the House of Worth, the original Paris couture house. Founded in the 1850s by Englishman Charles Frederick Worth, it was the originator of the designer label and the fashion show and was presided over by four generations of the Worth family before closing its doors in 1956.

Under the creative direction of Chief Development Officer Martin McCarthy and designer Giovanni Bedin, the four couture and ready-to-wear collections shown by the house since its re-launch in January 2010 have been technically dazzling interpretations of its historic traditions, with an emphasis on body conscious corseting and seaming and a sumptuous use of fabrics, with as many as three or four different weaves in one garment. Amongst the house’s fans is Carine Roitfeld, the former Editor of *Paris Vogue* and a closely watched trendsetter. ‘She came in on a Tuesday and ordered a couple of tops,’ recounts McCarthy. ‘She wanted them for a shoot on the Thursday. Giovanni went to the school he studied at in Paris and used their machines to get them done. I don’t think she ever realised it – but that’s the essence of couture, to go to that length for the client.’

For McCarthy, re-launching Worth has been the realisation of a dream. When the opportunity to buy the clothing portion of Worth came up 20 years ago, McCarthy didn’t hesitate – despite the fact that colleagues assured him that the idea of reviving a long dead couture house was madness. But in 2009, after partnering with Dilesh Mehta,

an entrepreneur who owned the fragrance side of the Worth business, McCarthy revisited the idea. ‘It was a very different time,’ McCarthy says. ‘Instead of having people look at me like I was crazy, we were getting very strong encouragement from people in the industry.’

The appeal of haute couture, McCarthy suggests, has skipped a generation, for both those who make it and those prepared to spend the money to wear it. The new House of Worth’s client list includes ‘entertainers in their twenties,’ he says. It’s a trend that’s born out amongst the small clique of women who fly to Paris twice a year from Dubai, Moscow, Rio and Abu Dhabi for the haute couture showings. While some are in their seventies and sport the sprayed hair and boucle suits associated with such spectacles, just as many others are in their thirties and wear five-inch stiletto heels and leather trousers.

‘The sons and daughters of the mill owners that we deal with might not want to take over the family business, but to the grandchildren, it’s a different proposition,’ McCarthy says. ‘The other day the son of a friend came to see me to talk about the business. He looks like a surfer, but when he speaks about it, it’s obvious that he has the interest and the passion for it. And that’s something that I see with a lot of younger people. It makes me feel very hopeful.’

alexismabille.com
boudiccacouture.com
erdem.co.uk
fitriani.com
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Images courtesy of Boudicca, Fitriani, House of Worth

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BLADE RUNNERS

It doesn't get much more evocatively English than the sound of leather on willow, on a lazy summer's day. But as Robin Swithinbank discovers, it takes a lot of hard work to achieve that unmistakable 'knock' – and the skilled artisans still championing the traditional method of cricket bat manufacture are thin on the ground in this age of mass manufacture. Much more than whittled lumps of wood, these are flowing, functional pieces of sculpture, proving that not only is England currently fielding the best test side in the world, but it also has the best bat makers too



In Rose Tremain's novel *Sacred Country*, we meet Edward Harker, a cricket bat maker who believes in a former life he was a lutenist in the court of a 17th century Danish King. Describing his trade, Tremain writes:

'His cricket bats were works of sculpture. He fancifully thought of them as shrouded figures or again sometimes as musical instruments. No two were precisely the same, yet the Harker stamp was on them all. Brand new, they seemed already subtly moulded by usage and time. Their sounds against the ball had a gratifying, recognisable sweetness. An industry of one, the name of Harker was known around the cricketing counties.'

Tremain's dark tale is set in the 1950s, but when I read the excerpt to Gary Sandford, a real life master bat maker and owner of Choice Willow, it quickly becomes apparent the sentiment is the same 60 years on.

'Yes, that sounds about how you feel as a bat maker,' he says, appearing surprised that anyone outside this 'industry of one' could empathise with the trade he first embraced as a teenager, 30 years ago. In a time when mass-production has cast age-old crafts into the shadows, traditional cricket bat makers like Sandford no longer grow on trees.

But that's not to say they're on the verge of extinction. While tennis and golf have swapped wood for space-age technology, and the science of the football has become one of the game's many obsessions, cricket has stayed inside the rope. Since 1979, when Australia's Dennis Lillee appeared at the crease with an aluminium blade, the MCC's Laws of Cricket (cricket has laws, rather than rules) have stated that a bat must be made of wood. And this is keeping the bat maker's craft alive.

The wood of choice is willow. Why? 'Willow's just got the rebound quality,' says Sandford, his voice laced with wonder as if describing some hitherto unheralded English legend. 'A hardwood would be too brittle and a softwood wouldn't last. Willow's got the best durability – it's a good all-rounder.' Good cricketers want bats tailored to their style of play and they come from all over the country to meet Sandford. He's not the only practitioner of the art, of course. Newbery and Salix are just two of the other names synonymous with hand-crafted cricket bats in this country. The tradition is in rude health.

I meet Sandford in his Hertfordshire workshop, perched in the rafters of a large, barn just outside St Albans where he's been running the Choice Cricket Centre – a coaching, retail and indoor cricket league business – since 1998 with an old teammate he first met while playing minor counties cricket for Bedfordshire.

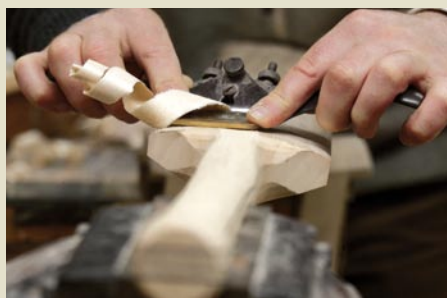
The workshop is a humble affair, a place where his only companions are clefts (pre-cut blocks) of willow and heaps of unswept shavings. Measuring roughly 20 by 15 feet, it's split in two, with a small area for heavy-duty machining and sanding tucked away behind Perspex windows. Stacks of bats in various stages of production are piled on a rack, some still looking like raw building materials, others already whittled and sanded into their final form, awaiting the finishing touches before they're delivered to expectant customers.

It's not hard to believe that lost in this solitude and surrounded by such poignant symbols of transformation a man could become convinced he was reincarnated, although Sandford is amused when I ask him whether he has any links to Scandinavian royalty in one of his former lives and dismisses the notion with a smile.

This year, he will hand-make around a thousand of his Choice Willow cricket bats. He has a number of models in his line-up, all with evocative, valiant names like Templar, Saladin and Black Prince, the latter of which won the Wisden Bat of the Year in 2010, an accolade Sandford rightfully underlines.



