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Just yesterday, Goodings kindly sent me a short video, shot from inside an Aston Martin DB4, of David Gooding, driving, chatting with Charlie, his auctioneer, and together extolling the delights of the Aston Martin that they were driving.

This took me back to a time in the mid 1980s when I owned an Aston Martin DB4 GT. I had bought it from good old Jeremy Wade, that purveyor of all classic motor vehicles (mainly Jaguar XKs) that he dealt in. I remember that it was missing 4th gear and that part of the deal involved me parting with my 1968 E Type Jaguar, which I'd owned for several years, and an Iso Grifo that I'd also had for a while and which I'd crashed once. That, incidentally, made it one of the most profitable cars that I'd ever owned, as I was able to buy it back from the insurance company and have it repaired and then sell it for a considerably higher price than I'd paid!

But I digress. Suffice to say that I remember the Aston deal was then for around \$14,000, which seemed a lot of money in those days. Anyway, I had 4th gear in the Aston repaired and then drove the car around for 6 months, before selling it to Harold Javetz in America for... \$14,000!

Why did I keep it for such a short time? At that time, I also owned a 1958 Ferrari 250GT Berlinetta, 0911GT, which I loved. Jess Pourret, in his book: "Ferrari 250 GT Berlinetta" wrote in the introduction: "In those days, what were you buying? A very light, lively and good performing GT car". He was spot on. A lovely car to drive, even today.

Compare that to the Aston Martin DB4GT; she was a truck, a fast truck, I grant you but still a truck. The steering was heavy, I remember, and the brakes needed a mighty shove to work properly. Crude would be a polite word for the Aston. She was a well maintained car, too, so it wasn't as if this wasn't how they were when new.

I can remember being somewhat disappointed, especially after reading tales of derring do by Jim Clark and Innes Ireland whilst racing Aston Martin DB4GTs but race results speak for themselves and the Ferrari 250GT Berlinettas, in SWB and, later, GTO form, trounced the Aston.

Then there was the Jaguar E Type. Even in 1968 form, my E type was far superior to the Aston in just about every way, power, steering and braking. Handling was much better too and this from a car that first came out in 1961, basically the same time as the Aston. And when you come to the price comparison.... it's embarrassing! The Aston cost \$11,255, the E Type in 1961, \$2,358. The Ferrari? GBP6666 17 and 6, whatever that translated to in dollars in 1961!

So why has the Aston Martin soared in value so much? I think it's a combination of things. The fact that James Bond used an Aston Martin DB4 didn't hurt it but don't forget either that not that many Aston Martins were ever made, so not many people actually drove them in the day. Also, as those owners were rich, they were hardly about to tell the World that they'd made a bad mistake and should have bought a better car, such as the E type Jaguar and saved themselves a shedload of money in the process. What fools they would have looked. Better to hold on to the old Aston and tell friends: "Wonderful car, darling, simply wonderful. Wouldn't touch that cheap old Jag with a bargepole and a Ferrari? Darling, the Etypes make them... Can't you just imagine the simply awful build quality? And the price! Total rip off merchants...."

But there was one Aston Martin that I liked. In 2014, I did the “Tour Auto” in a 1974 Porsche RS 3.0. On the second day, Joe Hayes, the owner of the Porsche, felt unwell and let me do the driving. Shortly after leaving the stage start, I caught up to a red Aston Martin DB4 and thought: “Well, I’ll soon overtake him.” But I couldn’t. The driver of the Aston saw me coming and put his foot down. Wow! We went to an indicated 140 mph on a decent straight and the Porsche couldn’t quite catch up to the Aston.

At the next stop, I went over to the driver of the Aston, who turned out to be English. “That’s the fastest Aston, I’ve ever seen.” I told hm. He smiled. “Well, it has been R.M. Williams-ized,” he replied, naming a well known tuner of mainly British cars. “The engine’s out to over 4 liters, probably giving over 400 horsepower and the suspension has been strengthened also, with uprated spring rates and a stronger anti-rollbar”. That certainly explained a lot....



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