



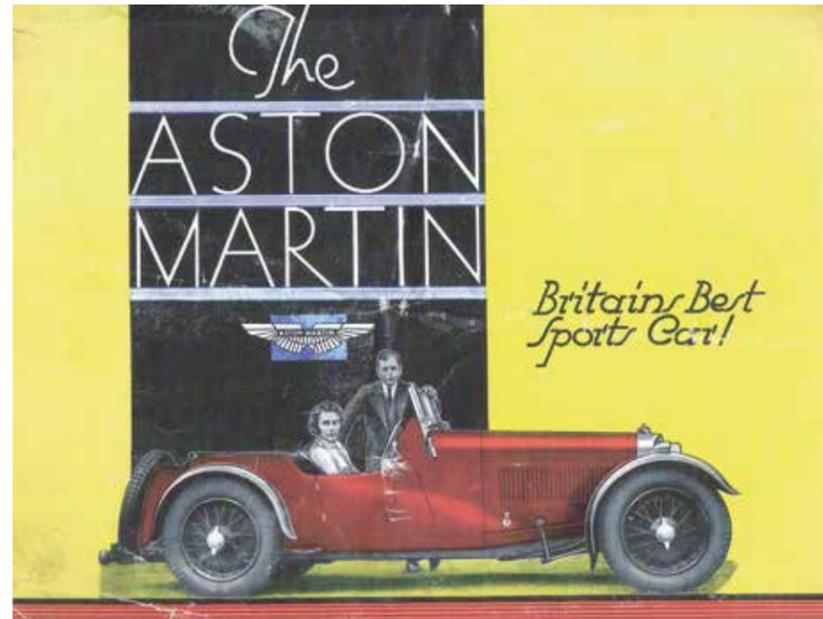
1933 ASTON MARTIN LE MANS

SPECIAL 4-SEATER

STEPHEN ARCHER



The Le Mans model was Aston Martin's most successful pre-war model and with good reason. When one considers the Bertelli line of road cars; The International (1929-1932) Le Mans (1932-1933) and the MKII (1934-1935) it is the Le Mans that epitomises the race ready, raffish and truly sporting style that defined Aston Martin then. To a large degree, today's cars can be traced back to the spirit of the Le Mans Model: Finely engineered grand tourers with performance, style and race pedigree.



"LE MANS" Special 4-Seater

"Long distance road racing is our experimental department"

A further development of the Le Mans type is this SPECIAL Long Chassis Model. It has been evolved to provide a Sports Car of similar performance, with accommodation for four people.

The lengthened chassis, in addition to providing adequate additional seating, permits of still more sweeping and graceful body lines. The specification is general in that of the two seater model, although certain variations of equipment have been made to meet general requirements. For instance, the windscreen has two detachable side wings. When the main screen is folded flat over the bonnet, these two wings may be detached from the sides and fixed in position to form small individual screens for driver and passenger.

4 SEATER "SPECIAL" £625 (10 1/2 chassis) 80/85 m.p.h.

ASTON-MARTIN
A PRODUCT OF BRITISH CRAFTSMANSHIP

THE BERTELLI ASTON MARTINS

This was the pinnacle of 'Bert' Bertelli's '2nd series' of the 1 1/2 Litre line of cars that he had presided over since his arrival at Aston Martin in 1926. The Le Mans model incarnation was the sleekest, most powerful model to date and it had its roots firmly rooted in Aston Martin's racing successes of 1931 and 1932. These were crucial years for the development of the 1 1/2 Litre model into a robust, race proven Sports car. The 1932 Team car chassis were to all intents identical to the road car version that would appear in early 1932. The brochure above may appear to be the product of hyperbole with Art Deco but the model was truly proven on track and in rallies of the period. Few cars could make that claim. At Le Mans, works team cars finished 5th and 7th overall and 1st and 2nd in class.

Sixty Five Le Mans would be built during 1932 and 1933 and in 1933 a record 106 cars were built. At the Motor Show in October the Le Mans 'Special' 4 seater was shown for the first time. Just fifteen 'Special' Long chassis Le Mans would be built, the last car was built in December 1933, it also happened to be the very last Le Mans : L3/329/L, BME 208.



LE MANS SPECIFICATION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The long chassis four seater version of the 'Le Mans' was known as the 'Le Mans Special 4 Seater'. With the same low frontal appearance including the same radiator and headlamps with fitted stone guards as the short chassis 'Le Mans', the 'Special 4 Seater' was a very attractive car.

The low body was identical to the short chassis up to the bulkhead, with two doors but without the 'scalloped' of the short chassis model. It could comfortably seat four adults, the rear seats fitting ahead of the rear axle by virtue of the lengthened chassis, with the rear passengers feet fitting in wells directly beneath the front seats which are mounted on top of the chassis.

It was a genuine sporting touring car, with a high specification throughout. The clever opening boot incorporated a parcel shelf which folded down over the fuel tank to provide a flat platform for additional luggage. A separate compartment allowed for the storage of the four side weather curtains. The spare wheel was mounted on the sloping boot.



CHASSIS:

- ◆ Steel ladder chassis made by Vickers
- ◆ 'Underslung' of the rear axle
- ◆ Semi elliptical leaf springs
- ◆ Hartford adjustable shock absorbers
- ◆ 'Marles' worm and floating peg with hemispherical bearings and drop link
- ◆ 'Rudge Whitworth' 52 mm 18" wire wheels with sixty spokes and 2 3/4" rims fitted with 5.25 tyres.
- ◆ 1 1/4" diameter aluminium drums with shrunk-in steel liners and cam operated 1 1/2" aluminium shoes, mounted on two pivots. Brakes actuated by fully enclosed 'Bowden' cables via two cross shafts in spherical bearings linked by short pushrod.
- ◆ The handbrake operates all four brakes.