RIGHT: Alastair Cook moves past his second Test double-century during the third power Test against India at Edgbaston this August, using his bat made by Gray-Nicolls – another brand keeping hand-craftsmanship alive from their factory in East Sussex.



PREVIOUS PAGE AND THIS PAGE: All workshop images courtesy of Salix Cricket Bat Company, another small, uncompromising manufacturer, founded in 1990 by Andrew Kember and based in Kent, proudly hand-making fine English cricket bats for the world's top players.

Each of these arrives in his workshop as a Grade 1 or 2 willow cleft (which Sandford then regrades as either Test, Pro or Match), selected by J. S. Wright, the world's largest and oldest supplier of English cricket bat willow. J. S. Wright has been the nonpareil willow supplier to the top bat makers for over a century and, according to Sandford, they send 50,000 clefts from Essex to India every month.

Most of those will be machined en masse into what Sandford calls 'factory-line' bats, a world away from the personal relationship he has with each of his creations. His process begins with a copy lathe – or a 'backie' – to turn a cleft into the base cricket bat shape. Then he splices them and inserts a handle, fastened in place with PVA glue, a prosaic material in this romantic affair, but it works.

Once the glue is dry, Sandford's own hand comes into play. Using a draw-knife that could easily have been taken from an exhibit at a Victorian farming museum, he shapes the bat, skillfully working the wood so the right amount of weight is left in the right areas – a bat can be tweaked to suit the front-foot player (bottom heavy), the back-foot pull-and-cut player (light pick-up) or the all-rounder.

From here, it's a question of finishing: adding in a toe-strengthening insert, sanding, waxing, buffing, hand polishing, binding the handles on a lathe and then finally fitting a grip, an anti-scuff covering and of course, the Choice Willow stickers with the St George's Cross motif. Few noble English traditions survive, and the jingoism feels justifiable.

Each bat takes two to three hours over a couple of days to complete. Even to my untrained eye, you can see Sandford's hand in the finished product. The reverse still bears a hint of the draw-knife's blade, and in the hand there's a balance to each of his bats that makes you want to get out to the crease and crash a cherry to the boundary.

For his customers, he says, perhaps the greatest joy of going onto the field carrying a Choice Willow hand-crafted bat comes from knowing it's unique, and therefore different to what other batsmen wield. 'No two are the same,' he says, in an almost fatherly tone.

cricketbawillow.com
cricketfirstchoice.co.uk
gray-nicolls.co.uk
newbery.co.uk
salixcricketbats.com

GRADING WILLOW

Grade 1 Blade: The best-looking blade money can buy, though it will not necessarily play the best. There may be some red wood evident on the edge of the bat. The grain on the face will be straight and there will be at least four grains visible. There may be the odd small knot in the edge or back but the playing area should be clean.

Grade 2 Blade: Also very good quality and normally a larger amount of red wood can be seen on the edge of a bat, this has no effect on the playing ability of the bat it is purely cosmetic. Again there will be at least four straight grains on the face of the bat with maybe some blemishes, pin knots or 'speck' visible.

Grade 3 Blade: The grade produced most, offering very good value for money. A Grade 3 Blade has up to half colour across the bat and is sometimes bleached, again this has no direct relation to the playing ability of the wood, it just has less visual attraction.

Grade 4 Blade: Over half colour or contains butterfly stain. Bleached just to make it 'look better', it will still play as well as the other grades. Any number of grains are possible and the willow containing 'butterfly' stain is very strong, there could also be more 'speck'.



ABOVE: Gary Sandford of Cricket First Choice, pressing the willow blade with a weighted hydraulic roller.

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TRUTH OF THE PUDDING

Handcrafted, artisan chocolate is booming. And as a genuine product of 'terroir', with soils, cacao varieties, climate and human craftsmanship all playing roles in their creation, there's a little-known story to be told around the 'truth' of chocolate. Golden ticket in hand, **Richard Woodard** ventures into a closeted industry, from the plantations of the Tropics to La Défense and Borough Market via Cognac

The thick, silky, deep brown liquid flows across the marble, covering every inch in a lava-like glossiness before, with practised skill, it is smoothed and scraped into a mirrored slab several metres long. As the rich, sweet scent of cocoa fills the air, Gilles Marchal, in his white chef's toque, looks on with a critical eye.

We're in the cool, vaguely clinical surroundings of the headquarters of French chocolatier La Maison du Chocolat (LMdC) in Nanterre, close to the huge arch of La Défense, the business nucleus of Paris. Soon, that glistening slab of combined dark chocolate and cream will be transformed into the sumptuous ganache chocolates that have become Marchal's signature in his four years as creative director at LMDC. The purity of Marchal's unadulterated ganaches makes them delicious, but behind that deceptive simplicity, the world of chocolate is anything but straightforward.

'The two most important elements in creating fine chocolate,' points out Marchal, 'are the skill of the workers and the selection of the ingredients.' And to find out more, we must leave the concrete jungle for the real thing in the Tropics. You can only grow a cacao tree in a narrow band either side of the Equator – 20° north, 20° south – and in highly specific conditions. Nestling in the jungle, the young trees are sheltered by

bananas and date palms, which trap humidity under their canopy and promote growth. The untidy scrub under the trees is equally important, creating the perfect environment for a particular tiny midge, responsible for pollinating the cacao. No scrub means no chocolate.

Little else in the production of quality cocoa is easy: just one in 1,000 flowers is successfully pollinated, and trees only become productive at the age of seven. At 25 years they reach their peak – and few reach 50. The time-consuming nature of cacao cultivation and the need for regular replanting makes the role of the farmer crucial, but there's a problem: in the cocoa fields of west Africa – already scarred by war and the shifting sands of local politics – the pittance given to most growers for their crop is deterring them from replanting, with younger generations heading to the cities in search of better-paid jobs.





When Cocoa Met Cognac



There's a lot of similarity between the art of combining various styles of cocoa to create fine chocolate, and the skill of blending contrasting eaux-de-vie to make a harmonious, elegant Cognac.

Mystères des Anges is a reflection of this conjunction of creativity, and of the long friendship of Gilles Marchal, creative director of La Maison du Chocolat, and Pierrette Trichet, cellar master at Rémy Martin Cognac.

The three types of chocolate inside the coffret – milk chocolate ganache, dark chocolate ganache and praline gourmandise delicacies – are designed to match perfectly with the bottle of Rémy Martin XO Cognac which accompanies them.

The milk chocolate brings out the Cognac's fruity notes, while the dark chocolate from Venezuela matches its earthy warmth and nuttiness – and the praline pairs with its honey highlights.

