

Sharp, new vantage point for British icon

Aston Martin is on the comeback trail. After years of being in a rut when it came to design and technology, the brand is going through a regeneration that started with the new DB11. Now it has revealed the latest version of its core model, the Vantage, and things are looking very different.



First used in 1951 on a highoutput engine option for the DB2, Vantage was quickly established as a model in its own right. Highlights include the William Towns-designed V8 Vantage, twin-supercharged V600 Le Mans and the V8 Vantage.

"It speaks volumes for the outgoing Vantage that it is the single most successful model in Aston Martin's history," says Andy Palmer, president and CEO of Aston Martin.

"Creating a worthy successor has been a challenge to relish and a huge source of motivation. I'm enormously excited by what we've created: a new Vantage that's more explicit in looks and intent, wrapping heart-pounding performance and dazzling dynamics into an everyday usable package. A true sports car with a sharper look and a keener dynamic edge, the new Vantage is the Aston Martin pure driving machine enthusiasts have been waiting for."

That sharper look is undeniable, marking a major departure from the traditional design present in the last generation.

"New Vantage has the most powerful and provocative design language ever seen in a Vantage," says Marek Reichman, Aston's chief creative officer. "A hunter, it's light in weight and light in its visual language. It is based on a single line under

tension, inspired by the DB10 and the extreme track-only Aston Martin Vulcan, blending the two unique design languages together into a form that is sculpted, dynamic, pure and elemental."

The company says that aerodynamic performance was central to the design concept: the front splitter directs airflow underneath the car, where a system of fences channels cooling air where it is needed and ensures the rear diffuser is fed with clean airflow. The design of the diffuser creates an area of low-pressure air, while simultaneously preventing turbulence generated by the rear wheels from disrupting the flow of air exiting centrally from beneath the rear of the car.

Inside, things are also different, but it is impossible not to see the influence of Aston shareholder Daimler in elements including the infotainment system and switchgear. The interior features a more focused sports car cockpit, which has been designed to provide a more immersive driving experience.

All about its heart - the engine

This is a sports car though, so for many it will be all about its heart - the engine.

Aston has taken the 4.0l twin-turbo V8 from AMG and added its own touches to create a power plant producing 375kW at 6,000r/min and 685Nm from 2,000-5,000r/min. Power is deployed to the rear wheels via a rear-mounted ZF eight-speed automatic transmission with a claimed 0-100km/h time of 3.6 seconds and 314km/h top speed.

Integrated electronic systems include dynamic stability control and Dynamic Torque Vectoring and for the first time on an Aston, the new Vantage features an Electronic Rear Differential (E-Diff). This differential is linked to the car's electronic stability control system, so it can understand the car's behaviour, and react accordingly to direct the engine's power to the relevant wheel.

The chassis is an evolution of the latest generation bonded aluminium structure first seen on the DB11, though Aston says that some 70% of the structure's components are new for Vantage. Highlights of the chassis include a solidly mounted rear subframe for an enhanced feeling of direct connection for the driver, new Pirelli P Zero tyres developed specifically for the model and the latest generation adaptive damping system which incorporates Skyhook technology and offers the choice of Sport, Sport Plus and Track modes.



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It also features a high level of craftsmanship as well as extensive scope for personalisation via a range of options, including forged alloy wheels in a variety of finishes, Sports Plus Collection seats and steering wheel, carbon-fibre interior and exterior detailing and a premium audio system.

Pricing has not yet been announced for SA, but the new Vantage is expected to be here in the second quarter of 2018.

Source: Business Day