



GAVIN MCGUIRE FOR FINE VETERAN TO POST VINTAGE AUTOMOBILES AND AUTO ART

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Aston Martin Two Litre Sports/DB1 Le Mans car

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Year 1949

Description 1949 Le Man Aston Martin Two-Litre Sports, Chassis number AMC/49/5, Registration number UMD 123. The history of Aston Martin is very well documented in various books written by marque experts and doesn't need any explanation from me though I have inevitably benefitted from reading their very informative works! However the Two Litre Sports (which became known as the DB1 after the 1950 introduction of the DB2) may be less well known as they only made 15 of them so I will summarise it here. Just before the outbreak of World War Two Aston Martins's designer Claude Hill was given the job of designing a new car which became known as the Atom. Although production plans were put into abeyance

for the war years, development work continued on a part time basis and when time permitted Hill was able to design a new four cylinder engine. Aston Martin, like many other small manufacturers of specialist high quality performance cars, suffered from underfunding and was undoubtedly saved by the arrival of engineer and industrialist David Brown. He sanctioned the development of the Atom project into a fully fledged road car which was launched in 1948 as the Two Litre Sports. In standard form the car was powered by Claude Hill's 1970 cc four cylinder push rod five bearing crankshaft engine which produced around 90 bhp though performance could be improved with a high compression (raised from 7.25:1 to 8.5:1) Spa cylinder head. Apparently 115 bhp could be achieved with a 10:1 compression ratio and special flat top alloy pistons. N.B. in 1953 the Aston Martin Works fitted this car with twin cam 2.5 Litre DB2 Vantage engine. The very stylish alloy body, designed by Frank Feeley and reminiscent of his Lagonda cars, is very much in the vogue you would expect to find amongst the more advanced post war sports cars. You can see similar looking flowing coachwork on several 1940/50 Alfa Romeos and Jaguar's XK 120 amongst others. The main technical aspects of this car are described further on so at this point I will summarise its general appearance, overall condition and driving characteristics. It is a very striking and elegant car which will immediately attract attention at any car event as, apart from its good looks, the chances are that most people won't have seen one before. It can best be described as although maybe not in 100% concours show order but a road going car in really presentable, very smart and sound throughout. The high quality paintwork has a glossy finish with no obvious defects apart from the odd small scratch, the brightwork is also very good and the body is sound with no nasty rattles even when driven on uneven roads. The upholstery, interior trim and carpets are smart and the hood is fine though it does have a couple of small tears. The engine compartment and underside of the car are clean and workmanlike though have clearly not been prepared with concours events in mind as the car is in regular use. The engine starts readily, runs smoothly and pulls very well throughout its range without making any unpleasant or expensive sounding noises and it maintains good water temperature and engine oil pressure. The synchromesh gearbox is also really nice and very easy to use. There are no untoward rattles from the suspension or nasty noises from the transmission and back axle. In summary the car is great to look at, really good fun to drive and will definitely reward a press-on approach to motoring! UMD123 can be viewed by appointment at its owner's premises in New Zealand. YOU CAN SEE THE CAR IN ACTION ON YOUTUBE BY CLICKING ON THE LINK IN THE TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THIS PAGE THEN CLICKING THE START ARROW IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PICTURE. N.B. THE FIRST TIME YOU PLAY A VIDEO ON YOUTUBE IT WILL PAUSE SEVERAL TIMES WHILE IT LOADS SECTIONS OF THE FILE. WHEN THE VIDEO FINISHES CLICK REPLAY AND IT WILL THEN RUN RIGHT THROUGH WITHOUT STOPPING.

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