Mystères des Anges will be available exclusively from Harrods in London for £275 from 17 October, and from La Maison du Chocolat shops in Paris, Hong Kong and Tokyo



The result, as chocolate consumption worldwide continues to grow, is that pricing is caught in a painful pincer movement. Cocoa prices have doubled in the past six or seven years which, if repeated in the longer term, will make cheap chocolate a thing of the past.

Not that cheap chocolate features on the radar of Marchal and other top chocolatiers. Their rigorous selection extends to the variety of cocoa used, of which there are three main types: Criollo, Forastero and Trinitario. Criollo is the bean of choice, with the delicacy and acidity needed to make the finest chocolates, but is also highly sought-after and expensive, accounting for less than 6 per cent of global cocoa production. Prone to disease and producing relatively low yields, for most hard-pressed cocoa farmers, it's simply too much trouble.

Forastero, on the other hand, is a workhorse – disease-resistant, high-yielding and cheap. It accounts for 75 per cent of global cocoa production and, if you've had a mainstream chocolate bar recently, you can bet it was made from Forastero. But the likes of LMdC and William Curley, the Scottish-born, London-based chocolatier described by leading chef Pierre Koffmann as a once-in-a-generation talent, eschew Forastero for top-quality Criollo – and Trinitario.

Trinitario is, in cacao terms, the third way, a hybrid of Criollo and Forastero with the delicacy of the former and the robust yields of the latter. Its spiritual home is the Caribbean island of St Lucia, location of The Rabot Estate, the island's oldest cocoa plantation and bought by entrepreneurs and Hotel Chocolat founders Angus Thirlwell and Peter Harris five years ago. Since then, the pair have set about reinvigorating the estate, rewarding the island's growers and making Trinitario chocolates for their shop in London's Borough Market.

There's a lot more to chocolate production – careful harvesting of the cacao pods, fermentation beneath banana leaves, drying of the seeds, low-temperature roasting to eke out all those natural flavours, then crushing to separate the cacao solids and butter (often sold onto the cosmetics industry by the less scrupulous producers and replaced with palm oil). But, while chocolatiers like Marchal and Curley show a keen interest in the entire process, they are reliant on chocolate producers called 'couverturiers' to produce the raw chocolate – to their precise specifications – for them to mould into their individual creations.

While Curley prefers Tuscan company Amedei, LMdC uses Valrhona, the French business established in the Rhône Valley in 1922 which supplied the world's chocolatiers long before launching its first consumer products in 1984. More than 160 people make up the tasting panels that assemble daily at the company's offices to sample everything from raw cocoa to the finished products. Look out for Valrhona's exquisite, bitter-edged Guanaja 70 per cent, sourced from the tiny Caribbean island off Honduras.

The story of chocolate comes together in the creations of Curley, in Marchal's summer collection, Chiberta – a homage in flavour to the south-west of France – and in their peers, such as Paul A Young, the Yorkshire-born chocolatier/pâtissier who opened his flagship shop in Wardour Street, Soho, this June.





As chocolate consumption continues to grow, pricing is caught in a painful pincer movement. Cocoa prices have doubled in the past six or seven years which, if repeated in the longer term, will make cheap chocolate a thing of the past

The Perfect Ganache

300g good quality chocolate – at least 60 per cent cocoa

250ml cream

Warm cream on a low-medium heat until it reaches a gentle simmer

To make a flavoured ganache, add ingredients (eg mint leaves, vanilla) and simmer for 6 minutes more

Strain any flavourings out of the cream

In a bowl, break up the chocolate into pieces

Slowly pour the warmed cream over the chocolate and mix with a whisk slowly but forcefully

Be sure to keep the stirring to the centre of the chocolate to avoid splitting – do not mix around the whole bowl

Once all the chocolate is melted, stir once around the whole bowl to mix everything together

Young is famed for fusing apparently unlikely flavours in his chocolates, including a summer collection whose highlights include passionfruit and coffee, and sea-salted black sesame tahini. As winter beckons, his Christmas collection aims to conjure seasonal flavours through chocolates with evocative names like Smouldering Embers – combining black cardamom, tobacco, chilli and sandalwood; or Christmas Eve, with its intriguing blend of peaty Lagavulin whisky, stem ginger, lapsang souchong tea and brown sugar.

Curley and Young in particular epitomise the new guard of British chocolate-makers, who threaten to overshadow their continental counterparts by fusing time-honoured techniques to new ways of thinking about flavour. Prestat stands in proud, traditional contrast to this spirit of innovation. Established in 1902, it holds the Royal Warrant and serves its chocolates at every major state banquet. Beloved of the late Queen Mother, the company's range is supplemented this Christmas by a subtly flavoured range of mint chocolates and a rather more fiery selection of Ginger Hunks.

Tradition? Innovation? Whatever your taste, the world of fine chocolate has never been richer or more varied. And, as the price of all chocolate looks set to go ever higher, we could all end up eating rather less of it in the future – so we might as well focus on the good stuff.



SAND

WORKS LIFE



IN HERITAGE WE TRUST

Join the Aston Martin Owners Club, and you'll automatically become a member of the Heritage Trust, whose fascinating collection may be found at the Barn headquarters



Since its foundation in 1998, the Aston Martin Heritage Trust has grown considerably, becoming a guardian of Aston Martin's legacy and the official 'living' archive of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd. It has an impressive collection of heritage items, received over the past 75-plus years from Owners Club Members, individuals and the company. Donations, which are always welcome, range from a single photograph, to funding the recent, complete restoration of A3, the world's oldest surviving Aston Martin.

As part of its commitment to education, the Trust hosts an annual lecture series. In January this year, at the Walter Hayes Lecture, a large audience was privileged to witness a conversation with Sir Stirling Moss and David Burgess-Wise, the automotive historian and editor of the Trust's magazine, *Aston*. At October's Dudley Coram Lecture, Trustee Brian Fearn will be talking on the subject, 'Claude Hill 1907-1982, an appreciation of one of Britain's most underrated Motor Engineers', at our headquarters.

Indeed, the Museum and Archive at our beautifully restored 15th-century Barn in the village of Drayton St Leonard is a boon to all enthusiasts



SUMMER OF 2011

Last year's packed schedule of 75th anniversary celebrations certainly didn't preclude a busy season for the Aston Martin Owners Club this year – the contrary in fact

The Aston Martin Owners Club has certainly been enjoying the summer months. In May, following the record-breaking Bonhams Auction at Newport Pagnell, the Club held its annual International Dinner at Althorp House, seat of the Spencer family and home to the late Princess Diana. Two hundred Club Members and their guests from fifteen countries enjoyed a sumptuous dinner in the Picture Gallery (pictured) whilst being entertained by an enthralling talk from Lord Spencer on the history of the house and family. The Summer Concours event held in the lush gardens was kindly supported by Aston Martin Works Service and other sponsors and proved to be one of the best-

attended displays of Aston Martins ever seen at a Club concours, with 74 fabulous cars in the display and 320 cars owned by Members, many of who travelled many miles, all proving a worthy repeat of last year's 75th anniversary event at Blenheim.

