

ASTON MARTIN

■ ASTON MARTIN DB2/
DB2.4 & DB MKIII

Traveller tycoon David Brown, who had bought Aston Martin in 1947, made something of a false start with the underpowered four-cylinder Aston Martin DB1 of 1948. He more than redeemed himself, however, with the DB2 of 1950, a car that set the pace for all subsequent Astons. Here was a all-around superb car with modern performance and old-world charm packing a smooth, powerful six-cylinder twin-cam 116bhp engine from the Lagonda 2.6 saloon (Brown had the Lagonda 2.6 saloon, in 1947). "DB"



ASTON MARTIN DB2, DB2.4, DB MK II & DB MKIII (1950-59)

Engine	1058cc, straight six
Capacity	2040-2022cc
Power	167-196bhp
Transmission	4-speed manual
Top speed	115-130mph (185-209kph)
No. built	1,720

had his rights held high; there would be no more four-cylinder Astons.

Clad in handsome open or closed alloy bodywork by Frank Heyrick, these cars would top 115mph (185kph) with the standard engine, and more than 120mph (193kph) in high-compression Vantage form, which by early '50s standards represented superior performance. Underneath, the classic cradleless chassis, with its pre-war belt-and-leaves rectangular section tubing, produced thoroughbred handling of the highest order. Coil spring, the live rear axle was located by trailing links - with



■ **Year Displaced:** Heyrick's big heart and a few Frank's smart shape.

■ **CRASH:** All models had the most power and could achieve up to 130mph (209kph).

■ **1957:** The engine was designed by R.D. Bentley and was originally intended for a Lagonda saloon.



a Panhard-style high-side-leads the car was capable of generating - and damped by its strong lever-arms. Front suspension was unusual, a trailing-link design with a main lower locating member running across the front of the car, its shaft resting in widely-spaced bearing with continuous oil-bath lubrication. It had big wire wheels; 15-in (38cm) centre-lockers shod with the best contemporary high-speed Dunlop crumpleys.

For the DB2.4 of 1953, Heyrick's smoothly contoured fastback shape was made more practical, but so pretty, by the addition of rear wing and a side-hinged rear hatch which meant stretching the tail by 10 inches. By the time the MKIII arrived, the DB2 grille had evolved into a wide mouth (derived from the DB4 of 1959) and small fins had sprouted on the wings with slim tail lights.

The WO Bentley-designed twin-cam six, in three-litre form since 1954, was upgraded for the MKIII with a stiffer

block, beefier crank, and much improved timing chain and intake manifolds. Its broadened better, too, thanks to the larger valves and higher-lift camshafts, technology lifted from the latest DB3-S racers. Twin SU carburettors remained, but the "DBA" engine produced 162bhp at 5500rpm.

Mildly tweaked three-litre engines were fitted to a handful of MKIIs in 1956, of which 10 had a Weber-carbed, twin-exhaust engine giving 194bhp (known as DBII), while a further 47 had a 178bhp running 85s but the better cams and twin exhaust of the DB3.

David Brown supplied the gearbox on all models. It had a crash first gear and the option of overdrive on top gear on the MKIII, giving 28.4 per 1000rpm. Gearing front discs were another innovation on the MKIII.

The DB MKIII was replaced by the DB4, although production overlapped for some months. The last MKIII was built in July 1959.



■ **1957:** The DB2.4 had an early form of rear hatch and two extra seats in the back. The body was aluminium.

■ **1950:** Left: A functional interior featured a full set of instruments, a big wheel and full leather trim. The build quality was superb.

■ **1956:** The MKIII had a bigger, wider grille, a three-litre engine and disc brakes, plus the option of overdrive.

■ **1950:** All cars featured a separate chassis and unusual trailing-link front suspension.

