

# PRE-OWNED ASTON MARTIN BUYER'S GUIDE

A Guide for Potential Buyers Looking for Advice on VH-Platform Aston Martins

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## INTRODUCTION

Aston Martins built on the VH Platform are those cars built between 2004 and 2018, and this includes the DB9, the V8 Vantage, V12 Vantage, Virage, Rapide, and Vanquish. This guide of tips and pointers has been created from feedback from many Aston owners and mechanics who have worked on the cars, and the goal is to assist potential buyers by giving them the basic knowledge they need to assess a car that they may be purchasing. This document will be updated over time as new information becomes available. The guide is not meant to list every little thing that can go wrong on one of these cars, but rather to present known common issues that a buyer should be aware of.

## RESOURCES FOR FINDING A PRE-OWNED ASTON MARTIN

### 1. Aston Martin's Dealers Listings ([preowned.astonmartin.com](http://preowned.astonmartin.com))

This will give you a listing of almost every used Aston Martin for sale at every Aston dealership around the world. It is generally safest to buy a used Aston from an Aston dealership. For one they have likely vetted the car. Cars that have major issues or have been red-flagged by Aston Martin will usually not be accepted by dealerships for trade or consignment. Additionally, they likely know the original owner and most likely did the maintenance on the car, so they'll be able to tell you more about the history of the car and bring up any maintenance records on it.

### 2. duPont Registry ([dupontregistry.com](http://dupontregistry.com))

This site is a good resource for finding any exotic car. Many of the Astons that come up in this listing will be the same ones that come up in the dealer listings, but it will also include a lot of cars sold by private owners or sold by other dealerships who got them as trade-ins.

### 3. eBay Motors ([ebay.com](http://ebay.com))

Yes, you can buy cars on eBay. Once again, this is going to be mostly a duplicate of the listings you find on the other sites, but eBay gives you better options for remembering listings you like, and allows you to bid on the cars that are being auctioned rather than sold.

## GENERAL BUYER INFORMATION

- Whether you buy the car from an Aston Martin dealership or not, it is still *highly* recommended that you have a certified Aston Martin mechanic check the car out first. Your neighbor's brother who's "good with cars" isn't going to have a clue what to look for in one of these exotics, so it's worth paying to have an expert check it out because what looks like a great deal can cost you tens of thousands of dollars if something isn't right with the car. A full inspection may cost you \$600, but consider it money well spent.
- You may be tempted to buy, say, a 2010 model year car because it is significantly less expensive than a 2011. However, the same model Aston often undergoes major updates over time, and sometimes those revisions are major and/or important, so educate yourself on the differences before going with the one that's less expensive.
- VH Platform Aston Martins have proven themselves to generally be quite reliable cars, but even minor issues can be extremely costly because that's the nature of owning an Exotic. The older the car the more difficult it may be to find certain parts, therefore, the maintenance cost may be inversely proportional to the cost of the car. For example, replacing the windshield on a 2003 Vanquish can set you back \$14,000 simply because replacements are rare and may have to come from overseas.

## COMMON ISSUES

- The single most common major issue we have seen with any of the VH-Platform Astons deals with the adhesives used to attach trim and leather. The adhesives Aston Martin uses simply do not hold up well in hot climates, so it is very common for trim and leather to become detached. When Aston Martin wraps leather around a panel they don't put much extra margin on the backside, so when leather starts to delaminate on the edges it tends to detach rather severely. Leather will also tend to bubble in the middle as the adhesive gives out. So, the general rule is never buy an Aston that has been left outside for even short periods of time (even a few days during the summer in Texas) without doing a very thorough examination of every inch of leather.
- Astons are very low clearance cars, and everyone has bottomed out their car. Usually, nothing bad happens, but sometimes it can cause damage such as a cracked air box (common on the Vantage). Always have the car inspected on a lift and be sure that there are no serious issues caused by the car bottoming out or scraping.
- The older a car gets the more likely it is that the pneumatic struts used in the hood, trunk, and doors will begin to fail and need replacement, so always check that everything opens and stays open.
- Astons are made by hand, but as Jeremy Clarkson used to say "Made by hand just means the doors will fall off." This is often true. Astons tend to have misaligned body panels, inconsistent gaps, and other random things caused by the lack of a precision robot building the car. Be on the lookout for parts that are coming loose, unacceptable

gaps in the body panels, etc. Also be sure to listen for squeaks and rattles because these cars tend to have more of that than, say, a robot-built Lexus.