June saw the Club organise racing over two days at the St John Horsfall Race Meeting at Donington Park, Derbyshire in conjunction with Aston Martin Racing GT4. Motors TV broadcast the event live to 39 countries, reaching almost 19 million homes across Europe and over 9 million in the UK alone – a first for the Club.

A midsummer black-tie Ball at Wentworth Golf Club, Surrey in June, followed by the Club's annual



golf match against the Bentley Drivers' Club were also hugely popular and successful events for our Members this summer – not to mention the news that after an exciting duel, the overall winners of this year's Mille Miglia retrospective were the all-Italian pairing of Giordano Mozzi and Stefania Biacca driving a 1933 Aston Martin Le Mans.

The impending autumnal season offers yet more exciting racing action and socialising (see calendar, right), so get in touch soon to book.

Why not join us? Ring the Club HQ to find out more on +44 (0)1865 400400 or visit www.amoc.org

WORKS LIFE

of the marque, and we encourage Trust and Club Members as well as the general public to visit and admire the ever-growing collection. All members will soon be able to search online for information relating to their own car or specific area of interest and we welcome the opportunity to share this with them.

In return for a donation we encourage our members to drive the Trust's cars – a unique 1934 Ulster and a 1987 Lagonda – to events where the work of the Trust and the Club can be promoted. A3 is usually on display too, but is too precious to be driven. The Trust's legacy campaign has also resulted in some interesting non-car donations, including St John Horsfall's cup and bronze medallion, courtesy of his niece Jenifer, originally presented to 'Jock' for winning his class and coming second in the International Tourist Trophy Race at Donington Park in September 1938, after a brilliant drive in his 'Black Car' (pictured).

If you wish to arrange a legacy or make a gift to the Trust, in the first instance please contact the Secretary, Anne Wright at secretary@amht.org.uk. For further information on the Trust please visit www.amht.org.uk



AMOC EVENTS CALENDAR

10-11 September	Snetterton Race Meeting, Snetterton Circuit (Norfolk, UK)
16-18 September	Goodwood Revival Meeting, Goodwood House (W Sussex, UK)
25 September	Autumn Concours and Autumn International Dinner (Gloucestershire, UK)
25 September	Curborough Sprint (Staffordshire, UK)
15 October	Dudley Coram Memorial Lecture, Club HQ (Oxfordshire, UK)

VANQUISH AVAILS

By officially bestowing the much-loved Vanquish and Vanquish S with 'Heritage Status', Aston Martin has pledged its ongoing commitment to supporting owners of these highly acclaimed cars

With this newly bestowed Heritage Status, longevity of support for Vanquish owners is now guaranteed from Aston Martin's Works Service facility in Newport Pagnell, as well as Aston Martin's dedicated Heritage Specialists, of which there are 13 around the world, all of whom have undergone factory-based training on service and repair of the Vanquish range.

The Vanquish is established as a modern classic amongst owners and enthusiasts alike; a muscular thoroughbred that marked the beginning of a new era for Aston Martin and set the tone for the generation of models that have followed it. Since its launch 10 years ago and the culmination of production at the former factory at Newport Pagnell in 2007, the Vanquish proved to be a huge success with over 2,628 cars delivered to customers around the world; far surpassing initial sales expectations.

'For seven years Vanquish was the flagship of a company proud to display its heritage but determined to make the most technologically modern and beautifully designed sports cars in the world,' commented Kingsley Riding-Felce, Director of Works Service and Parts Operations.

'As a result, it has become a highly sought-after model, and reached a point where it must be treated as a piece of Aston Martin's heritage itself. Works Service are, naturally, the world's greatest experts and we never have less than half a dozen Vanquishes in the workshop at any one time.'

Renowned for its servicing and restoration, Aston Martin Works Service has now successfully completed over 60 conversions of the Vanquish transmission to stick-shift manual, offering a bespoke alternative for customers wanting a more hands-on, traditional drive. An expert team of technicians from Works Service collaborated closely with the engineering team at Aston Martin's Gaydon headquarters to design and build a conventional system that is robust, reliable and, above all, right for the Vanquish.

'The marque has a long-standing ethos that Aston Martins were built to be driven,' added Kingsley. 'Aston Martin not only stands for the constant improvement of 'Power, Beauty and Soul' but also for the support of all its cars and their owners for life.'





ROAD TO RESTORATION [PART THREE]

In the third and concluding part of our ongoing series charting the complete, ground-up rebuild of a 1965 DB5 convertible, **Simon de Burton** returns to the floor of Aston Martin Works Service's Heritage department where, 14 months and 1,700 man hours later, the wraps are finally off – revealing a stunning, better-than-new beauty

As good as new? Well, better, actually. That was the verdict all round when the wraps were finally pulled off what must now be regarded as one of the world's best Aston Martin DB5 convertibles, following its meticulous, 14-month restoration by the Heritage Restoration department at the Aston Martin Works Service facility in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire.

Regular readers might have been following the progress of this remarkable rebuild, which began in June 2010 with a rather sad-looking 'barn find' car that had been bought from Bonhams' annual Aston Martin auction and sent, tout de suite, to Works Service in order to be returned to its former glory.

Originally built in 1965, '2 NKN' is believed to have belonged to the late English actress Beryl Reid before being sold to its second owner who kept it for 37 years until finally deciding to consign it to Bonhams. The purchaser, Mr Woods – an Aston Martin enthusiast who owns several other DBs – was fully aware that he had bought a car that needed far more than light re-commissioning: this was going to be a ground-up job, and the only people he trusted to do it properly were the small, dedicated team led by Heritage Manager David Townsend.

'The fact that the car was complete, undamaged and original made the whole process much easier, but we still put around 1,700 man hours into the rebuild,' explains David.

'The owner was invited to watch the work progress and he visited us on around four occasions to see how it was going and to let us know about any specific alterations or modifications he required. We fitted, for example, electrically operated power steering, a discreet iPod connection for the original, Motorola push-button radio and upgraded the engine to a more powerful Vantage specification.'





'We clock up around 250 miles on all newly restored cars to check for everything from squeaks and rattles to mechanical malfunctions. In the case of 2 NKN, there was very little to attend to... The engine was run in on the dynamometer before being refitted and, I must say, it pulls like a train and sounds marvellous!'

