





Aston Martin

Aston Martin Legend Limited



ASTON MARTIN

Type	Private
Founded	1913
Founder(s)	Lionel Martin Robert Bamford
Headquarters	Gaydon, Warwickshire, England
Key people	Dr. Ulrich Bez, CEO Marek Reichman, Director of Design
Industry	Automotive
Products	Automobile
Owner(s)	David Richards John Sindors Investment Dar Adeem Investment
Website	Aston Martin Website for England

Aston Martin Lagonda Limited is a British manufacturer of luxury sports cars, based in Gaydon, Warwickshire. The company name is derived from the name of one of the company's founders, Lionel Martin, and from the Aston Hill speed hillclimb near Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire

From 1994 until 2007 Aston Martin was part of the Ford Motor Company, becoming part of the company's Premier Automotive Group in 2000. On 12 March 2007, it was purchased for £479 million (US\$848 million) by a joint venture company, co-owned by Investment Dar and Adeem Investment of Kuwait and English businessman John Sinders. Ford retained a US\$77 million stake in Aston Martin, valuing the company at US\$925 million.



History

Foundation

Aston Martin was founded in 1913 by Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford. The two had joined forces as Bamford & Martin the previous year to sell cars made by Singer from premises in Callow Street, London where they also serviced GWK and Calthorpe vehicles. Martin raced specials at Aston Hill near Aston Clinton, and the pair decided to make their own vehicles. The first car to be named *Aston Martin* was created by Martin by fitting a four-cylinder Coventry-Simplex engine to the chassis of a 1908 Isotta-Fraschini. They acquired premises at Henniker Place in Kensington and produced their first car in March 1915. Production could not start because of the outbreak of World War I, and Martin joined the Admiralty and Bamford the Royal Army Service Corps. All machinery was sold to the Sopwith Aviation Company.

Inter war years

After the war the company was refunded at Abingdon Road, Kensington and a new car designed to carry the Aston-Martin name. Bamford left in 1920 and the company was revitalised with funding from Count Louis Zborowski. In 1922, Bamford & Martin produced cars to compete in the French Grand Prix, and the cars set world speed and endurance records at Brooklands. Three works Team Cars with 16 valve twin cam engines were built for racing and record breaking: chassis number 1914, later developed as the Green Pea; chassis number 1915, the Razor Blade record car; and chassis number 1916, later developed as the Halford Special. Approximately 55 cars were built for sale in two configurations, long chassis and short chassis. The company went bankrupt in 1924 and was bought by Lady Charnwood, who put her son John Benson on the board. The company failed again in 1925 and the factory closed in 1926, with Lionel Martin leaving.

Later that year, Bill Renwick, Augustus (Bert) Bertelli and a number of rich investors, including Lady Charnwood, took control of the company and renamed it Aston Martin Motors, and moved it to the former Whitehead Aircraft Limited works in Feltham. Renwick and Bertelli had been in partnership some years and had developed an overhead cam 4 cylinder engine, using Renwick's patented combustion chamber design, and had tested it in an Enfield Allday chassis. It was the only 'Renwick and Bertelli' motor car made. It was known as 'Buzzbox' and survives to this day.

They had planned to sell this engine to motor manufacturers, but having heard that the Aston Martin car was no longer in production they realised that they could capitalise on the reputation of the Aston Martin name (what we would now call the brand) to give themselves a head start in the production of a completely new car.

Between the years 1926 and 1937 Bertelli was the technical director of Aston Martin, and the designer of all subsequent Aston Martin cars during this period, these being known as the 'Bertelli cars'. They included the 1 1/2 litre 'T-type', the 'International', the 'Le Mans', the 'MKII' its racing derivative the 'Ulster', and the 2 litre 15/98 and its racing derivative the 'Speed Model'.

Mostly open two seater sports cars and mostly bodied by Bert Bertelli's brother Enrico (Harry) a small number of long chassis four seater tourers, dropheads and saloons were also produced.



Bertelli was very keen to race his cars and he was a very competent driver. One of the very few motor manufacturers to actually sit in and race the cars he designed and built, the competition no doubt 'improved the breed' and the 'LM' team cars were very successful in national and international motor racing including at Le Mans and the Mille Miglia.

Financial problems reappeared in 1932 and the company was rescued by L. Prideaux Brune who funded it for the following year before passing the company on to Sir Arthur Sutherland. In 1936, the company decided to concentrate on

road cars. Car production had always been on a small scale and until the advent of World War II halted work only about 700 had been made. During the war years aircraft components were made.

