



## HEAVEN FOR 7 WORKS SERVICE

Following the huge success of DB4 Day in June, Aston Martin Works Service hosted another magnificent single-model celebration day in October – this time in tribute to the much-loved DB7

Following its magnificent DB4 50th anniversary celebration on 21 June, Aston Martin Works Service and the Aston Martin Owners Club held a special 'DB7 Day' at Newport Pagnell on Sunday 11 October. Amazingly, it is 15 years since the rejuvenated Aston Martin company launched what was universally recognised as the most beautiful car of its day – an opinion confirmed by an international jury that accorded this title to the sleek new Aston Martin for three years in succession.

DB7 Day saw some 130 cars descend upon a sunny Tickford Street, admired by over 300 visitors to the Aston Martin Works Service premises. To the delight and interest of those gathered, several key players from the DB7 development programme gave presentations, including Ian Callum, the car's designer. Ian revealed that before DB7 he felt he'd designed 'nothing larger than a steering wheel!' However, this was his first new car design and he gave it 'everything I had'. It started life as 'Project NPX' in the early 1990s, the aim to produce a superlatively sophisticated but user-friendly sports car in the Aston Martin tradition. Ian, who had cut his design teeth in the custom coachworks of Carrozzeria Ghia in Turin, took his inspiration from the classic Aston Martins of the 1960s, yet produced a sleek new look that would carry the marque forward into the 21st century.



In the most complex new model programme that Aston Martin had ever undertaken, 30 prototypes were built, as well as 10 training cars destined to be taken apart and rebuilt. A further three DB7s were deliberately written off during crash testing and over 500,000 miles were driven during development and testing, in conditions ranging from desert heat to 40 degrees below zero. Production ran from 1994 to 2004 in a state-of-the-art production facility at Bloxham in Oxfordshire.

On DB7 Day – one of a new series of reunion days that, in 2009, will celebrate such modern icons as the Vanquish in July and the Supercharged Vantage in October – enthusiastic owners of what has already become a modern classic converged to chat, compare notes, enjoy lunch and admire the many variants of the basic DB7 design on display.

For while this was an Aston Martin built in relatively large numbers, the variety of colour and trim options available meant that every one of the 7,000-plus DB7s produced was built to a bespoke order. Add to that the fact that after six years of production, the original supercharged six-cylinder power unit – which gave a top speed of 157mph – was replaced by the awesome 6.0-litre V12 Vantage unit with a maximum of 185mph in manual gearbox form, and you have a bloodline that can only be described as thoroughbred.

Among the models in attendance on 11 October were examples of the gorgeous DB7 Volante drophead, a model launched at the 1996 Detroit Auto Show by no less an icon of Aston Martin history than Stirling Moss, as well as the handsome and rare DB7 Vantage Zagato, fruit of a renewed partnership between Aston Martin and the Milanese coachbuilder.

Works Service General Manager Arthur Sinclair, who joined Aston Martin as Production Manager for Project NPX, estimates that some 20 per cent of the cars serviced and maintained at Newport Pagnell are DB7s. Designed first and foremost as a grand tourer capable of covering large distances at high speeds, 'the DB7 also had to be tractable and easy to drive for town use,' he commented. 'It's a beautifully set up machine that offers predictable handling and a great deal of fun!' Particularly, adds Arthur, when it's had the Works Service Driving Dynamics treatment...

