



ASTON MARTIN

**ASTON MARTIN READY TO RACE IN THE SPIRIT OF '59 AS IT
HONOURS 60TH ANNIVERSARY LE MANS VICTORY**

- **Aston Martin Racing targets GTE Pro and Am victory at Le Mans**
- **Team in high state of readiness ahead of FIA World Endurance Championship finale**
- **Le Mans-winning V8 Vantage GTE to take its final bow**

Monday, 10 June 2019, Le Mans: Aston Martin Racing heads into the 2019 24 Hours of Le Mans as a serious contender for victory in the fiercely-contested GTE Pro class, as the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) Super Season reaches its climax at the legendary Circuit de la Sarthe in France this weekend (15-16 June).

Sixty years on from Aston Martin's greatest victory, when Roy Salvadori (GB) and Carroll Shelby (USA) took Aston Martin's only outright win at Le Mans, the crews of the Vantage GTEs once again prepare to fight. In the front-running GTE Pro class, Aston Martin Racing will race against five of the world's greatest sportscar manufacturers in a 17-car battle for supremacy.

The British manufacturer comes into the event as the form team, having won two of the last three rounds of the WEC. The #95 crew of Nicki Thiim (DEN) and Marco Sørensen (DEN), who will be joined by three-time Le Mans class-winner Darren Turner (GB), scored the Vantage GTE's first win at Shanghai in China last November. Then, at Spa-Francorchamps last month, Alex Lynn (GB) and Maxime Martin (BEL) delivered a stunning triumph in the #97 car that will also be driven by 2017 Le Mans victor and reigning British GT champion Jonny Adam (GB).

But the team is not underestimating the opposition. During the official test on the 8.467-mile Le Mans circuit, the top ten, which included the front-running Aston Martin using a revised aero package for the first time, was covered by just 0.7 seconds. This

suggests that Le Mans could be an even closer fight than the famous battle Aston Martin won against Corvette in the final laps of 2017.

Not long after their glorious victory in 1959, Aston Martin's DBR1s were retired from active service. The same is true of the Le Mans-winning V8 Vantage GTE this year. Aston Martin's GTE-Am class teams will field brand new Vantage GTEs for the 2019-2020 WEC season, which concludes at next year's twice-around-the-clock event. After much success, the V8 Vantage GTE will make its final swansong with two entries in this year's event.

The works #98 V8 Vantage GTE will once again be driven by Paul Dalla Lana (CDN), Mathias Lauda (AUT) and Pedro Lamy (POR), a trio that has raced together for five seasons. During this time, they have delivered 16 WEC class victories and won the 2017 GTE Am title. The only thing missing from the trophy cabinet is the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The #98 crew also remains in contention to retain the title, being 36 points behind the leaders with 37.5 on offer.

Also in contention for the GTE Am WEC title are TF Sport drivers Salih Yoluc (TUR) and AMR Junior driver and former karting world champion Charlie Eastwood (IRL), who will share the #90 V8 Vantage GTE with Euan Alers-Hankey (GB).

Aston Martin Racing Technical Director Dan Sayers: "The test day was a lot closer than last year's and we are in a much more competitive position than we were 12 months ago, partly due to car development and to our increased understanding of the package. Last year's Le Mans race was only the Vantage GTE's second race. What we saw in the test was very encouraging. There is still a small gap to the fastest cars in the class, but we are confident we can find that over race week. This was the first time we've used the new aero pack and we've got some excellent data to work with. The car is very well-balanced, and the overall drivability has increased, so we are confident going in to Le Mans."

Aston Martin Racing Team Principal Paul Howarth added: "Le Mans is as much about preparation and focus as it is about pace. In order to be successful in the 24-hour race a team must manage every detail and be precise and disciplined in all of its procedures. We have given 100 per cent focus in every aspect of the team's build-up to Le Mans, from garage build to track time, so that we are in a maximum state of

readiness to take advantage of all the opportunities that arise for this event and are ready to fight at the front of the field.”

Aston Martin Vice President Chief Special Operations Officer and President Aston Martin Racing David King said: “The 2019 24 Hours of Le Mans probably has the greatest field of GT cars ever assembled for the event – 34 across GTE Pro and Am – and it is with great pride that we can say that four of them will be Aston Martins that are capable of contending for victory. Aston Martin’s history is tightly woven in the heritage of the event, and this year’s 60th anniversary of our famous win in 1959 reminds us of the racing spirit that comes from the very core of the company. Back then, engineering, intelligence and planning were blended with brilliant driving talent and the race-craft of a crack team of dedicated people. The same is true of this year’s team, and with luck on our side and a clear run, we can honour this occasion with a result worthy of it.”

Ten facts from 1959

- The winning #5 Aston Martin DBR1 of Roy Salvadori (GB) and Carroll Shelby (USA) covered 2701 miles at an average speed of 112.5mph, shattering all records for a 3.0-litre class car in 1959. In 2018, the #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE completed 2,870 miles.
- Three Aston Martin DBR1s were entered for the 1959 24 Hours of Le Mans: #4 Stirling Moss (GB)/Jack Fairman (GB), #5 Roy Salvadori (GB)/Carroll Shelby (USA), #6 Maurice Trintignant (F)/Paul Frère (BEL). The 1959 event was the first time that either Salvadori or Shelby had ever finished the race.
- Moss and Fairman battled for the lead with the Jean Behra/Dan Gurney Ferrari for much of the first half of the race, but both cars would retire with technical issues. Salvadori was later quoted as saying: “Moss was very unlucky. He was very gentle on his car and did not push it unduly. They could easily have won”
- Salvadori estimated that Aston Martin team manager Reg Parnell collected a cheque from the organisers for approximately £10,000 in French francs for finishing first and second in the race, as well as third in The Index of Performance (a balancing measure that scored cars from all classes).