The David Brown era

In 1947, David Brown Limited bought the company under the leadership of managing director Sir David Brown—its "post-war saviour". David Brown also acquired Lagonda that year, and both companies shared resources and workshops. In 1955, David Brown bought the Tickford coachbuilding company and its site at Tickford Street in Newport Pagnell, and that was the beginning of the classic series of cars bearing the initials "DB". In 1950, the company announced the DB2, followed by the racing DB3 in 1957 and the Italian-styled 3.7 L DB4 in 1958. All the cars established a good racing pedigree for the firm, but the DB4 was the key to establishing the company's reputation, which was cemented by the famous DB5 in 1963. The company continued developing the "grand touring" style with the DB6 (1965–70), the DBS, and the DBS V8 (1967–72).

1970s - Changing ownership

Despite the cars' appreciation in value, the company was often financially troubled. In 1972, it was sold to a company called Company Developments Ltd., backed by a Birmingham-based consortium, and chaired by Chartered Accountant and company director William Willson, (MBE). The company was resold in 1975 to North American businessmen Peter Sprague and George Minden. The new owners pushed the company into modernising its line, producing the V8 Vantage in 1977, the convertible Volante in 1978, and the one-off William Towns-styled Bulldog in 1980. Towns also styled the futuristic new Lagonda saloon, based on the V8 model.

In 1980 Aston-Martin had plans, which did not materialize, to buy MG, which they would have utilized as a sister marque, probably building smaller sports cars. Ideas were plotted to design a new model and they revealed to the press their approach to an 'updated' '1981' model MGB.

As worldwide sales of Aston Martin shrank to three per week, chairman Alan Curtis together with fellow shareholders American Peter Sprague and Canadian George Minden, had almost chosen to shut down the production side of the business and concentrate on service and restoration. Curtis attended the 1980 Pace sponsored Stirling Moss benefit day at Brands Hatch, and met fellow Farnham resident Victor Gauntlett.

1980s - Victor Gauntlett

Gauntlett bought a 10% stake in Aston Martin for £500,000 via Pace Petroleum in 1980, with Tim Hearley of CH Industrials taking a similar share. Pace and CHI took over as joint 50/50 owners at the beginning of 1981, with Gauntlett as executive chairman. Gauntlett also led the sales team, and after some development and a lot of publicity when it became the world's fastest 4-seater production car, was able to sell with success the Aston Martin Lagonda into Persian Gulf states, particularly Oman, Kuwait and Qatar.

Understanding it would take some time to develop new Aston Martin products, they bought Tickford to develop automotive products for other companies. Products included a Tickford Austin Metro, a Tickford Ford Capri and even Tickford train interiors, particularly on the Jaguar XJS. Pace continued sponsoring racing events, and now sponsored all Aston Martin Owners Club events, taking a Tickford engined Nimrod Group C car owned by AMOC President Viscount Downe, which came third in the Manufacturers Championship in both 1982 and 1983. It also finished seventh in the 1982 24 Hours of Le Mans race. However, sales of production cars were now at an all time low of 30 cars produced in 1982.

As trading became tighter in the petroleum market, and Aston Martin was requiring more time and money, Gauntlett agreed to sell Hays/Pace to the Kuwait Investment Office in September 1983. As Aston Martin required greater investment, he also agreed to sell his share holding to American importer and Greek shipping tycoon Peter Livanos, who invested via his joint venture company with Nick and John Papanicalou, ALL Inc. Gauntlett remained chairman of the AML company 55% owned by ALL, with Tickford a 50/50 venture between ALL and CHI. The uneasy relationship was ended when ALL exercised options to buy a larger share in AML; CHI's residual shares were exchanged for CHI's complete ownership of Tickford, which retained development of existing Aston Martin projects. In 1984, Titan the main shipping company of the Papanicolaou's was in trouble, so Livanos's father George bought out the Papanicolaou's shares in ALL, while Gauntlett again became a shareholder with a 25% holding in AML. The deal valued Aston Martin/AML at £2 million, the year it built its 10,000th car.

Although as a result Aston Martin had to make 60 members of the workforce redundant, Gauntlett bought a stake in Italian styling house Zagato, and resurrected its collaboration with Aston Martin.

In 1986, Gauntlett negotiated the return of fictional British secret agent James Bond to Aston Martin. Cubby Broccoli had chosen to recast the character using actor Timothy Dalton, in an attempt to re-root the Bond-brand back to a more Sean Connery-like feel. Gauntlett supplied his personal pre-production Vantage for use in the filming of "The Living Daylights," and sold a Volante to Broccoli for use at his home in America. Gauntlett turned down the role of a KGB colonel in the film, however: "I would have loved to have done it but really could not afford the time."

