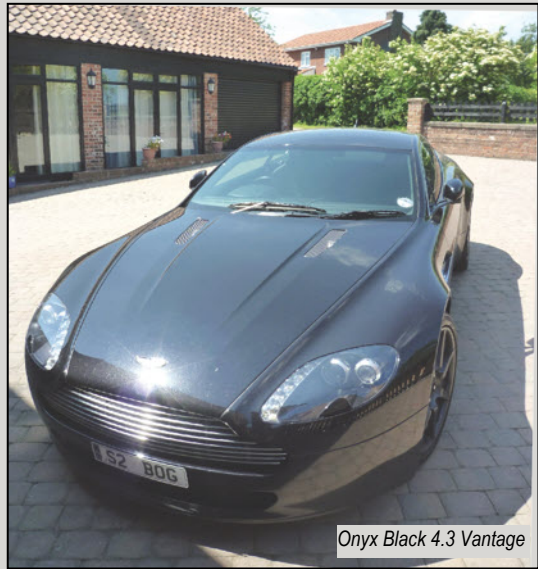


Introduction: Mark Maltby

18 years old at heart, with an extra 22 years life experience (40 years young!); I am Director of Systems Engineering for a computer networking manufacturer. I am also a lifelong petrolhead and Aston Martin fan that loves driving, trackdays, touring and motorsport.



Onyx Black 4.3 Vantage

What first drew you to consider an Aston

I have been lucky enough to have owned many bikes and cars over the years. As a British car fan I have enjoyed various models from the Lotus, TVR and MG ranges. I finally purchased an Aston when they made one small enough and useable daily. I love the brand, styling and practicality.

Which model do you have

I purchased a six month old 2006 model 4.3 Vantage back in April 2007 and have now covered 54k miles to date.

Positives: things you enjoy about the car. Handling, looks, sense of occasion, noise, general quality feel, compact physical size.

Negatives: design faults, quirks and hassles. The 4.3 could do with a bit more torque, although outright speed and performance is more than enough in the real world. The water-based paint is prone to chips, so needs the mud-flaps (called Stone Guards.. Ed). I don't like the centre armrest on the newer models and actually prefer the original pre 09MY interior.

Any faults or unexpected costs

The MIL (Malfunction Indicator Light) occasionally seems to have a sensitive "hair trigger" on the emissions front! I have had a coolant sensor fail, (£20) and also a thermostat failure at four years (£170), not bad for a four year old 54k car!

Thoughts and advice on running costs

Truly the first Aston you can use as an "everyday car". Use an independent, and it costs no more to run than a high end German saloon and seems as reliable, so far.

Top tips on buying and owning an Aston

Get one that's been driven and had all the new owner niggles sorted. I read about so many low mileage cars where people experience niggles that should have been sorted by the first service. Get paint protection film (like Armourfend.) and stone guards if you intend to actually use it, particularly on track. Don't bother with the optional Pirelli Corsa tyres unless you only use it in the dry, or do trackdays; otherwise you won't get the benefits but you will get the downsides of poor wet performance and high wear rates. Out of the box, the standard set-up is fine for most people to drive at 8/10ths on the road. Don't worry about using it, Astons are meant to be driven.

Summary of ownership experience

The Vantage is a fantastic all round daily driver sports car, with character, that still manages to feel special every time I sit in it or drive it, even after four years of ownership. One of the most reliable and economical to run (relatively) of any performance car I've owned. It can hold its own on track, in standard specification, yet it does the GT role perfectly when asked. I wouldn't swap it for anything, except maybe a Roadster or a V12V!