



## **Aston Martin returns to Le Mans to fight for overall victory with Valkyrie hypercar**

- **Aston Martin set to enter the 2025 24 Hours of Le Mans Hypercar class with prototype Valkyrie racecar**
- **Heart of Racing to lead Aston Martin's hypercar challenge in the FIA World Endurance Championship and IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship**
- **Valkyrie set to become first hypercar, inspired by a road car, to simultaneously compete in both endurance racing's most prestigious series**
- **Aston Martin sets 2024 motorsport agenda and confirms new GT3 and GT4-homologated Aston Martin Racing-built challengers**
- **British ultra-luxury brand set to be the only manufacturer present in all forms of global endurance racing and Formula 1® in 2025**

*Wednesday, 4 October, 2023, Silverstone:* A racing prototype version of the ultimate hypercar, the Aston Martin Valkyrie, will take on the challenge it was born for when it carries Aston Martin into the fight for overall victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, from 2025.

Through the invaluable support and backing of Aston Martin's championship-winning endurance racing partner Heart of Racing [HoR], at least one Valkyrie racecar will be entered by Aston Martin in the top Hypercar class of each of the FIA World Endurance Championship [WEC] and the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championships [IMSA] from 2025. This means that the prototype Valkyrie will participate in three of sportscar racing's most prestigious events; Le Mans, the Rolex 24 at Daytona and the 12 Hours of Sebring.

Performance is the driving force behind everything Aston Martin creates and just as its latest production siblings DB12 and DBX707, the world's fastest luxury SUV, are class leading for performance and driving dynamics, so Aston Martin Valkyrie is the definitive hypercar, unlimited by sporting regulation and harnessing emphatic, breathtaking performance.

Lawrence Stroll, Executive Chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda, said: “Performance is the lifeblood of everything that we do at Aston Martin, and motorsport is the ultimate expression of this pursuit of excellence.

“We have been present at Le Mans since the earliest days, and through those glorious endeavours we succeeded in winning Le Mans in 1959 and our class 19 times over the past 95 years. Now we return to the scene of those first triumphs aiming to write new history with a racing prototype inspired by the fastest production car Aston Martin has ever built.

“In addition to our presence in the FIA Formula 1® World Championship, Aston Martin’s return to the pinnacle of endurance racing will allow us to build a deeper connection with our customers and community, many of whom found their passion for the brand through our past success at Le Mans. And of course, the complex knowledge-base we are building through our F1® team is data that Aston Martin Performance Technologies can harness to further enhance the capabilities of the Valkyrie racecar at Le Mans, in WEC and IMSA. Just as the learnings we gain through endurance competition will feed directly into our road car programmes, further improving the ultimate performance of our products. I would like to thank Gabe Newell and Heart of Racing for partnering with Aston Martin on this programme, and I look forward to working with him and the team as we aim for success in the greatest endurance race of them all.”

Sportscar racing is in Aston Martin’s DNA. Its name is synonymous with endurance racing glory, with the brand’s Le Mans debut coming just five years after the race was run for the first time in 1923. Since then, cars adorned with the famous Wings have clinched no less than 19 class victories at the world-famous French event, including overall triumph in the 1959 race with the iconic DBR1 driven by Roy Salvadori (GBR) and Carroll Shelby (USA).

In total, more than 240 drivers have raced Aston Martins at Le Mans over the past 95 years in 27 different chassis and engine combinations, through virtually every era. No other venue has given Aston Martin so much success, or more steadfastly proven that our DNA is forged out of the very essence of competition. So in the year the marque celebrates its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it makes perfect sense to announce its return to the greatest endurance race on earth with the ultimate expression of the most potent hypercar ever devised.

Valkyrie AMR Pro was originally designed and developed to meet the LMH hypercar regulations and now Aston Martin Performance Technologies, situated in the newly-built

AMR Technology Campus which is co-located with the Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One® team's Silverstone headquarters, has begun the task of developing a competition prototype version of Valkyrie for racing within a pre-defined aerodynamic and power performance window that gives it parity with its direct competition in WEC. It will then be homologated for the WEC Hypercar and IMSA GTP classes ahead of the 2025 season.

The race-optimised carbon-fibre chassis Valkyrie will use a modified version of the sensational Cosworth-built 6.5-litre naturally aspirated V12 engine, which in standard form revs to 11,000rpm and develops over 1000bhp. The power unit will be enhanced further to incorporate the critical Balance of Performance requirements of the Hypercar class, and developed to withstand the rigours of top level long-distance competition. As with the Valkyrie AMR Pro track-car, the battery-electric hybrid system that features on the road-specification Valkyrie is absent from the race car.

Once homologated, the Heart of Racing team will spearhead Aston Martin's programmes in both WEC and IMSA as the Valkyrie race car becomes the first purebred hypercar to participate in both championships, and the only one among its rivals that can trace its origins back to an existing production car.

Founded in 2014 by American businessman and philanthropist Gabe Newell, The Heart of Racing is a charity that raises money for the Seattle Children's Cardiology Research Fund (among other worthy causes). The US-based HoR team was conceived in 2020 and has partnered with Aston Martin since its inception, competing predominantly with the ultra-successful Vantage GT3 in IMSA's two GTD classes.