- Parnell encouraged all three crews to run to a pre-set delta lap time, and not to pay attention to the faster opposition. Moss's car was the fastest and Salvadori believed that the Briton's pace is what broke the Ferrari challenge: "Moss put on quite a lot more pressure than they were prepared to accept, and he made them go much faster than they would like to have gone." The Salvadori/Shelby delta was 4m20 per lap with a pit-stop strategy of 34 laps per stint.
- The #5 Aston Martin DBR1 that completed the 24 hours of Le Mans in 323 laps was in such good condition at the finish that it was reckoned it could have completed another 24 hours. "The oil pressure was 80 pounds at the start and never varied... The car was 100% for the entire race," said Salvadori.
- Salvadori and Shelby drove to Le Mans in an Aston Martin DB MKIII. Fairman meanwhile took a Lagonda Shooting Brake packed with spares for the race.
- Such was the heat generated in the DBR1, through its aluminium bodyshell and the position of the clutch pedal above the exhaust pipes, that both Salvadori and Trintignant suffered badly scolded feet. Shelby meanwhile endured a sickness bug that he carried from the sixth hour of the race to the finish.
- Shelby and Salvadori engaged in a heated contest of 'Gin Rummy' card games throughout the Le Mans week. By the end of it Salvadori was £28 up on his teammate, though it's not known whether the American ever paid up.
- In the build-up to the race the weather had been hot and all the team had taken to swimming in the river adjacent to the Hotel de France in the Le Chartre-sur-le-Loir. Moss didn't partake until the Wednesday morning, when disaster struck and he lost his front teeth diving in. He was forced to get his secretary to fly out his spare pair of false teeth on the first flight out of Paris.

Driver quotes:

Marco Sørensen (DEN), #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: "I think everything is looking very interesting for Le Mans and we obviously have a good package this year. With the new Le Mans upgrade, we've added a little bit to the car. So, for me I just want to get it started. I know it's a long week up until Saturday before the race start. But in the end, this weekend is what we work for all year long and I can't wait. There

is only one satisfying goal for this race and that is to win it. We have had the chance to win it two times now and this year we have to make it stick.”

Nicki Thiim (DEN), #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: “We have a year’s experience with the car now and we had a really good and positive test where we learned a lot and the car feels strong. You can really feel the positive steps, and the massive gains we have made with the car, if you compare it to last year. It’s really a big step on drivability and competitiveness. It’s going to be awesome to see what 17 Pro cars fighting for the biggest race on the planet with the best GT drivers in the world can show racing fans.”

Darren Turner (GB), #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: “We have so much to look forward to going back to Le Mans this year. Last year was the first time with the new Vantage GTE and we learned a great deal with the car and as the season has gone on with the World Endurance Championship, a huge amount of progress has been made with the car. The test day looked very promising and we were in the mix, which is a good sign at this point. All the drivers were happy with the handling characteristics of the car. It is my 17th time at Le Mans and I am as excited as I was when I first went there back in 2003. I am really looking forward to seeing what we can do this year and hopefully we will have a good chance of fighting for a podium.”

Jonny Adam (GB), #97 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: “I’m really looking forward to Le Mans this year and joining up again with my team-mates in the #97 Aston Martin Vantage GTE. The build-up has been strong, and the team has worked hard on the details behind the scenes to give us a good opportunity to deliver a big result this year. It’s nice celebrating 60 years since Aston Martin won in 1959 and the goal is to challenge for another Le Mans victory.”

Alex Lynn (GB), #97 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: “It doesn’t get bigger than this! It is what the last 12 months have been about, as a team and as a driver crew. We’ve come an extremely long way from what was without a doubt the longest 24-hour race I’ve done as a racing driver. The distance we’ve come as a team and as a manufacturer and as a group of people working for the same goal, it is all going to come down to the next 24 hours. We are going all in for this. It’s obviously everything you dream of as a driver and as a manufacturer to win this race. You can guarantee that every single one of us is fully committed to win this race.”

Maxime Martin (BEL), #97 Aston Martin Vantage GTE: “This is the last race of the Super Season. For sure the expectations are quite a lot higher than last year. We had a difficult Le Mans last year, but we have proved through the season that we have really made big progress with the car and the team. I’m really looking forward to returning to Le Mans for the second year with this car and a lot more knowledge. I think we will be a lot more competitive.”

Paul Dalla Lana, #98 Aston Martin V8 Vantage GTE: “We have a great team, great engineers and, as a driving unit, we have always clicked. We have good top-speed and it is always a solid car, it hardly ever fails. Our goal is always to win and we have led the race so many times. We have one last chance to do it with this car and I do not intend to waste it.”

Carroll Shelby (USA), 1959, #5 Aston Martin DBR1: “Anyone who reckons on winning Le Mans is just day-dreaming. Le Mans is 80 per cent luck. A car that’s built for out-and-out racing is not supposed to stay together for 24 hours. I think it’s too much to ask of them.”

Roy Salvadori (GB), 1959, #5 Aston Martin DBR1: “The reason I went so much quicker in the first session [of the race] was simply because one of the Ecurie Ecosse cars was in front of me. I didn’t mind having a Ferrari in front, but I wasn’t going to have a Jaguar there.”

Stirling Moss (GB), 1959, #4 Aston Martin DBR1: “As soon as a motor race is over it becomes history. This was memorable history, no doubt about that, but history all the same because there’s always the next race to start thinking about and planning for.”

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