



Aston Martin Vantage V8 – Customization and Upgrades

ENGINE, DRIVETRAIN

Exhaust sound switch

In order to comply with (sound) emission laws, newer V8 Vantage models carry a vacuum operated system which routes the exhaust gas flow on different paths through the muffler.

In short, this system limits sound emissions at lower rpms and opens up at higher rpms. In order to switch the exhaust sound at my discretion (vs. the engine ECUs), I designed a system which allows me to switch between the two modes with a small remote control.

EXTERIOR

Front license plate holder

The license plate holder is made from two black painted aluminum bars which are attached to the original mounting points behind the grille and do not require drilling the front bumper.

The holder is "invisible" and the front license plate does not obstruct the grille.

Black Grille

The Grille is made out of polished Aluminum bars. To give the front a more aggressive I painted the grille in high gloss black.

Carbon fiber tonneau covers

The original tonneau covers were covered with (faux) leather and showed some minor misalignment around the roll-over protection bar openings. I replaced the tonneau covers with carbon fiber, and kept the original leather "head" frames.

Stainless steel covers for roll-over bars

The original covers for the roll-over protection bars are made from plastic, covered with (faux) leather and for some reason did not exactly match the curvature of the tonneau covers. I replaced the top of these covers with thin (lightweight) stainless steel plates and aligned them with the curvature of the (surrounding) tonneau covers.

Carbon Fiber covers for roll-over bars

In order to simplify the appearance I replace the stainless-steel covers of the roll-over bars with carbon fiber parts, matching the tonneau covers



WHEELS, TIRES

Wheel spacers

In order to improve the appearance ("stand") of the car I installed H&R DR-style 11mm wheel spacers at the front and front axle. These spacers just slip on the existing hub and do not require any alterations to the existing setup (studs, wheels). But they do require different wheel nuts which were supplied with my spacers.

I tried H&R DRM-style 23mm spacers at the rear, but since my wheels did not have the necessary "pockets" to accommodate the spacer studs, it would have required cutting or replacing the original studs which I did not feel like doing.

Tires

Switched from original tires Bridgestone Potenza to Michelin Pilot Sport 4s

BRAKES

Brake pads

My car came with OEM brake pads from PAGID. These pads do one thing very well, and that is braking. Regarding the amount of brake dust and noise they produce they're not that great. I pretty much tried everything to reduce the squeaking (chamfering, Teflon, rubber paste etc.) but did not succeed. Eventually I replaced the PAGID pads with R4-S pads from PORTERFIELD which a; significantly improved the brake dust issue and b; eliminated squeaking. (These pads are chamfered already and I applied CRC 05016 Disk Quite on all pads).

In every day driving the pads perform very well, I have not tried them on the track yet. The only (very minor) drawback in comparison to the OEM Pads is a little less "crisp" pedal feedback. But that's unhappiness on a very high level, most drivers might not even feel a difference. (My job for many years is prototype car testing. - which means I make a living noticing these things.)

INTERIOR

Carbon fiber center stack ("Ski Slope")

My car came with a piano black slope which always looked dusty regardless how often it was cleaned (especially in a roadster) and also appeared a bit outdated.

Carbon fiber dash panels

The dash panels (in front of the dash board, right underneath the windshield) in my car were covered with black (faux) leather which showed a few "bumps" and misalignments around the edges - perhaps a result of unevenly applied glue and exposure to direct sunlight and heat.

Carbon fiber door sills

My car came with - actually quite beautiful - dark purple anodized metal door sills. In order to limit the number of different surface materials and complete the "carbon theme" I replaced those with carbon fiber.



Floor- and trunk mats with embraided Aston Martin Logo

I wanted AM logos on my floor carpet but did not want to add additional floor mats because

- a; the OEM floor carpet in my car includes some nice red stitching around the edges which matches the interior leather color,
- b; I did not want to add unnecessary stuff and weight and
- c; OEM floor mats with AM logos cost several hundred dollars

Instead, I cut a small (negative) template of the AM logo, used it to cut down the floor carpets in the shape of the logo and glued embraided AM logos (which I purchased on ebay) into the cut-out area to make them flush with the floor carpet surface.

iPhone 11 Holder

In order to hold my iPhone accessible and secure I 3D printed a holder in PLA which locks into the open storage compartment in front of the middle console.

Pen

The V8 Vantage carries the same center stack ("ski slope") as the DB9 model. At the right side and bottom of the slope, the V12 has a button for active damping, while the V8 Vantage has a little pen made by LAMY which slides in the opening left by the DB9 button. The pen was missing in my car but I was able to purchase one from Scuderia.

ELECTRIC/ELECTRONICS

Battery float charger

In order to keep the battery charged and prolong it's lifetime I connect the car to a load charger (not a trickle charger) through a cigarette lighter plug in the trunk whenever it's parked in my garage.

Sat/Nav map

My vehicle is equipped with a GARMIN Navigation system and still had the original OEM map data from 2013 installed. An upgrade with OEM data is quite expensive, but after some research I found and installed a GARMIN MicroSD/SD card map data upgrade which costs about 1/4 quarter of the dealer price and works perfectly fine (I even believe this to be exactly the upgrade one would receive from a dealership).