Once the car was fully reassembled, repainted and re-trimmed, all that remained was the moment of truth – the first, shakedown road test. 'We take all newly restored cars on numerous separate road tests and clock up around 250 miles to check for everything from squeaks and rattles to mechanical malfunctions. In the case of 2 NKN, there was very little to attend to and the small jobs that did need looking at were quick and easy to find,' explains David.

'That is one of the benefits of having the same, small team working on the car from start to finish. Everyone knows it, literally, inside-out so you're not faced with the usual difficulty of having to track down a fault that has been caused by someone else's workmanship not being quite right.

'The engine was run in on the dynamometer before being refitted to the car and, I must say, it pulls like a train and sounds marvellous. We are really delighted with the way the whole project worked out. It is the 15th ground-up restoration we have completed in the past five years and there is no doubt that the process is getting smoother all the time. Everyone in the team now knows exactly what is involved and what problems to expect.'

Once the car had been confirmed 'good to go', the owner was invited to see his pride and joy in all its gleaming glory in an unveiling ceremony at Works Service.

'We had the car covered with an opaque plastic sheet for his arrival and when we pulled it off his reaction was, literally, "Wow!" It's that 'wow factor' that we work to achieve, so to see the client so happy is very satisfying.'

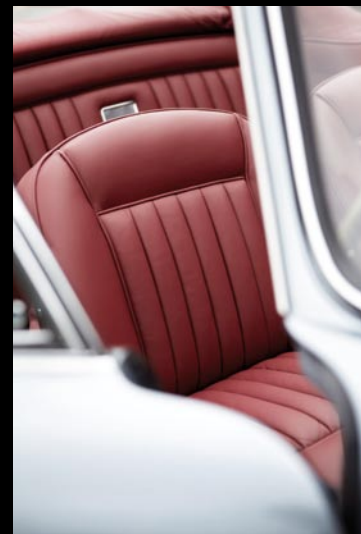
After that, all that remained was to deliver the car to the owner's home – an event that took place on one of our summer's few warm and sunny days, so Mr Woods could begin to enjoy his DB5 convertible in the best possible way: with the roof down.

Thankfully, appreciation for the sterling work of Aston Martin Works Service won't just be limited to employees and Mr Woods: visitors to September's Goodwood Revival were able to admire 2 NKN on the Aston Martin stand, where it drew hundreds of enthusiasts, many of whom found it difficult to believe that they were looking at a 46-year-old car.

But David and his team can't afford to rest on their laurels – there are no fewer than 15 further heritage cars waiting in the wings for the same treatment. 'We have at least seven year's worth of work in those cars alone,' says David. 'I'll be retired long before the last one is finished!'

THE ASTON MARTIN WORKS SERVICE HERITAGE RESTORATION TEAM WHO REBUILT '2 NKN'

Trimmers: Chris Brewer, Helen Judkins and John Croot
 Painter: Duncan Hall
 Electrician: David Dillow
 Quality control: Gordon Higgs
 Technician: David Pearce
 Body technician: David Alderman





In the grip OF WINTER

Aston Martin is pleased to announce the launch of Winter Wheel and Tyre Kits for all current models. Combining stylish wheel designs with factory approved winter specification tyres gives you the piece of mind to continue using your Aston Martin in all weathers.

Winter Tyres are formulated with specific compounds that are ideal for use in low temperatures; they have a specific tread pattern which helps reduce the risk of aquaplaning. This gives traction and safety, even on snow, and enables notably shorter braking distances: up to minus 10 per cent in rain at low temperatures and minus 20 per cent on snow compared with summer tyres. At a temperature of 7°C or below, even the best summer tyres gradually reduce their road holding capabilities, compromising stability and braking performance.

The kits consist of Wheels, Tyres and Wheel Centre Badges. An additional option of Tyre Pressure Monitoring Sensors (TPMS) is also available.

For further information including details of the special offer pricing please contact your local Aston Martin dealer.



[1]

[2]



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[7]

1. V8 Vantage S
19" V-Spoke Silver DT
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
235/40 R19 96W
275/35 R19 100W

2. V12 Vantage
19" 10-Spoke Graphite
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
235/40 R19 96W
275/35 R19 100W

3. V8 Vantage
19" 7-Spoke Silver
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
235/40 R19 96W
275/35 R19 100W

4. DBS
20" Multi-Spoke Graphite
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
245/30 ZR20 95W
295/30 ZR20 101W

5. Rapide
20" Multi-Spoke Silver
Bridgestone Blizzak LM32
245/40 R20 95W
295/35 R20 105W

6. DB9
19" 10-Spoke Silver
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
235/40 R19 96W
275/35 R19 100W

7. Virage
20" 5-Spoke Silver
Pirelli Sottozero
Winter 270
245/30 ZR20 95W
295/30 ZR20 101W

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NEW AND USED CAR OPPORTUNITIES





MODEL RANGE PURE ASTON MARTIN

ONE_77_II-III

DBS_IV-V

VIRAGE_VI-VII

RAPIDE_VIII-IX

DB9_X-XI

V12 VANTAGE_XII-XIII

V8 VANTAGE & V8 VANTAGE S_XIV-XV

CYGNET_XVI-XVIII



ASTON MARTIN



One-77

For a strictly limited number of discerning customers, One-77 fuses advanced technology with stunning Aston Martin design to create what is possibly the world's most desirable automotive art form





Aston Martin's One-77 exists at the intersection between a limited edition artwork and pure technological innovation. The 77 people who will become owners are making a major commitment – their reward, a car that is the culmination of all the elements that define Aston Martin's modern era; V12 power, lightweight construction, modern materials, craft skills, design excellence and, naturally, raw beauty.

Based on a sophisticated carbon-fibre chassis with a hand-crafted aluminium body, this 200 mph-plus, 7.3-litre V12 supercar will deliver exhilarating performance for a strictly limited number of discerning customers. The vision of Aston Martin's design team, led by Marek Reichman, Director of Design, has been faithfully translated into a stunning machine by the One-77 team led by Engineering Director Ian Minards, with the structural tub and cross-bracing revealed beneath its flowing skin. One-77 is as pure an expression of Aston Martin design as it is Aston Martin engineering.

It goes without saying that One-77 is not a traditional production car. For a start, the exquisitely engineered chassis is not designed for assembly on the high-tech production line at Gaydon. Instead, the car is comprised of a series of bespoke elements, all brought together in a specially designated production area, where each finished customer car will take an estimated 1,500 hours to create.

