

2002 Aston Martin Vanquish

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Chassis number: SCFAC13372B500172

Aston Martin, James Bond's traditionally preferred make of car, returned to secret service after a 15-year absence when Pierce Brosnan got behind the wheel of the latest V12 Vanquish for *Die Another Day*. No more Bimmers for Bond.

In September 2001, Aston Martin representatives met with those from EON Productions to discuss their requirements for the forthcoming Bond movie. EON needed three finished production cars to become "hero" cars; chassis numbers 172, 173 and 174 were selected to be used for the close-ups of Pierce Brosnan as James Bond. All three were Tungsten Silver with charcoal leather interior and equipped with Linn stereo systems and brushed aluminum center consoles.

For the stunts and chase sequences, Aston Martin and the EON special-effects department created four Vanquishes that used standard body shells and interiors with four-wheel-drive Ford Explorer running gear and V8 engines. Of these special-effects cars, two have been destroyed and two remain the property of Aston Martin, one of which is currently serving promotional purposes. Neither can be sold or registered for road use and the Newport Pagnell firm will retain both.

The production Vanquish models had a much easier life during filming—these cars were not used for special effects. The car offered for sale here, chassis number 172, has been confirmed by EON as the main hero car. Owned by Aston Martin and never registered, it was used for most of the close-up shots. Whenever Bond is seen in the film near to, or sitting in, a Vanquish, that car is most likely 172.

Of the remaining two "hero" Vanquishes, 174 is currently owned by EON and is un-registered and has never been driven. It is unlikely that it will ever be sold. A mere bit-player in the film, 173 is scheduled for minor post-filming changes of specification and will be disposed of anonymously via the dealer network.

A detailed log of every car's appearance was kept by the film crew and special effects co-ordinator, as is usually done for continuity; this included some scenes that never made it to the screen. Aston Martin has this record, which will be provided together with a letter of authenticity from Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd. This car was never fitted with any gadgets nor had any modifications, and its low mileage (less than 200) reflects the minimal driving done with this car. For all intents and purposes, it is a new Aston Martin Vanquish, but also the star of *Die Another Day*.

This right-hand-drive, UK-spec car sold for \$336,800, including buyer's premium, at Bonhams' Newport Pagnell auction, held May 10, 2003.



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| Years produced | 2002-present |
| Number produced | approx. 150 per year for the US (options vary) |
| Original list price | \$235,610-\$245,750 (options vary) |
| Tune-up/major service | \$1,500 |
| Chassis # | In driver's door jamb and plaque in engine bay |
| Engine # | Unique plaque in engine bay |
| Club | Aston Martin Owner's Club, Attn: Susan Lasky, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, 30th Floor, New York, NY 10019 |
| Web site | www.amoc-na.org |
| Alternatives | Ferrari 575 Maranello (Bad Boys II Edition), Bentley Continental (J. Lo Edition) |
| SCM Investment Grade | A (this car), C (standard models) |

What value does fame have? In this case, fame cost about \$85k, or about the price of a good used Aston Martin DB7 or decent DB4. That was the premium paid here over a "regular" dealer-stock Vanquish.

Along with a 1961 DB4GT, this Bond Vanquish was one of the "star cars" at this annual sale by Bonhams. The buzz in the room was legitimate and the bidding by 007 and Vanquish aficionados was spirited. Bonhams was even kind enough to throw in cardboard cutouts of Halle Berry and Pierce Brosnan to add to the excitement.

So was it a smart buy? As I am happy to say to potential customers who ask about "investments," the answer is a solid "probably." Keep in mind that 99% of all new automobiles are decreasing assets or increasing liabilities—you pick. But they aren't investments—any new car dealer telling you that is lying. This includes a new Vanquish.

But this isn't just a new Vanquish. Revisionist history has shown that the true original Goldfinger DB5 Bond cars (all four of them—or now just three, as one has gone suspiciously missing) are some of the most collectible Astons ever. Are they worth five or 10 times the price of a perfect DB5? Absolutely! They may be million-dollar cars at this point.

So will 172 be worth more in a decade than a standard tungsten-colored 2002 Vanquish? I'll hedge toward "yes" using the following logic:

A generation of new Bond and Aston youngsters is enjoying playing with its new Corgi Vanquish cars and dreaming of its great superhero Bond, James Bond. When these kids grow up and want the car they saw in their first Bond movie, the one that made that indelible first impression, one of those successful grown-ups will seek out S/N 172 and simply stroke the check to say he bought the dream car of his youth. And isn't dream fulfillment a big part of what collecting is all about?—Steve Serio

(Historic and descriptive information courtesy of Bonhams.)◆



2002 Aston Martin Vanquish
Lot #248, S/N N/A
Condition: 1
Bonhams; Newport Pagnell, UK; 5/11/2002
Sold at \$238,235
SCM ID# 28337

COMPARABLES

1998 Ferrari 550 Maranello
Lot #450, S/N ZFFZR49A1W0112462
Condition: 2-
eBay/Kruse; Santa Clara, CA; 10/27/2001
Not sold at \$136,000
SCM ID# 23364

