

Daniel Craig in James Bond: Casino Royale with an Aston Martin DB5



CRUISE CONTROL

Henry Broughton takes the 2014 Aston Martin V8 Vantage S out on the town

Aston Martin. Car lovers tend to go weak at the knees at the very mention of the name, but for the majority of people it is the transport of the world's least secret secret agent. When Ian Fleming allocated James Bond a DB MKIII in the novel *Goldfinger* and Sean Connery drove the now iconic DB5 in the film of the same name, a legend was created, one that endures to this day. However, it is easy to forget that at the film's release, in 1964, when Ferrari was still a teenager and Lamborghini an infant, Aston Martin had already been going for 51 years. This is a company with some serious history. With an exquisite racing pedigree at Le Mans and a tiny output of simply beautiful road cars that guarantees exclusivity, Aston Martins in essence are deeply cool. Always have been, always will be. Period.

I have to confess a little bias here, as the proud owner of a 1995 V8 Supercharged Vantage, the most spine-tingling, entertaining and quite frankly terrifying car I have ever driven. The Vantage was the last of the truly handcrafted Astons, exemplified by the small gold plaque on top of the 550bhp behemoth, under the hood, inscribed with: "Engine hand built by Terry Durston." The market has reacted well to these cars, and if you were fortunate enough to have bought a classic Aston Martin ten years ago (when you could have bought a DB5 for \$80,000), you would now be sitting in a car worth ten times that sum. As a result, in those ten years, the roles

have been reversed, and the new cars, although by no means cheap, seem like a positively good value.

Thus it was when talking to the good people at Aston Martin that I leaped at the opportunity to drive the new V8 Vantage S. Arrangements were made and one day "my" car sat waiting for me, absolutely stunning and at the same time pleasingly menacing—the color of cobalt blue, which is just about as subtle as our secret agent. I decided that it was the perfect car to take on one of the most beautiful drives in the Hamptons.



I press the flush door handle, then pull, and the frameless door opens outward and slightly upward, making entry easy and, more important for the ladies, ready for a dignified exit, too. The cabin is simply beautiful, with hand-stitched leather, Alcantara and black piano wood are everywhere beside a thick-rimmed wheel and stubby gear lever. (Being a bit of a traditionalist, I have opted for a stick, but most people prefer the seven-speed Sportshift automated manual.) Pushing the crystal "key" into the Engine Start in the center of the dash, I jump a little as the 430bhp 4.7 liter V8 quite

literally barks into life before settling in to a satisfying growl.

I head to Noyac Road from Southampton as I acclimatize to the car with growing excitement and anticipation of what is to come. I am really loving this "baby" Aston, and as I leave my rendezvous point, the fire station, behind me, I feel I can push on a little bit as I head past the Coast Grill and into the woods. What happens next takes me a little by

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HAMPTON DRIVE

surprise, but as the needle heads past 4000rpm, little butterfly valves in the exhaust open up and the V8 really opens its lungs. It is utterly addictive. I turn off the AC, drop the windows and find myself keeping in low gears just so I can listen to the sound reverberating through the trees. When I back off the throttle to change down a gear or anticipate an undulation in the road, the exhaust cracks and pops.

With its precise steering and superb brakes, the car is literally flying along to the sound of my own imagined opera, but soon the majestic sight of the causeway, with Noyack Bay on my left and Sag Harbor Cove on my right, comes into view, the slightly orange sun above glinting on the waves. My timing is going to be perfect. I head slowly through Sag Harbor and sit at the South Ferry terminal. The cobalt blue Aston is attracting a fair amount of attention and I pray I can get on and off the ferry without damaging the car or making a fool of myself—either a distinct possibility.

Happily, all passes without incident and I head across to Shelter Island, relishing the fact that my surroundings are still very much like the Hamptons I remember. As I arrive at Sunset Beach, the sun is ready to take a bow, and I park, the Aston gently “tick-tick-ticking” in the parking lot as I head to the bar. I know precisely what I should order, but, then, I have the drive back to look forward to. When I get home, however, I will have mine stirred, not shaken. ♦

Martin, Aston Martin

The car of choice for James Bonds throughout the years



Aston Martin DB5:

Goldfinger, Sean Connery
Thunderball, Sean Connery
Golden Eye, Pierce Brosnan
Casino Royale, Daniel Craig
Skyfall, Daniel Craig



Aston Martin DB5:

On Her Majesty's Secret Service,
George Lazenby



Aston Martin DB5 V12:

Casino Royale, Daniel Craig
Quantum of Solace, Daniel Craig



Aston Martin V8 Vantage:

(Volante & Coupe versions) *The Living Daylights*, Timothy Dalton



Aston Martin V12 Vanquish:

Die Another Day, Pierce Brosnan

***Five distinct Aston Martin models were featured in James Bond films*
Source: astonmartin.com/bond

—Kelsy Kershaw

From top: Sean Connery, George Lazenby, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig