

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Aston Martin Rapide



**Aston Martin will be revealing a four-door saloon concept at Detroit next week utilising the flexible VH platform of the DB9 and V8 Vantage. The car will have a longer wheelbase and slightly increased weight, so the 6.0 litre V12 will be upgraded to produce more power to suit, as will the suspension, steering and brakes.**

The increase in length is by 30 cms (25 cms within the wheelbase), thus accommodating the extra doors and 'proper' rear seats compared to the DB9. Height has been increased by 4 cms, and the car's a little wider at the rear compared to its 2 + 2 cousin. The result is a sporting saloon with the current model range's DNA, yet hinting at Astons of old with their greater interior and luggage space in comparison with cars from other equivalent marques such as Ferrari and Porsche. The closest comparison would be Maserati's Quattroporte, but the Rapide is likely to be nearer in price to the Ferrari 612 Scaglietti if - and when - it sees production in a few years time.

A practical feature of the car carried over from the V8 Vantage (and also seen as a ground-breaking feature of the DB2/4 in the '50s) is the hatchback boot that should allow a party of four to carry enough luggage for a long weekend away. The name 'Rapide' is one formerly used by Lagonda, the sister company bought by David Brown at the same time as Aston Martin.



The car is the work of the company's Design Director Marek Reichman, in conjunction with CEO Dr Ulrich Bez, and started as a series of sketches in the summer of 2005, with the final model completed just before Christmas.

The company has announced no plans to build the Rapide, and will be giving more details at its official launch in Detroit on Monday, 9th January 2006.

Classic Driver will carry full details of this exciting project as soon as they are published.

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