Although the company was doing well, Gauntlett knew it needed extra funds to survive in the long term. In May 1987, Gauntlett and Prince Michael of Kent were staying at the home of Contessa Maggi, the wife of the founder of the original Mille Miglia, while watching the revival event. Another house guest was Walter Hayes, vice-President of Ford of Europe. Despite problems over the previous acquisition of AC Cars, Hayes saw the potential of the brand and the discussion resulted in Ford taking a share holding in September 1987. In 1988, having produced some 5,000 cars in 20 years, a revived economy and successful sales of limited edition Vantage, and 52 Volante Zagato coupes at £86,000 each; the company finally retired the ancient V8 and introduced the Virage range - the first new Aston launched in 20 years.

Although Gauntlett was contractually to stay as chairman for two years, his racing interests took Aston back into sports car racing in 1989 with limited European success. However, with engine rule changes for the 1990 season and the launch of the new Aston Martin Volante model, Ford provided the limited supply of Cosworth engines to the Jaguar cars racing team. As the "small Aston" DB7 would require a large engineering input, Ford agreed to take full control of Aston Martin, and Gauntlett handed over the company chairmanship to Hayes in 1991. In 1992, the Vantage version was announced, and the following year the company renewed the DB range by announcing the DB7.

The Ford era

Ford placed Aston in the Premier Automotive Group, substantially invested in new manufacturing and quickly ramped up production. In 1994, Ford opened a new factory at Banbury Road in Bloxham. In 1995, the company produced a record 700 vehicles. Until the Ford era cars had been produced by hand coachbuilding craft methods, such as the English wheel. In 1998 the 2,000th DB7 was built, and in 2002 the 6,000th, exceeding production of all previous DB models. The DB7 range was boosted by the addition of V12 Vantage models in 1999, and in 2001 the company introduced the V12-engine Vanquish.

At the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan in 2003, Aston Martin introduced the AMV8 Vantage concept car. Expected to have few changes before its introduction in 2005, the Vantage brought back the classic V8 engine to allow the company to compete in a larger market. 2003 also saw the opening of the Gaydon factory, the first purpose-built factory in Aston Martin's history. Also introduced in 2003 was the DB9 coupé, which replaced the ten-year-old DB7. A convertible version of the DB9, the DB9 Volante, was introduced at the 2004 Detroit Auto Show. In 2006, the V8 Vantage sports car entered production at the Gaydon factory, joining the DB9 and DB9 Volante.

In December 2003 Aston Martin announced it would return to motor racing in 2005. A new division was created, called Aston Martin Racing, which became responsible, together with Prodrive, for the design, development, and management of the DBR9 program. The DBR9 competes in the GT class in sports car races, including the world-famous 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Sale by Ford

In 2006, under mounting financial pressure, an internal review of costs and realisable value on investment led Ford to consider divesting itself of parts of its Premier Automotive Group. After suggestions of selling Jaguar Cars, Land Rover or Volvo Cars, Ford appointed UBS AG to sell Aston Martin by auction. At the end of August 2006, Ford announced that it would be willing to sell all or part of Aston Martin. Bill Ford said: "As part of our on going strategic review, we have determined that Aston Martin may be an attractive opportunity to raise capital and generate value".

The first round of the auction closed on 30 November 2006. One of the four survivors was Syrian-born billionaire Simon Halabi, while the Australian bid included James Packer, Australia's second richest man. The German auto newspaper *Autobild* reported on 2 February 2007 that the luxury goods conglomerate LVMH had bought the company for an undisclosed sum. The paper cited "anonymous, but well-placed sources" with the information. It was later reported by Autocar magazine that LVMH had denied the news as "rubbish".

2007 - A new era begins



On 12 March 2007 a consortium led by Prodrive chairman David Richards purchased Aston Martin for £475m/\$848m. Prodrive has no financial involvement in the deal. Ford will keep a stake in the company (valued at £ 40 million / \$ 70 million). The consortium also consisted of John Sindors, an Aston Martin collector; and two Kuwaiti investment companies, Investment Dar and Adeem Investment Co.

On 19 July 2007 the last car, a Vanquish S, was produced at the Newport Pagnell plant. Nearly 13,000 cars had been made there since 1955. All production was concentrated at Gaydon, with the old premises in Tickford Street remaining in Aston Martin ownership as the restoration and service department.