- Like any car, Astons sometimes get recalls. Be sure your car has had all recalls taken care of.
- Also be on the lookout for modifications that may affect the value of the car or affect its performance. Some owners like to tweak their cars, but that often diminishes the value of the car, so know what mods have been made. The most common modification is replacing the stock exhaust with a Quicksilver exhaust. If that's your thing then you may be okay with this, but if you were expecting your car to sound like an Aston Martin then you might want one without a Quicksilver modification.
- All VH Platform Astons have a convertible (Roadster or Volante) variant. These mechanisms are complex and often develop problems. Be sure to thoroughly test the convertible top several times up-down-up-down to be sure it is working properly.
- Condensation in the headlights is quite common, and a little bit of fog that goes away when it heats up is probably normal, but if it's extreme or there is standing water in there then it could be a sign of a more serious leak. Same with the tail lights.
- Older cars leak. This pretty much goes for every type of car, but according to owner reports it is more common in Astons than, say, a Honda. Just be sure that when you're inspecting the underside of the car there are no signs of a fluid leak.
- Ask where the service was performed, and make sure it was done by someone certified to work on Aston Martins. Oil changes should have been performed regularly along with replacing other various fluids and filters according to Aston Martin's schedule.
- Most of the VH platform Astons came with both a glass key and a plastic valet key - sometimes multiples of each. Be sure you're getting all of the proper keys and that each one works because replacement keys are incredibly expensive.
- When it comes to mileage you might think that lower is better, and that's probably true to a point, but if you see a 5 year old car with only 1000 miles on it... that's not good. That means that car has basically been sitting there for 5 years, and nothing could be worse for it. All cars, especially performance cars need to be driven to keep them operating properly. As a general rule you want to see at least 1,000 miles per year on any Aston.
- Tires. Verify all date codes are within 2 years. High performance tires get hard and lose traction at about 3+ years. Tread depth on a low mileage car is no indication of tire life. If tires are more than 3 years old count on replacing them and the cost.
- In a normal car replacing the battery is a simple process that anyone can do. No so much in an Aston. It's expensive. If the battery is over 3 years old assume you'll need to replace it, and ask if it was kept on a trickle charger because that will greatly extend its life.
- If the car has a clear bra see if it is yellowing and needing replacement. Older Astons likely have the older 3M clearbra which yellows in just a few years. Newer cars have a better clearbra material that won't yellow.
- Astons are bespoke vehicles, and people often order them with unusual and impractical choices such as the color of the dashboard. Light or vibrant colored dashboards create serious glare making it difficult to drive on bright, sunny days.

## V8 & V12 VANTAGE ISSUES

- The clutch in a Vantage tends to need replacing every 20-30k miles. It costs ~\$7500 to replace it. Know if your car is going to need one soon.
- The gearbox itself seems very reliable in the Vantages, but it is also the part that we've seen more issues with than any other major mechanical part. It's always something minor, but the cars will often develop problems shifting, but it's usually just due to a cable that fell out of a channel or something like that. Your car should shift quickly into any gear. If it is slow or has trouble then it is probably either the clutch or one of the other minor issues.
- Be aware that the 2006-2008 Vantages have the old Sportshift gearbox, the smaller 4.3L engine, and the older interior. They got all the mechanical and design kinks worked out in the 2009's which have the Sportshift II, the 4.7L engine, improved suspension, and better interior.
- Just about everyone who has owned a Vantage has had the gas flap get stuck. This is an extremely common problem. Be sure the gas flap opens and closes properly.
- All Astons have mufflers with a bypass valve. This allows the car's computer to control how loud the exhaust is by opening the valve when you punch the gas, and closing it when you're cruising. On the Vantages some people have pulled Fuse #22 which disables the bypass leaving it open and loud all the time. Just be aware if your car has the fuse or not so that you can decide what to do about it.

## DB9 ISSUES (including Virage which is really a DB9)

- Be sure you don't hear a "ticking" sound when driving the car slowly. There was a recall on the axles of some ~2013-2014 DB9s because of a ticking problem. Just be aware if your car was one with the recall and if it was performed.
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## RAPIDE ISSUES

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## VANQUISH ISSUES

- It is highly recommended that you get a 2015 or later Vanquish as these have the much improved 8-speed gear box which is a world of difference better than the 6-speed in the

2013-2014 cars. It makes the car significantly faster, more fuel efficient, and simply feels better.

