

# 1949 ASTON MARTIN 'DB1' TWO-LITRE SPORTS

This is the Aston Martin Two-Litre Sports, retrospectively often known as the DB1. It's a rare and elegant car that combines British sporting heritage with genuine Le Mans pedigree.

Just a few weeks ago, the rotunda displayed a modern World Endurance Championship contender, the Cadillac Hertz Team JOTA Hypercar. Yet long before today's ferocious endurance racers, Le Mans was a proving ground for cars like this. First run in 1923, the 24 Hours of Le Mans remains the world's oldest active endurance race, renowned not only for factory-backed teams but also for the determined private entrants who have competed since its earliest days.

This particular DB1 was entered into the 1949 24 Hours of Le Mans by its first owner, Robert Lawrie, a master bootmaker and accomplished mountaineer whose equipment was used by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay during their ascent of Mount Everest. Finished in Suffolk Green, Lawrie and co-driver Richard W. Parker took on far more powerful rivals with a carefully prepared 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine and a focus on reliability.

Against the odds, the pair finished an impressive 11th overall. In a memorable act of sportsmanship, Parker surrendered the final lap so that Lawrie could take the chequered flag himself.

Beyond its racing history, the DB1 occupies a special place in Aston Martin's story. Introduced in 1948 as the first model produced under David Brown's ownership, it established the famous 'DB' lineage that would later include some of the marque's most celebrated cars. With its beautifully proportioned aluminium bodywork by Frank Feeley, only 15 examples were built.

Recently restored by RS Williams, this remarkable DB1 is more than a rare survivor of Aston Martin's heritage. More than 75 years after its Le Mans campaign, it stands as a symbol of the adventurous spirit that defined early endurance racing.

## Brief Technical Specification

Engine: inline four-cylinder, 1970 cc

Top speed: 93 mph

Maximum power: 90 bhp

Price when new: £2,331

On display Tuesday 16 June May to Monday 29 June, courtesy of Mr Martin & Tom Shelbourn.

For more information, please see the cabinet outside the library on the first floor.