



ICE cool

Aston Martin Works Service now offers Vanquish owners the opportunity to retro-fit one of several Alpine 'infotainment' set-ups

Building on its impressive in-car entertainment (ICE) capabilities, highlighted by this year's announcement of the iPod® retro-fit – an upgrade that's proven to be overwhelmingly popular – Aston Martin Works Service now offers an option for your Vanquish that's pure gadget heaven. In fact, as far as high-fidelity ICE goes, Alpine's integrated audio, on-board navigation and multimedia set-ups have been at the vanguard since the 1970s.

The Vanquish Alpine package offered by the Special Vehicle Operations team at Newport Pagnell involves the removal of the existing radio/CD head unit and its replacement with an Alpine touchscreen. This is the control centre for every one of the multitudinous gizmos you may opt for. For example, the 'Level 1' package, which starts at £9,891 + VAT, comes with a motor-out touchscreen head unit and amplifiers stowed subtly in the boot with a six-disc DVD/CD changer and satellite navigation, plus a 10" sub-woofer, new mid-bass and tweeter speakers and iPod® video – all controlled via the touchscreen. Other bolt-on options, all the way up to the Premium package (£13,215 + VAT), might include digital amplifiers, Bluetooth connectivity, MP3 playback and top-of-the-line 'Type X' speakers.

The DVD GPS navigation system that lies at the heart of every Vanquish set-up is Alpine's latest and best 'NVE-N099P' model, boasting European as well as UK map coverage. One of the most accurate and comprehensive systems available on the market, it provides wide TMC real-time traffic coverage as well as voice guidance in 12 languages.

Those still nervous about reversing out of the garage could also do well to opt for reverse and forward-facing cameras, mounted on the front license plate and rear spoiler. These are extra eyes that – whilst using your mirrors and windows as usual of course – you can monitor for unexpected kerbs, bollards and blind spots.

Another remarkable feature is Alpine's 'Imprint' speaker adjustment system – for a listening experience that's literally tailored to the car's interior, and you. During configuration, a white noise signal is played directly from the amp, and microphone measurements are taken at eight points around the cabin. The measured data is then processed and downloaded from a laptop into the Imprint unit. The Imprint system uses AntEQ and MultiEQ hardware and software to improve the sound stage, tonal balance and definition. This 'tunes' the stereo to your specific driving environment. The resulting audible effect is likened to a band playing on a stage directly in front of you.

This is an optional extra that Aston Martin Works Service strongly encourages customers to experience for themselves at the factory. Ian Rhodes, Supervisor of Special Vehicle Operations recalls: 'We recently had the opportunity to compare a 15-speaker system with a retro-fit Imprint. The standard system sounded very good as expected, but when the Imprint system was switched on there was simply no contest, even though it had been set up to run only six of the original speakers – they had been optimised perfectly.'

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