

(newcomers) aston martin dbs



BRIAN VANCE

AAA-rated bond

An updated ride for the latest 007

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL

for Her Majesty's Secret Servant to employ the same car in more than one movie. The iconic DB5 appeared in "Goldfinger" and "Thunderball," so why not let 007 have another go at Aston's freshened flagship, the DBS, for "Quantum of Solace"? For 2009, the DBS offers the optional availability of a six-speed automatic transaxle, 2+2 seating, a new 20-inch wheel package, and a Bang & Olufsen audio system.

The DBS shares its layout and architecture with the DB9, but is much sportier and differentiated enough to earn its own name. Available in coupe form only, its sinuous body is crafted of aluminum and carbon fiber. There's no change underhood: 510 horsepower still boils out the same 5.9-liter V-12 the model was launched with in late 2007.

This is our first track test of a DBS, and it has the goods to honor the badge on its bonnet. With a 0-to-60 time of 4.2 seconds, grip at

0.96 g, a 60-to-0 stopping distance of 106 feet, it's the quickest, stickiest, and shortest-stopping Aston Martin we've ever tested. And it feels so good doing it. The engine whirs and warbles as only a V-12 can. There's a ton of grip and good body control, yet the ride harshness isn't over the top.

The new transmission isn't as responsive as the best dual-autoclutch units, but lets you be in command. In manual mode, there are no downshifts even when you floor it, and it will hold gears to redline (which unfortunately isn't marked on the tach).

Fire up the new B&O audio package and speaker towers rise out of the dash, looking for all the world like props from a Ken Adam Bond set. The system's imaging, clarity, and transparency are impressive. The rest of the cabin is a study in leather, Alcantara, aluminum, French stitching, and satin-finished carbon fiber. Even the keyfob looks the part, crafted of alloy and beveled glass.

Aston Martin's DBS walks a smart line between GT and sports

car and is an eminently desirable piece. The new color, by the way, is named Quantum Silver, after the movie of a similar name.

■ **matt stone**

2009 ASTON MARTIN DBS TOUCHTRONIC	
BASE PRICE	\$274,350
PRICE AS TESTED	\$278,370
VEHICLE LAYOUT	Front engine, RWD, 2-pass, 2-door coupe
ENGINE	5.9L/510-hp/420-lb-ft DOHC 48-valve V-12
TRANSMISSION	6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (DIST F/R)	3949 lb (52/48%)
WHEELBASE	107.9 in
LENGTH x WIDTH x HEIGHT	185.9 x 75.0 x 50.4 in
0-60 MPH	4.2 sec
QUARTER MILE	12.6 sec @ 112.3 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	106 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.96 g
MT FIGURE EIGHT	24.8 sec @ 0.78 g avg
EPA CITY/HWY FUEL ECON	12/18 mpg
CO ₂ EMISSIONS	1.37 lb/mi
ON SALE IN U.S.	Currently

