

THE NEXT GENERATION - ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH

The DBS has always been slightly handicapped by its name, which infers that it is a slightly more sporting DB9, rather than the thoroughly re-engineered car that it is. In June 2012 Aston Martin unveiled a new mainstream flagship model and they didn't make the same same mistake twice, bringing back the iconic name - Vanquish. The last generation Vanquish was something of a pioneering model, the first Aston to use an all-new bonded and riveted body shell and an automated manual gearbox. The new Vanquish may be more evolution than revolution, but there is nothing wrong with that, it has kept the Porsche 911 at the top of the sports car league for many decades. Of course the key is how effectively the DBS has been evolved and from the outset we can say it has been very thoroughly revised and improved, in line with customer and press feedback.

Gen-4 Exterior and Design

Of course no new model can be born without aspects of the design being called into question. Controversy over reusing the Vanquish name aside, (mainly fuelled by those that currently own the old model!) it is the styling that has caused the biggest reaction, particularly with regards to the car's huge Carbon-fibre front spoiler, side skirts and large rear diffuser. There is little doubt that the exterior design has created something of a Marmite car, with some loving and others hating the new look. As you walk towards the Vanquish it certainly has real presence, but the front looks rather like the Virage (partly because it shares the same Bi-Xenon lights) with a big ugly bolt-on spoiler added; we also wonder how the exposed surfaces will fare when they encounter speed

humps and steep inclines. As you move around the side a large new side strake/crease and blade like sills provide strong new styling cues, and the wheels better fill the wide wheel arches. At the rear you can see aspects of the One-77, particularly with the fabulous new LED light blades. Aston say the design was inspired by the brand logo and if you put both lights together it recreates the famous wings. You may not notice at first glance, but the new aero-duct and boot lid are made from one piece of Carbon-fibre, this complex panel design takes two days to produce. Aston say they have left the splitter, sills and rear diffuser as unpainted carbon to emphasise that the entire car is cloaked in the material. We think they are seeking new buyers by providing a more "tunable design," for example: choose a bright colour that contrasts with the carbon elements and then add the new style silver/black wheels and the car looks rather "bling" - choose standard silver wheels and a more traditional colour and it will look more sophisticated. Personally we would prefer to see the carbon elements painted to create a classier more cohesive look. Although it is certainly a striking and more modern design, which looks better in the flesh than in photographs, the jury is still out, no doubt press reviews and sales figures will be the final judge of Marek Reichman's design.

Of course the exterior form is not just about aesthetics, CAE (computer aided engineering) was used to ensure effective airflow. The (ugly!) front splitter uses race technology to reduce front end lift, while also helping to cool the engine and brakes. This is aided by the sills and the new rear aero duct (spoiler) which, along with the rear