BODY (BY HARRY BERTELLI):

- ◆ Aluminium over ash frame
- ◆ Cast aluminium bulkheads
- ◆ Helmet wings
- ◆ Folding hood with side screens
- ◆ Fold flat windscreen
- ◆ Instrumentation by Jaeger

ENGINE:

- ◆ 1493 cc. Bore 69.3 mm, stroke 99 mm.

- ◆ Dry Sump lubrication.
- ◆ Compression ratio: 7.5:1 using the second series cylinder head as also used in the short chassis 'Le Mans' models.
- ◆ Power: approximately 70 bhp at 4500 rpm
- ◆ Torque: approximately 65 lbft.
- ◆ Twin SU 1 1/8" side draughts.
- ◆ Magneto ignition.
- ◆ Two 'PetroFit' SU Fuel pumps.

TRANSMISSION:

- ◆ Aston Martin designed four speed crash gearbox with constant mesh main shaft and layshaft and dog clutch fourth speed with straight cut David Brown gears. The aluminium casing mounted in unit with the engine on an aluminium bell-housing.
- ◆ Borg and Beck dry plate clutch had a six spring cover plate.
- ◆ Final drive by splined shaft to an E.N.V. differential

DIMENSIONS:

- Wheelbase: 10'
- Track: 4' 4"
- Length: 14' 5"
- Width: 5' 5"
- Height: 4' 7" (hood raised).
- Weight: 23 cwt.
- Price. £625



LORD DOUNE

In its November 1964 edition, the Newsletter of the 'Vintage Sports Car Club' saw Major Gold offering 'BME 208' for £495, described as being "100% original" and in "Concours Condition". Had Lord Doune wished to consider something less expensive the same Newsletter offered a 1929 Alfa Romeo 6C for £240, or if tempted to spend more then a 1940 4½ Litre Bentley DHC was available for £625.

Armed with the Newsletter and train times noted in its margin (Waterloo at 1.24 pm would arrive at Bracknell at 2.19 pm), Lord Doune proceeded to Bracknell to inspect the car.

Such was the ethics of the day that on January 16th 1965 Major Gold sent a hand-written letter to Lord Doune acknowledging receipt of a cheque for the full asking price, recommending that he join 'The Aston Martin Owners Club' given that it "promotes several enjoyable meetings". In the absence of neither the factory nor club producing an Owners Manual, the letter proceeded to include key information on magneto timing, valve timing, and gap clearances, all for the benefit of the new owner. Major Gold also provided a hand-written summary of the appropriate oils, temperatures, and starting procedure etcetera.

A Mr Latham of Grantham Lincolnshire was employed to drive the car from Berkshire to Scotland, though in his letter to Lord Doune of January 3rd 1965 he regretted that a severe cold required that the trip be delayed for a week. Writing again on January 19th 1965 after delivering the car safely to Scotland, Latham eulogised on the pleasure of driving the Aston Martin versus the "tin boxes" that his job required of him, noting also that he thought the camshaft "may be worn", the piston rings "a bit sloppy", the differential "noisy", and the brakes "below par", though quickly adding that other than these items the car was "very good"!

After a ten hour drive from Grantham to Scotland he thanked Lord Doune for ensuring that his "welfare" was well taken care of by Mr and Mrs Baird, members of Doune's household staff.

THE DOUNE COLLECTION

In 1963 Peter Hugo compiled and wrote the book, *Private Motor Car Collections of Great Britain*, including 'The Doune collection' in Perthshire which became a well-known Museum for motoring enthusiasts.

Accumulated over a period of twenty years, Hugo described the Collection as an extension of one man's personality, in this case the Gentleman Lord Doune. When pressed on the motoring philosophy behind the Collection Doune stated, "These are good examples of cars that I particularly like and I am fortunate to be able to own them". The Collection became legendary in Lord Doune's time until it was dispersed after the Museum closed in 1998.

In correspondence with P.S. Nicholson (Forres) Ltd Perthshire regarding the maintenance of 'BME 208', Lord Doune referred to it as his "Wife's car", a meaningful wedding present no doubt for Lady Malvina Murray, daughter of the 7th Earl of Mansfield, whom he had married shortly after purchasing the car.

Much has been written of the many interesting and historically important cars in the Collection, some of the most notable being the 1938 Alfa Romeo 2.9 Litre Le Mans by Touring, the 1938 Bugatti Type 57C Drophead by Aravis, and the 1934 Maserati 8CM of Whitney Straight, all of which made worthy companions for 'BME 208'.

LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Mr Peter Dubsy of Vienna Austria purchased the car from Lukas Huni in 2001 and engaged Ecurie Bertelli Limited, then the World's leading pre-war Aston Martin specialist, to maintain the car. Mr Dubsy was active within the 'Vintage Sports Car Club' and secured its 'Buff' Eligibility Document in February 2004. He campaigned the car extensively at many European events.

TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

In 2005 Ecurie Bertelli sold the car to Monsieur Philippe Lantanier of Paris who secured its FIVA Identity Card in 2006 and actively campaigned the car in events such as the Le Mans Classic. The car remained in French ownership when it passed from Monsieur Lantanier to Monsieur Jean Marie Maréchal of Provence who kept the car for private touring until 2019.





SUMMARY

- ◆ One of fifteen produced and the last 'Le Mans' built
- ◆ Part of the Lord Doune collection for thirty three years
- ◆ GBP45,502 of work performed by 'Ecurie Bertelli' between 2005 and 2010
 - ◆ Full provenance from new with detailed History File
 - ◆ FIVA identity card, FFSA 'passport technique', and VSCC 'Buff' eligibility document
 - ◆ Just fully serviced and new tyres fitted