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Aston Martin DB11 V12 Coupé – Road Test

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Author: Robin Roberts

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Part of their “second century” plan will see Aston Martin roll out another new generation of SUV cars at St Athan, near Cowbridge, South Wales before the decade is out, while it continues making models at Gaydon and has recommissioned its Newport Pagnell facility for specialist projects.

The Gaydon-built DB11 is the natural successor to the DB9 and is the new figurehead for the series so many know and love, like the DB2/4, DB5 and the DB9 as well as the DB10 created for the James Bond film franchise.



The V12 engine is the most powerful regular production engine in an Aston Martin with advanced mechanical, software and fuel technology to stretch economy without detracting from the performance and aural attributes of the powerhouse. The figures really speak for themselves in acceleration, top-speed and consumption.

What is not seen in the figures but felt through the driver's hands, feet and seat of pants is the way it steers, rides, handles, brakes, inspiring and impressing with every journey. The new electronic brain in the V12 includes driver-chosen GT, Sport and Sport Plus modes to progressively sharpen responses from the engine and its highly sophisticated eight-speed ZF transmission which can be left to its own devices or manually massaged to bring out the best.

The cockpit is dominated by a 12-inch liquid crystal display for speedometer, tachometer and essential driver information and a centrally placed eight-inch infotainment screen for navigation, the high quality sound system and wifi connectivity, together with cameras and sensors to aid parking.



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Very wide opening doors give excellent front seats' access but it's more of a fiddle to squeeze into the two bucket back-seats and the legroom behind is very short and contrasts with that in the front. Headroom is adequate in the front, less so behind, and there is poor oddments room throughout, and a surprisingly small boot for a grand-tourer of its calibre.

Fortunately, the DB11 is quick enough to make longer journeys easily accomplished and you do so in superb comfort thanks to the new platform and suspension. It is slightly firm but not at all hard, it soaks up bumps and ridges without complaint or loss of composure and when you are pressing on around some twisting tracks it sticks like glue thanks to its very big wheels and tyres, with little roll or pitching.

The handling is inspiring and safe, the electric steering pin-sharp and progressive while the massive steel brakes result in dramatic deceleration.



It's a big car but with familiarity it actually feels smaller and that's down to its dynamic qualities and responses, its roadholding and agility. A driver is unlikely to ever find its limits of adhesion except on winter roads.

The leather filled interior is impressive and individual areas can be finished from a lengthy list of choices, but I thought the "marbled" door casings in the test car looked out of place.

The ultra smooth exterior lines of the DB11 really flow from front to back, around both ends and over the roof in a most satisfying style which captures airflow to improve stability and cooling at the same time.

VERDICT

Outwardly it engenders comments about its styling and inside it makes occupants comment on its luxury, but for the driver it simply makes your heart beat and feel more at one with the world, and your DB11 of course.

For: Iconic British brand, 2+2 coupé styling, comfort, performance, powertrain and handling.

Against: Small boot and oddments space, limited rear legroom and some noise intrusion.



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Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Sec. in Brief:

Aston Martin DB11 V12, two door Coupé.

Price: £157,900.

Mechanical: 600 bhp, 5.2 litre, V12 cylinder, turbo-petrol engine, 700 Nm (516 lb.ft) at 1,500 rpm, eight-speed auto/manual transmission, rear wheel drive.



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Performance: 200 mph; 0-62 mph 3.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 24 mpg.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 265 g/km, VED road tax £2000 First Year/£140 Standard Rate, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 50 tba.

Warranty: Two years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.74 m (15.55 ft), W 1.94 m (6.36 ft), H 1.28 m (4.20 ft), bootspace: 270 litres (9.53 cu.ft), two doors/four seats.