For Aston Martin, One-77 is a unique opportunity to create a car as functional art – an object of beauty and contemplation that can also be interacted with, enjoyed by a select few on a strictly personal basis. Although One-77 delivers nothing less than shattering performance and handling, at rest it will provide a different kind of enjoyment; the indulgence in manufacturing excellence and the appreciation of pure form.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-seat, two-door coupe
- Carbon-fibre monocoque structure
- Hand-crafted aluminium body panels
- Single bi-xenon headlamps with integrated LED side lights and direction indicators
- Carbon-fibre front splitters
- Carbon-fibre rear diffuser with integrated transaxle cooler
- LED rear lamps (fog and reverse)
- Active aerodynamics with deployable spoiler

ENGINE

- Alloy quad overhead camshaft, 48-valve, 7312 cc V12
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless-steel lightweight sports exhaust system with active bypass valves
- Compression ratio 10.9:1
- **Max power** 559 kW (750 bhp/760 PS)
- **Max torque** 750 Nm at 5500 rpm

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted, six-speed automated manual gearbox with auto shift manual/select shift manual (ASM/SSM) electric hydraulic control system
- Magnesium alloy torque tube with carbon fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio 3.538:1



DBS [COUPE & VOLANTE] & DBS CARBON EDITION

Seductively powerful and exquisitely finished, the Aston Martin DBS is the ultimate blend of refined performance and minimalist luxury



Truly great luxury sports cars are rare. In a world often diminished by mediocrity, genuine design innovation and engineering accomplishment are available only to the discerning few. With its race-car roots and luxury appointments, the Aston Martin DBS is just such a car. The DBS represents the synthesis of raw power, race-bred technology and design excellence. Powered by a hand-built V12 engine producing 380 kW (510 bhp/517 PS), it delivers breathtaking power and performance.

Like a well-toned athlete in a figure-hugging suit, the aluminium and carbon-fibre bodywork of the DBS is a tight wrapping on the muscle that lies beneath, expressed in the taut lines and heavily sculpted flanks. Every flowing line, crease and curve conveys the enormous potential of the DBS, honed to create an exhilarating driving experience: taut, dynamic and monumentally fast, but always highly controlled. Using technology developed in competition, the DBS is a direct descendant of the DBR9 – a thoroughbred race car that has won many of the world's greatest GT endurance race titles, most notably back-to-back GT1 class honours at the

coveted Le Mans 24-Hours in 2007 and 2008. Carbon ceramic brakes and adaptive suspension that adjusts to virtually every situation ensure that the DBS is perfectly at home in the city, on the open road or on the track. Representing a milestone of Aston Martin's technological abilities in car design, it is an open invitation to drive: the supreme temptation.

The DBS Volante affords customers the combination of the DBS's established benchmark sports car characteristics with all the thrills of open-air motoring. Broadening the DBS's character, the DBS Volante appeals to drivers who wish to combine the excitement of driving a finely tuned sports car with the invigorating feeling of being open to the elements. 'Volante', meaning 'moving with light rapidity' or 'flying', perfectly defines the performance potential and the dynamic characteristics of the car. The DBS Volante delivers the ultimate driving experience with the hood up or down.

DBS CARBON EDITION

Celebrating the success of the DBS Carbon Black, the flagship model range has been further enhanced by the introduction of the new Carbon Edition, a striking suite of special editions that offer a choice of understated flair or dramatic aesthetics.

The DBS Coupe Carbon Edition incorporates three exterior colours: the bespoke Carbon Black metallic paint especially formulated with a metallic twist to create a deep rich patina, in addition to two unique carbon inspired colours, Ceramic Grey and Flame Orange. Carbon-fibre features are appointed extensively throughout, whilst swathes of Obsidian Black or Maranello Orange deep soft leather enhance the luxury feel of the interior environment.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-door coupe body style with 2+0 seating or soft-cover convertible top body style with 2+2 seating
- Extruded bonded aluminium VH body structure
- Aluminium, magnesium alloy and carbon-fibre composite body
- Extruded aluminium door side-impact beams
- High Intensity Discharge headlamps (dipped beam)
- Halogen projector headlamps (main beam)
- LED rear lamps and side repeaters

ENGINE

- All-alloy, quad overhead camshaft, 48-valve, 5935 cc V12
- Compression ratio 10.9:1
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless steel exhaust system with active bypass valves
- Max power 380 kW (510 bhp/517 PS) at 6500 rpm
- Max torque 570 Nm (420 lb ft) at 5750 rpm
- Acceleration 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.3 sec
- Max speed (manual) 305 km/h (190 mph)
- Max speed ('Touchtronic 2') 295 km/h (183 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted, six-speed manual gearbox
- Rear mid-mounted 'Touchtronic 2' six-speed gearbox with electronic shift-by-wire control system
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio – manual 3.71:1
- Final-drive ratio – automatic 3.46:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 388 g/km¹ – manual
- 367 g/km¹ – automatic

¹ Data not applicable to North American market





Virage [COUPE & VOLANTE]

The Aston Martin Virage is a new breed of handcrafted luxury sports GT. Powered by an effortlessly muscular V12 engine mated to a smoothly responsive paddle-shift 'Touchtronic 2' automatic transmission, the Virage is a lesson in discreet style and assured performance: elegant, opulent, exclusive and seductively understated





French for 'bend' or 'turn', 'Virage' was an apt nomination for Aston Martin's new top-end V8 sports car in 1988. Immaculate design, innovative engineering, immense performance and impeccable quality were the founding cornerstones of the Aston Martin Virage range. Twenty-three years on, built around Aston Martin's proven all-aluminium structure for lightness and strength and powered by a bespoke version of the company's iconic V12 engine, Virage is back, offering a new twist to Aston Martin's unique brand of performance.

Neatly fusing the full-blooded performance and striking looks of a thoroughbred sports car with the effortless character and lavish appointments of a luxury GT, the Virage is the perfect choice for the discerning driver who demands comfort but also desires genuine dynamism. It combines the presence and formidable performance of a V12-engined sports car with the comfort, convenience and prestige of a true luxury car.

Delivering an intoxicating blend of imperious pace and cossetting sensory indulgence, every journey is an experience to savour. The smooth, sensual lines of both the Coupe and convertible Volante perfectly reflect the way the Virage performs. With a peerless 490 bhp 6.0-litre V12 engine it has the outright pace of a purebred sports car, but thanks to its six-speed 'Touchtronic 2' automatic transmission and carbon ceramic brakes such performance is delivered with composure and maturity.

