

# ENGLISH CAR

Market  
Review  
&  
Buyer's  
Guide

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## 1989 Aston Martin Zagato Volante

Chassis number: SCFCV81Z4JTL30025

Engine number: V585/0025

**W**ith the introduction of the Vantage Zagato in 1986, Aston Martin renewed its association with one of Italy's most illustrious *carrozzerie*, the latter having been responsible for that most celebrated and desirable of all post-war Aston Martins, the DB4GT Zagato. The first Vantage Zagato prototype was shown to the public at Geneva in March 1986, and in June successfully met its design target by achieving a maximum speed of 186 mph while on test with the French magazine *Sport Auto*.

Part of Zagato's brief had been to shed some of the standard Vantage's avoidupois, and this was achieved by the simple expedient of shortening the wheelbase by a little over 17 centimeters and deleting the rear seats, thus creating Aston's first production two-seater since the DB4GT. The 5.3-liter four-cam V8 was, naturally, to Vantage specification, producing a mind-bending 432 bhp at 6200 rpm. The manner of installation, though, created a certain amount of controversy. The Zagato's low, sloping hood, designed to cover a fuel-injected engine, was marred by an unsightly bulge necessary to clear the Vantage's quartet of Weber carburetors.

Predictably, given the success of the coupe and the premiums desperate buyers were paying over the \$171,808 list price to obtain one, a Zagato Volante convertible was not long in coming. The first example was exhibited in 1987. Intended only for the fuel-injected 320 bhp engine, the Volante avoided its sibling's hood bulge unless, of course, a customer specified an engine in Vantage tune. Re-styled, the Volante's rather bland frontal grille was not to everyone's taste, and a number of cars were fitted with Vantage front ends by the factory.

*This sparingly used Volante was auctioned in Geneva by Brooks on March 6, 2000 and sold for \$87,522 (including premium). It had benefited from the fitment of the Zagato coupe nose and a five-speed manual gearbox. The superfluous original nose sections (included in boxes) will make great wall art, if nothing else. The exterior color of Gladiator Red did this car little justice as its red hue swallowed what was left of any design attraction.*

*The hammer price reflects the value in today's market, and represented no premium over a stock-bodied V8 Vantage Volante. V8 Zagato Vantage coupes will bring another 35%, a rare case of a closed car being more valuable than an open one.*

*Zagato captured a brute design sense for the V8 Zagato Vantage Coupe, and Aston Martin took it to the next level of performance. To this day, the coupe has a solid following and represents a potential Aston collectible. No one expects the Zagato Coupes to go the route of the original DB4GT Zagato in market value, but there are only fifty-two of them on the planet and Aston aficionados agree that they are undervalued as well as great fun to drive. The same aficionados, on the other hand, agree that the V8*



*Zagato Vantage Volante, with its (yawn) 320 bhp fuel-injected V8, may be on the heels of the AM Lagonda for aging poorly and driving, well, not nearly as excitingly as the coupe.*

*Manufactured at a time when the Lamborghini Espada was "collectible" and a good Aston DB6 automatic was \$75,000, Aston's timing with these cars was either fortunate or sheer luck. If they had been built any later, thirty of these ugly ducklings would have been mothballed, a la the Jaguar XJ 220, and Newport Pagnell would have been making high-anxiety phone calls to strike a deal with the Sultan of Brunei.*

*Much money and many service hours have allowed the initial bugaboos of poor Zagato build quality to be rectified in most of these beasts. Much like the VWs built in Mexico and then rebuilt again on the docks of the US, these cars had to be reassembled by Aston Martin after Zagato*

*had done such an "Italian" job the first time around in Italy. I've personally witnessed the frustration of one Aston worker during his repeated attempts to simply close the trunk lid of a just-completed V8 Zagato Vantage Coupe. You can only imagine the angst some original owners experienced after waiting patiently for delivery and then being handed a car with the build quality of an early Hyundai.*

*Warren Beatty has just received the Irving Thalberg Award for a lifetime of wonderful achievement in the motion picture industry. The Academy must have winked coyly to the audience, for this man also starred in and produced *Ishtar*, an awful film that has actually spawned a verb and adjective. If Bonnie and Clyde equals Aston Martin DB5 and Heaven Can Wait equals Aston Martin V8 Vantage Coupe, then *Ishtar* equals Aston Martin V8 Zagato Vantage Volante.*

*The Academy forgave good ol' Warren B. and at the end of the day he got Annette Bening. We should hold no grudges against Aston because at the end of the day we got the DB7 Vantage.—Steve Serio (Photo and description courtesy of auction company.)♦*

Years produced .....	1987-1988
Number produced .....	35
Original list price .....	\$226,063 (1988)
SCM Price Guide .....	N/A
Tune-up/major service .....	\$2,600
Service interval .....	15,000 miles
Chassis # .....	Plate on top of left side of inner fender
Engine # .....	Top center at back of engine block, next to bell housing
Club .....	Aston Martin Owner's Club, c/o Susan Laskey, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10019
Web site .....	www.astonmartin.com
Alternatives .....	Aston Martin V8 Vantage Volante, Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible, Bentley Turbo R