

ASTON MARTIN DB11

PRE-PURCHASE PROTOCOL · V12 & V8 · SOFTWARE · CAMPAIGNS · FRONT AXLE

Compiled from public sources, the Aston Martin DB11 family, its Model File and specialist review · Personal use only · v2.1

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This checklist is written for enthusiasts who want a base of knowledge: enough context to follow what a PPI specialist tells them, to read an inspection report a dealer hands over, and to understand what is being discussed in videos and forums. It does not replace the diagnosis or judgement of a qualified specialist or workshop, and it is not a tool for saving the cost of one. If you are not deeply familiar with these cars technically and are unsure about a vehicle's condition, our standing recommendation is simple: commission and pay a qualified PPI specialist of your choice, whether an official dealership, a marque specialist, or an experienced supercar specialist who knows the brand. The checklist gives you context; the specialist gives you the verdict.

A · BUYER CHECK · PROVENANCE & PAPERWORK

- ☐ Variant truth first: V12, AMR or V8, Coupé or Volante, build year — by chassis data.
- ☐ VIN campaign check: 17V411 (TPMS), 18V065 (driver airbag), 19V806 (passenger airbag), 20V604 (seat-airbag fasteners) — closed and documented where the year applies.
- ☐ Software history: updates documented — an early car on early software is a finding.
- ☐ Oil-change history complete; gearbox oil per ZF recommendation, not "lifetime".
- ☐ Battery age and maintainer regime documented.
- ☐ Front-axle invoices on early cars: arms, bearings, any corrosion work.
- ☐ Accident file with structural documentation — bonded aluminium demands it.
- ☐ Infotainment version and any hardware swaps recorded.

B · BUYER CHECK · AT THE CAR

- ☐ Battery health first: resting and starting voltage before any electronic fault counts.
- ☐ Full electronics round: infotainment, driver display, windows, alarm, sensors, camera, Bluetooth.
- ☐ Fault memory read BEFORE the drive — and again after it.
- ☐ Cold start filmed: even idle on both banks, no smoke, boost builds cleanly.
- ☐ ZF 8HP: cold engagement, shift quality, kickdown — no flare, no harshness.
- ☐ Cooling watched warm: stable temperature, no coolant smell or traces.
- ☐ Leak look from below: engine, turbo lines, gearbox — dry is the standard.
- ☐ Front axle on early cars: corrosion sighted at arms and mounts, geometry evidence read from tyre wear.
- ☐ Interior: leather, seat adjustment, headliner, sun visors, switches.
- ☐ A/C: cooling performance at all outlets, compressor behaviour.
- ☐ Volante: roof cycled, seals, drains, control — carpet moisture checked.

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C · SPECIALIST PPI SCOPE (MINIMUM)

- ☐ Full diagnostic scan with software levels of all modules documented.
- ☐ Campaign closure verified in the dealer system — all four where the year applies.
- ☐ Compression/leakdown on any doubt; borescope only on evidence, not habit.
- ☐ Turbos assessed: boost curve, wastegate function, shaft play on evidence, oil traces in the intake.
- ☐ ZF adaptation values read; oil condition assessed against the service history.
- ☐ Front axle measured: geometry printout, arm and bearing condition, galvanic corrosion photographed.
- ☐ Structure: bond lines and repair traces inspected — aluminium-competent eyes only.
- ☐ Battery load-tested; quiescent drain measured.
- ☐ Cooling system pressure-tested on age or evidence.
- ☐ Infotainment function-tested through, not clicked at.
- ☐ Volante: hydraulics, drains and roof control function-tested.
- ☐ Typical full specialist PPI cost, rounded orientation (2026): ≈€500–1,000 / ≈£450–900 / ≈\$550–1,100. Indications — obtain current local quotes.

D · PRICE & INVESTIGATION ITEMS

Engines and gearbox are the certainties: the price sits in software, campaigns, electronics, battery and the early front axle.

- ☐ Open campaigns: closed before money moves — on early cars a delivery condition.
- ☐ Outdated software: update path priced and scheduled — not "it works fine".
- ☐ Front-axle corrosion findings on early cars: parts and labour quoted, documented.
- ☐ Electronics faults: diagnosed to module level before pricing — never bundled as "gremlins".
- ☐ Weak battery: replaced and the fault picture re-read before findings are priced.
- ☐ ZF service due: mid four figures — priced, and the history corrected going forward.
- ☐ Brake wear: mid to high four figures on these cars — measured, not assumed.
- ☐ Negotiate from the documented file: software level, campaign record, front-axle state.

E · RED FLAGS · WALK-AWAY OR ESCALATION

- Open airbag campaigns on an early car — or a seller who cannot show closure.
- Electronics faults sold as "just needs a software update" without evidence.
- A fault picture read on a weak battery and never re-checked.
- Front-axle corrosion dismissed as cosmetic on an early car.
- Structural repair on the bonded aluminium without specialist documentation.
- No oil-change evidence behind a "perfect" engine.
- A seller who refuses the full diagnostic scan.
- A car whose findings cannot be named, quantified and priced.

F · FIRST WEEK OF OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Baseline stored: full scan with module software levels, adaptation values, battery test, geometry printout.
- ☐ Software brought current; battery on a maintainer; service reset to the calendar doctrine.
- ☐ Purchase file, campaign record and PPI report archived.

"The DB11's engines are the easy part — buy the software level, the closed campaigns, the battery and the front axle. The modern Aston is inspected through the OBD port as much as from the pit."

Deep dive: Supercar Models Paper 65 · Model File 65 · Owner's Intelligence series.