Taut lines and generous, fluid curves give the Virage a sleek, muscled physique to match its powerful performance potential. Masterful detailing ensures it has its own distinct identity, while an opulently appointed interior fashioned from the finest natural materials creates a truly luxurious environment for driver and passenger alike.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-door coupe or soft-cover convertible top body style with 2+2 seating
- Extruded bonded aluminium VH body structure
- Aluminium, magnesium alloy and composite body
- Extruded aluminium door side-impact beams
- Single bi-xenon headlamps with integrated LED side lights and direction indicators
- LED rear lamps and side repeaters

ENGINE

- All-alloy, quad overhead camshaft, 48-valve, 5935 cc V12
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless steel exhaust system with active bypass valves
- Compression ratio 10.97:1
- **Max power** 365 kW (490 bhp/497 PS) at 6500 rpm
- **Max torque** 570 Nm (420 lb ft) at 5750 rpm
- **Acceleration** 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.6 seconds
- **Max speed** 295 km/h (183 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted, 'Touchtronic 2' six-speed automatic gearbox with electronic shift-by-wire control system
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio 3.46:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 349 g/km



Rapide

Rapide is the world's most elegant four-door sports car. The Rapide exists in a class all of its own – a stunning evolution of Aston Martin's unmistakable design language, accommodating four adults in luxury and comfort with benchmark levels of driver engagement and refinement



The elegant Rapide, functional yet luxurious, provides space for up to four adults combined with an engaging driving experience synonymous with all Aston Martins. As the marque's first production four-door sports car, Rapide encapsulates the core values of Power, Beauty and Soul.

Four 'swan wing' doors provide access to cossetting sports seats both front and rear, comfortably accommodating four in supreme comfort and luxury. Rapide's rear environment has been intelligently packaged to create a space where passengers feel a part of the driving experience with clear views to the front and sides. Comfort and support is supplied in the form of two hand trimmed individual seats and a personal heating and air conditioning system. Aiding the practicalities of everyday use, a 317-litre luggage compartment affords generous space for belongings for all four occupants

whether they are sports bags or, indeed, sets of skis, creating an Aston Martin which can be enjoyed on any occasion, anytime, anywhere.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ulrich Bez says, 'With Rapide, the entire family can enjoy their Aston Martin together in unison, in an invigorating yet comfortable environment, sitting low, with plenty of visibility from every seat and with new levels of comfort, refinement and entertainment.'



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Four-door body style with tailgate and 4 individual seats
- Extruded bonded aluminium VH body structure
- Aluminium and composite body panels
- Extruded aluminium door side impact beams
- Single bi-xenon headlamps with integrated LED side lights and direction indicators
- LED rear lamps and side repeaters

ENGINE

- All-alloy quad overhead camshaft, 48-valve 5935 cc V12
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless-steel exhaust system with active bypass valves
- Compression ratio 10.9:1
- **Max power** 350 kW (470 bhp/477 PS) at 6000 rpm
- **Max torque** 600 Nm (443 lb ft) at 5000 rpm
- **Acceleration** 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 5.2 seconds
- **Max speed** 295 km/h (183 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted 'Touchtronic 2' six-speed gearbox with electronic shift-by-wire control system
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio – 3.46:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 355 g/km



DB9 [COUPE & VOLANTE]

The Aston Martin DB9 is the quintessential sporting grand tourer – a thoroughbred performance car that combines true beauty with functionality. Whether in Coupe or Volante form, it offers a supreme combination of driver involvement, character, luxury and refinement





The Aston Martin DB9 is a thoroughbred sports car with GT levels of comfort and refinement. Combining Aston Martin's unique character with an uncompromising design philosophy, the DB9 was borne out of a synthesis of traditional craftsmanship, high-tech manufacturing, modern components and use of the finest materials. The DB9 is both a full-blooded sports car and a hugely capable grand tourer. Beautifully styled, the DB9 never fails to stir the soul with its unique sound, power and performance. This purebred sports car is also a technical triumph, its beauty signifying aerodynamic efficiency, its power unencumbered by weight, its devastating straight-line performance paired with exquisite handling. All great sports cars strive to balance these qualities, and the DB9 creates an experience that is both unique and unforgettable.

What the driver sees, hears and feels is in harmony. The reward is total involvement: a level of engagement that truly stimulates the senses, that re-ignites a passion for driving. But an Aston Martin is also about luxury, indulgence and enjoyment – it is a feast for the senses. Sure enough, the magnificent exterior styling of the DB9 gives way to a sumptuous, comprehensively equipped cabin, trimmed in the finest materials. Every element is perfectly conceived, from the 6.0-litre V12 engine to the hand-stitched seats and carefully selected interior woods. Nothing is out of place.

Above all, the DB9 encapsulates the qualities embodied in every Aston Martin: Power, Beauty and Soul.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-door coupe or soft-cover convertible top body style with 2+2 seating
- Extruded aluminium bonded VH body structure
- Aluminium and composite body panels
- Extruded aluminium door side-impact beams
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlamps (dipped beam)
- Halogen projector headlamps (main beam) with power wash
- LED rear lamps

ENGINE

- All-alloy, quad overhead camshaft, 48-valve, 5935 cc V12
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless-steel exhaust system with active bypass valves
- Compression ratio 10.9:1
- **Max power** 350 kW (470 bhp/477 PS) at 6000 rpm
- **Max torque** 600 Nm (443 lb.ft) at 5000 rpm
- **Acceleration** 0-100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.8 sec
- **Max speed** 300 km/h (186 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted, 'Touchtronic 2' six-speed automatic with electronic shift-by-wire control system
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio 3.154:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 345 g/km





V12 Vantage

One of the world's great engines clothed in one of the most stylish coupes ever designed, the V12 Vantage is a unique and extraordinary Aston Martin. Compact, agile and blisteringly quick, it is the most potent of the Vantage model range





The most potent production sports car in the marque's 95-year history, the Aston Martin V12 Vantage is the fastest and most agile model in the range – designed to provide a unique character that appeals to different drivers with different tastes. Based on the hugely successful V8 Vantage, the V12 Vantage features Aston Martin's most powerful engine, the 6.0-litre V12 engine, which produces 380 kW (510 bhp/517 PS), and 570 Nm (420 lb ft) of torque with a top speed of 305 km/h (190 mph) and acceleration from 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.2 seconds. Purposeful, striking and functional styling signals the performance capabilities of this formidable car, which, like the Aston Martin DBS, benefits from the use of race-derived technology and features lightweight carbon fibre.