Having brought Aston Martin its first IMSA GTD class championship title with AMR Academy graduate Roman De Angelis [CDN] in 2022, HoR recorded the brand's maiden class victory in January's Rolex 24 with Team Principal Ian James (GBR), Darren Turner (GBR) and two-time WEC GT champion Marco Sørensen also driving. HoR also made its 24 Hours of Le Mans debut with the Aston Martin Vantage GTE in June this year, finishing seventh, and will continue through the rest of the 2023 WEC season.

Ian James, Team Principal of Heart of Racing, said: "It's a privilege to be able to bring Aston Martin back to the top of endurance racing with the Heart of Racing.

"Our team has grown exponentially since we began racing with those famous wings at Daytona in 2020. We understand and are aligned with the ethos of the brand and we have developed our own systems and technologies to extract the maximum performance

of the cars we compete with. Our understanding of Valkyrie is strong and we have worked closely with it through our customer activation programmes for two years now.

“This HoR team has big ambitions in endurance racing and this is absolutely the right time for us to step into the top classes of WEC and IMSA and challenge for overall honours. This is not an easy target, but between our partners and the support of Aston Martin Performance Technologies, it is one we have all the tools and capabilities in place to hit the bullseye with.”

Aston Martin’s entry into the Hypercar class ensures that the British ultra-luxury sports car manufacturer will have a presence in all aspects of endurance racing from the gentleman racer through to the very pinnacle of the sport. Indeed, from 2025, Aston Martin will be the only manufacturer competing at all levels of sports car and GT racing (from Hypercar to GT4) and the FIA Formula 1® World Championship.

This is made possible through an additional announcement today of Aston Martin’s commitment to building and preparing all-new GT3 and GT4 cars, based on the Vantage platform, which will conform to all existing and new GT rule-sets, including the new-for-2024 LMGTE3 regulations that replace the outgoing GTE class in WEC.

This new GT challenger, which is expected to compete in WEC, IMSA and SRO-run GT World Challenge Series as well as various internationally-based regional championships, will be available for existing Aston Martin Racing partners and prospective customers to purchase and compete with for the beginning of the 2024 racing season.

The introduction of a new GT race car brings to end a remarkable chapter in Aston Martin Racing’s history with the current generation of Vantage, arguably the most successful racing car Aston Martin has ever produced. Since making its debut in 2018, the Vantage GTE has recorded four world championship titles, including two drivers’, one manufacturers’ and one teams’ crown, as well as three 24 Hours of Le Mans class victories.

The GT3 variant is also steeped in glory, having won IMSA’s GTD crown and this year’s Rolex 24. A class winner in the Spa 24 Hours, Vantage GT3 was GTWC class champion and was also the first Aston Martin to win a sports car championship in Japan, with D’station Racing taking the 2021 Super Taikyu title. Vantage GT4 is a multiple championship-winning entry level GT adored by amateur and gentleman racers’ for its

driver-friendly attributes, and is the most successful and popular GT racing car currently competing in the US.

Adam Carter, Aston Martin Head of Endurance Motorsport, said: “Today marks the beginning of a new chapter for Aston Martin in endurance racing. As a manufacturer, Aston Martin has a consistent record of success at world championship level and, through the efforts of the Heart of Racing, also now in IMSA.

“Valkyrie takes us back into the top tier of sportscar racing and, together with our partners we are absolutely confident that we can deliver a race car with the potential and the performance capabilities to fight alongside the benchmark machinery in the class. To be able to do this in cooperation with a proven championship-winning operation such as Heart of Racing ensures we have all we need to race from a competitive platform. It’s a fascinating programme, given that this is the only hypercar in the class with direct synergies to its road car counterpart, but the Valkyrie concept was always intended to break through boundaries, and now we have the opportunity to show what it can do on a track.

“By also confirming Aston Martin’s commitment to a new GT3 and GT4 challenger, we signal our intent to compete for victory at all levels of sportscar racing now and well into the future.”

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#### **About Aston Martin Lagonda:**

Aston Martin’s vision is to be the world’s most desirable, ultra-luxury British brand, creating the most exquisitely addictive performance cars.

Founded in 1913 by Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford, Aston Martin is acknowledged as an iconic global brand synonymous with style, luxury, performance, and exclusivity. Aston Martin fuses the latest technology, time honoured craftsmanship and beautiful styling to produce a range of critically acclaimed luxury models including the Vantage, DB12, DBS, DBX and its first hypercar, the Aston Martin Valkyrie. Aligned with its *Racing. Green.* sustainability strategy, Aston Martin is also developing alternatives to the internal combustion engine, with an ambition to create the world’s most thrilling and highly desirable electric performance cars, the first of which is targeted for launch in 2025.

Based in Gaydon, England, Aston Martin Lagonda designs, creates, and exports cars which are sold in 56 countries around the world. Its sports cars are manufactured in Gaydon with its luxury DBX SUV range proudly manufactured in St Athan, Wales. The company is on track to deliver net-zero manufacturing facilities by 2030.

Lagonda was founded in 1899 and Aston Martin in 1913. The two brands came together in 1947 when both were purchased by the late Sir David Brown, and the company is now listed on the London Stock Exchange as Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings plc.

2020 saw Lawrence Stroll become the company’s Executive Chairman, alongside significant new investment, a move that led to Aston Martin’s return to the pinnacle of motorsport with the Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One<sup>®</sup> Team and commenced new era for the iconic British marque.



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