

The Stunning Aston Martin Rapide S

When Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford founded Aston Martin in 1913, they would never have imagined that the brand would become one of the most sought after and that it would become the star of a number of James Bond films.



An early racing model was the Ulster and only a few were ever built, today they command a figure counted in millions of pounds.

On and off the race track Aston Martin has found fame on circuits such as Le Mans. The famous American driver who went on to construct his own cars Carroll Shelby won the famous twenty four hour race in 1959 and to honour his achievement recently the famous Swiss watch company Baume & Mercier launched a special edition watch in his honour.

Local drivers have taken to the track driving an Aston Martin; Richard Lyons currently races one, a highly respected endurance driver.

My interest in the brand was rekindled recently with the opening of a new Aston Martin showroom at Charles Hurst Belfast and post the event I was approached would I be interested in taking a test drive. I did not have to be asked a second time.

On the evening of the launch Belfast was treated to the launch of the DB10, the new car for Mr. Bond in his latest film. Might this be my test car, not a chance, this model will never go into production.

My test car was the Rapide S; surely one of the most glamorous four door, four seater cars in the world and a complete head turner with its racy lines, every inch of metal an Aston Martin.

The Rapide S combines sheer luxury with performance and despite its generous dimensions on the road it handles like a well engineered hot hatch. A near perfect 49:51 front / rear weight distribution means it is unique, a true sports car with four-





doors and weighing just 1990kg, it is a four-door car with world-class dynamics. A four-door car that is every inch a sports car.

Beneath its sleek bonnet rests a powerful AM29 V12 engine with 552bhp enough to take you beyond the 200mph barrier, so the chance of ever sampling the performance potential of this car in Northern

Ireland is very remote. The sprint from rest to 62mph takes a mere 4.2 seconds.

I had the opportunity to try the Rapide S over a variety of roads including the one that winds its way from Newtownards down the Ards Peninsula and to Kirkistown race circuit where a number of enthusiasts at a car race meeting surrounded the car and a few recalled the stories of former Astons such as the Ulster.

While the sleek lines of this car catch the eye immediately the interior bristles with luxury thanks to the use of quality materials and workmanship; mass production is not in the Aston Martin vocabulary.

What impressed so much about this car, it is a supercar no doubt, but unlike so many it is one that you could use everyday of the week, not just a weekend wonder. So the person who is lucky enough to own one can attain maximum usage.

Sad to say I will never ever own one, but it was a joy to be allowed to test one for a few days.



Ian Lynas