Aston Martin has also boosted its worldwide appeal by opening more dealers in Europe, as well as branches in China for the first time in its 93 year history in Beijing and Shanghai. This has brought their dealership programme to 120 dealers in 28 countries.

On 1 September 2008, Aston Martin announced the revival of the Lagonda marque. A concept will be shown in 2009, coinciding with the brand's 100th anniversary. The first production cars should come in 2012.

In December 2008, Aston Martin announced that it would cut its 1850 workforce by 600.

2009 - Return to Le Mans



In January 2009 it was announced that the company was entering the 2009 Le Mans 24 Hours race as a factory team in the prestigious LMP1 division. After competing throughout the 2008 season with a Lola B08/60 LMP1 Coupe under the Charouz Racing banner, Aston Martin will use a slightly modified Lola LMP1 design for their programme. Three Lola-Aston Martins have been entered in the 2009 Le Mans 24 Hours by Aston Martin but only two have been confirmed with sponsorship. Aston Martin will also compete in the complete Le Mans series with the Lola-Aston Martin LMP cars, starting at Barcelona in early April. The programme got off to an unfortunate start at the pre season Paul Ricard test on March 8 when Tomas Enge destroyed the 007 car in an accident. Aston Martin Racing have subsequently taken delivery of a new Lola to replace the written off chassis.

Models

Pre-war cars

- 1921-1925 Aston Martin Standard Sports
- 1927-1932 Aston Martin First Series
- 1929-1932 Aston Martin International
- 1932-1932 Aston Martin International Le Mans
- 1932-1934 Aston Martin Le Mans
- 1933-1934 Aston Martin 12/50 Standard
- 1934-1936 Aston Martin Mk II
- 1934-1936 Aston Martin Ulster
- 1936-1938 Aston Martin 2 litre Speed
- 1937-1939 Aston Martin 15/98
- 1939-1939 Aston Martin 2 litre C-Type

Post-war Sports and GT cars

- 1948–1950 Aston Martin 2-Litre Sports (DB1)
- 1950–1953 Aston Martin DB2
- 1953–1957 Aston Martin DB2/4
- 1957–1959 Aston Martin DB Mark III
- 1958–1963 Aston Martin DB4
- 1961–1963 Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato
- 1963–1965 Aston Martin DB5
- 1965–1969 Aston Martin DB6
- 1967–1972 Aston Martin DBS
- 1969–1989 Aston Martin V8
- 1977–1989 Aston Martin V8 Vantage
- 1986–1990 Aston Martin V8 Zagato
- 1989–2000 Aston Martin Virage
- 1989–1996 Aston Martin Virage/Virage Volante
- 1993–2000 Aston Martin Vantage
- 1996–2000 Aston Martin V8 Coupe/V8 Volante
- 1993–2003 Aston Martin DB7/DB7 Vantage
- 2002–2004 Aston Martin DB AR1
- 2001–2007 Aston Martin V12 Vanquish
- 2004–2007 Aston Martin V12 Vanquish S
- 2004– Aston Martin DB9
- 2005– Aston Martin V8 and V12 Vantage
- 2007– Aston Martin DBS V12
- 2009– Aston Martin One-77

Other

- 1944 Aston Martin Atom (concept)
- 1961–1964 Lagonda Rapide
- 1976–1989 Aston Martin Lagonda
- 1980 Aston Martin Bulldog (concept)
- 1993 Lagonda Vignale (concept)
- 2008– Aston Martin Rapide
- 2007 Aston Martin V12 Vantage RS (concept)
- 2008 Aston Martin Vanquish S

Current models

- V8 Vantage, V8 Vantage Roadster & V12 Vantage RS
- Aston Martin DB9 & DB9 Volante
- Aston Martin DBS V12

Future models



- Rapide - Addition to the range in 2009 - a long, 4-seater Grand Tourer
- A DBX model was mentioned on the call announcing the sale of Aston Martin to the consortium led by David Richards and CEO, Ulrich Bez. No further details were provided. The DBX was later revealed to be a possible new flagship for Aston Martin based on the Zagato to compete against the Mercedes McLaren SLR, with speed over 205 mph (330 km/h) and a V12 mid engine tuned to produce 700 bhp. This is now most likely the newly revealed Aston Martin One-77.
- Aston Martin V12 Vantage RS (600bhp) - Announced at the official opening of Aston Martin's first-ever dedicated design centre in Gaydon, Warwickshire, on Tuesday 11 December 2007.















Arthur Ali
ARTHUR ALI







