



"pinstriped leather seams." As with the DB9 the upper console has a Walnut wood finish and the upper door caps are leather as standard. The comprehensive specifications mimic that of the DB9: with full electronic, memory, heated seats (featuring smart Rapide style silver controls) - Bluetooth - Premium Audio - cruise control - powerfold mirrors - parking and tyres sensors, all standard. Satellite navigation is also standard, but the big news here was an all new system developed with Garmin. Owners have long moaned about the previous Volvo based system, so this is great news. The new high resolution 6.5 inch screen still swivels from the dash-top and is controlled by the same console joystick, but it offers improved ease of use with clearer graphics, improved pictorial junction views and better safety camera data. The Virage also has new more efficient Beam windscreen wipers.

With the Volante version of the Virage engineers have ensured a very rigid chassis by solidly mounting the rear subframe and front shear panel. For the first time, they have also used an extra shear panel at the rear of the car. This is excellent news as the extra stiffening

should allow the Volante to offer similar sporting dynamics to the coupe, uncompromised by the open roof; which features an extra layer of Thinsulate for improved refinement. Aston also worked hard on reducing NVH (noise-vibration-harshness), improving refinement, with slightly better ride comfort and reduced cabin noise.

Despite the Virage's stunning exterior design, excellent driving dynamics and comprehensive luxury specification it did not find the sales success Aston Martin expected. The flagship DBS had more power and prestige, while the DB9 offered a lower price point. Following the launch of the new flagship Vanquish, Virage production ceased in September 2012 and the design was evolved to become the new DB9, see overleaf for full details.

The Virage now offers particularly good value as a used purchase. It looks virtually the same as the new DB9 and is only slightly less powerful than the discontinued DBS. But the short production run hasn't been kind to residuals, so it is available for much less than the equivalent DBS, making it a sensible option if you are considering a lightly used example.

