

A Spectre of things to Come

*Motor*Madness



Shaken not stirred **Ian Lamming** test drives the car associated with 007 for the last 50 years

THESE are tense and testing times. The weather is as grey as a cold war greeting; the roads full of villains who could take your life at any time.

In the passenger seat is a cool customer, a survivor of many a hard fought battle, a collected individual under whose scrutiny I fall.

If you ever wanted to feel like Bond, James Bond, this is as close as you can expect to come. The DB10 is still in the showroom, the pride of Yorkshire at an Aston Martin road-show designed to promote the latest 007 blockbuster Spectre.

Q in this instance is Aston Martin professional driver Andy Curtis, a man who has raced cars around the globe, been a team manager and even ferried the Bond girls around film locations – albeit the originals, some of who are now in their 80s.

Intimidated? Me? Why would I be? He has only driven the gorgeous DB10 in the latest movie (Daniel Craig was superimposed at a later date) and the DB9 GT, the last of the 9s before the onslaught of the new DB11, is now in my charge. As for the DB10, there were only ten made for the movie. The majority were trashed during filming and one will head off to a motor museum somewhere. The last is likely to be auctioned off for charity. Can you imagine how much some uber-rich Bond fan will pay for the only DB10 on the road? It will be a bewildering sum, that's for sure.

Meanwhile, I have to 'make do' with the DB9

GT. Talk about slumming it. It only costs £140,000 and only packs a 547BHP, 6.0 litre V12 engine under those sleek and sexy lines. It will only hit 60mph in four seconds and only has a top speed of more than 180mph. Sometimes I wonder why I bother getting out of bed. But it's just about enough to tackle the heavy traffic of a Yorkshire ring-road in a circular from local Aston Martin dealer JCT600. Of course 'sport' setting is duly selected, just to get the full impact of the firmer suspension and ring-road lumps and bumps. It also releases the burbling crackle from the huge exhausts and means the sprint from myriad traffic lights leaves even countless white van men in our wake – yes it is that fast!

With a mighty 50mph on the clock there is time to enjoy the interior, which is positively glorious, from the crystal-like chunky key that slots into the dash to create a starter button, to swathes of leather that cosset body and soul.

One of the best dashboards on this automotive planet is home to a blend of traditional and tactile alloy knobs and space-age touch sensitive buttons. It's a masterpiece of thought and design. I've just realised there is no gearlever, so where does the button for the ejector seat live? And the handbrake is on the driver's door side; it lies flat whether it is on or off. That should get the carbon brakes heated through if you forget to release it. Rear seats are large enough for small children or adults without legs and the

boot will take a set of golf clubs – without the extra-long drivers.

The slowest car chase ever recorded over and back at JCT600, it is time to enjoy the Bond legacy some more. Sitting aside the DB10 in the showroom is a stunning DB5 (Goldfinger in 1964 and reborn in Goldeneye in 1995, with cameos in Tomorrow Never Dies in 1997, Casino Royale in 2006 and Skyfall in 2012). There's a flared trouser version that inhabited Live and Let Die and the DBS, rolled so magnificently in Casino Royale (it actually set a world record as it cartwheeled around Millbrook Driving Range's hill circuit in Bedfordshire) only to return repaired and shiny in the 2008 Quantum of Solace. The Vanquish from 2002's Die Another Day, thankfully came without 'adaptive camouflage' that would have made it invisible to the eye.

The symbiosis between Aston Martin and James Bond remains astounding. There's nothing quite as British as the DB and M16 both working together to make the globe a better place. If a DB9 can still look this good and the DB10 even better, what is the next generation going to bring to the world – I can't wait to see.

Aston Martin - Engine: 6.0 V12,
Power: 547PS0-60mph: 4.5 secs
Top speed: 183mph. Combined miles per
gallon: 19.8. Transmission: six speed
Insurance: 50. CO2 g/km: 333