The original V12 Vantage concept was unveiled to guests at the opening of the Aston Martin Design Studio in December 2007. Continuing the marque's impressive record of bringing concepts to market in their original form, Aston Martin engineers brought the V12 Vantage to market in just 12 months. Designed for the focused driver, every component of the V12 Vantage has been honed with pure driving enjoyment in mind; performance and agility have been tuned to perfection. Visually enticing, the V12 Vantage expresses its potential through its purposeful stance created by enhanced aerodynamic and cooling aids. Equally inviting, the cossetting interior permits the driver to extract maximum performance ability from the car while also enjoying customary levels of Aston Martin comfort on longer journeys. High levels of power and torque are available at all engine speeds, making the V12 Vantage responsive and tractable in any driving situation.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-door, two-seat coupe body
- Bonded aluminium structure
- Extruded bonded aluminium VH body structure
- Extruded aluminium door side-impact beams
- High Intensity Discharge headlamps (dipped beam)
- Halogen projector headlamps (main beam)
- LED rear lamps

ENGINE

- All-alloy quad overhead camshaft 48-valve 5935 cc V12
- Compression ratio 10.9:1
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless-steel exhaust system with active bypass valves
- **Max power** 380 kW (510 bhp/517 PS) at 6500 rpm
- **Max torque** 570 Nm (420 lb ft) at 5750 rpm
- **Acceleration** 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.2 seconds
- **Max speed** 305 km/h (190 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted six-speed manual gearbox.
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio 3.71:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 388 g/km



V8 Vantage & V8 Vantage S [COUPE & ROADSTER]

A supreme example of modern automotive design, the V8 Vantage and V8 Vantage S are hand-crafted sports cars offering exceptional performance, outstanding agility and everyday usability



The V8 Vantage epitomises Aston Martin's approach to design: a commitment to engineering excellence without aesthetic compromise. Each model shares the same beautiful form, undeniably modern yet with a direct lineage to some of the great Aston Martin models of the past. At the heart of every great sports car is a great engine, and the V8 Vantage is powered by Aston Martin's 4.7-litre V8, developed for both flexibility and outright performance. The engine is so willing, the handling so predictable and the controls so easy to use that it is as comfortable in town or city as it is on winding country roads or even a demanding race circuit.

As its name and race-bred looks suggest, the new V8 Vantage S is a more overtly sporting Vantage aimed at the keenest driver, heavily influenced by the 2011 Vantage GT4 race car. Available as a Coupe or a Roadster, styling

changes include new wheels and race-winning aerodynamics honed in GT racing, while inside unique detailing creates a very special driving ambience. Featuring a tuned version of the same V8 developing 321 kW (430 bhp/ 436 PS) and 490 Nm (361 lb ft) of torque, the V8 Vantage S mates this added potency to an all-new seven-speed Sportshift II paddle-operated transmission specifically designed for 'S' model. The seven-speed gearbox is fitted as standard and features close gear ratios which, in combination with the short final drive ratio, ensure exceptional in-gear acceleration for a searing sense of urgency. Thanks to more sporting suspension settings and a more responsive steering rack it has the reactions to match, while a competition-derived floating disc front brake system complete with larger discs and new six-piston calipers ensure immense stopping power for absolute confidence.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two-seat, two-door coupe or soft-cover convertible top body style
- Extruded bonded aluminium VH body structure
- Aluminium, magnesium alloy, composite and steel body
- Extruded aluminium door side-impact beams

ENGINE

- All-alloy quad overhead camshaft, 32-valve 4735 cc V8
- Front mid-mounted engine, rear-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless-steel exhaust system with active bypass valves

- Compression ratio 11.3:1
- Max power (V8 Vantage) 313 kW (420 bhp/426 PS) at 7300 rpm
- Max power (V8 Vantage S) 321 kW (430 bhp/436 PS) at 7300 rpm
- Max torque (V8 Vantage) 470 Nm (346 lb ft) at 5000 rpm
- Max torque (V8 Vantage S) 490 Nm (361 lb ft) at 5000 rpm
- Acceleration (V8 Vantage) 0–100 km/h (62 mph) in 4.9 seconds (V8 Vantage S data TBC)
- Max speed (V8 Vantage) 290 km/h (180 mph)
- Max speed (V8 Vantage S) 305 km/h (190 mph)

TRANSMISSION

- Rear mid-mounted, six-speed manual transmission
- Sportshift six-speed automated manual transmission
- Rear mid-mounted Sportshift II seven-speed automated manual transmission – V8 Vantage S
- Alloy torque tube with carbon-fibre propeller shaft
- Limited-slip differential
- Final-drive ratio 3.909:1 V8 Vantage S, 4.182:1

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 321 g/km – manual
- 295 g/km – Sportshift
- 299 g/km – V8 Vantage S





Cygnet

We are moving in a changing world. It is time for an Aston Martin Tailor-Fit for the city. Elegant and distinctive, individual and practical, Cygnet is the luxury solution to urban mobility



With Cygnet, Aston Martin have created a car that is breaking into a new automotive space. Previously, 'small' has meant a compromise to materials and craftsmanship; Cygnet is a small car without compromise to either quality or craftsmanship. It looks and feels like an Aston Martin, with a hand-crafted interior comparable to the marque's current sports car range – even the One-77 supercar.

Cygnet is the eighth major production car Aston Martin has introduced at its state-of-the art Gaydon facility since 2004, and is assembled in a new dedicated facility by the same skilled local workforce of technicians and craftspeople that create Aston Martin's award-winning range of sports cars.

Cygnet is innovative, luxurious and forward-thinking: a genuine solution for urban mobility, providing significant manoeuvrability and parking benefits and yet still being capable of carrying up to four people. It is a natural extension to Aston Martin's line-up of acclaimed luxury sports cars, complementing the range by providing an alternative for the city commute – a luxury commuter car that can thread easily and unobtrusively through the modern metropolis.

The same Aston Martin philosophy of design, craftsmanship and attention to detail all result in a car of exceptional quality – the perfect expression of your own character and lifestyle.





TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BODY

- Two door body style with full width tailgate and four seats
- Bright aluminium front upper and lower grilles
- Bright metal side strakes with Magnum Silver mesh
- Bi-halogen headlights
- LED tail lamps

ENGINE

- 1.33 litre with Variable Valve Timing (VVT)
- 4 in-line cylinders
- 16-valve DOHC (Double Overhead Camshaft) chain drive
- Electronic fuel injection
- Front mounted engine and differential
- Front-wheel drive
- Fully catalysed stainless steel exhaust system
- Compression ratio 11.5:1
- **Acceleration**
 - 0-100 km/h (62 mph) in 11.8 seconds (manual)
 - 0-100 km/h (62 mph) in 11.6 seconds (CVT)
- **Max power** 72 kW (97 bhp/98 PS)
- **Max speed** 170 km/h (106 mph)


TRANSMISSION

- 6-speed manual (with Stop & Start technology and gear shift indicator)
- Optional Constantly Variable Transmission (CVT) (with Eco Driving Indicator)

CO₂ EMISSIONS

- 116 g/km (6-speed manual)
- 120 g/km (CVT)



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