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2006 ASTON MARTIN DBR9

2006 Aston Martin DBR9/03

- Chassis 3 of 10 Works cars, one of the most successful DBR9s
- Petit Le Mans and Salt Lake winner, 9 consecutive ALMS Podiums in 2006
- 2nd in Class at Le Mans 2006, 3rd in Class at Le Mans 2007
- 2010 and 2011 AMR Young Driver car in GT1 World Championships with a win and 6 podiums
- Restoration and race preparation by Venture Engineering

A decade-long campaign to win the Le Mans 24 Hours ended in 1959 when the famous victory for Roy Salvadori and Carroll Shelby in the factory DBR1 brought Aston Martin's competition involvement to a close. But in 2003, work began on a GT1 competition version of the recently released DB9 with Prodrive founder David Richards. At Prodrive, Richards, with the backing of Swiss enthusiast Frédéric Dor, had garnered valuable experience turning the five-year old Ferrari 550 Maranello into a Le Mans class winner.

The first chassis was ready for testing by October 2004 and just under a week later was unveiled to select clients in the nostalgic livery of metallic green with a yellow noseband. The chassis numbering would also be a nod to the glory years of the 50s with the single or two-digit numbers for the works cars and triple-digit numbers for the customer cars.

2005 was a renaissance of the GT class with Corvette hoping to build on their success in 2003 and 2004. They entered their new C6R, Maserati entered the MC12 and the Ferrari 550 Maranello, Saleen S7-R, and Dodge Viper all returned. But the Aston Martin DBR9 was an instant success, trouncing the competition in its debut at the 12 Hours of Sebring.

DBR9/03's story also begins with success at Sebring. The third car works car produced of ten and one of just five works cars actually run by the works team, DBR9/03 raced at Sebring with Darren Turner, Tomáš Enge, and Nicolas Kiesa – two thirds of the team that had won the previous year. DBR9/03 scored a Podium and finished 6th overall. DBR9/03 continued its winning ways in the next two races, with two further class podiums in Houston and Mid-Ohio.

Three races into the ALMS season, Le Mans arrived and DBR9/03 got the call up. Wearing 007 and driven by Pedro Lamy, Stephane Ortelli and Stephane Sarrazin DBR9/03 qualified ahead of sister car 009 and well ahead of the privateers. Come 5 o'clock it was a battle royal between the two Aston Martin Racing cars and the yellow Corvettes with endless swapping of the lead and drama from the off. A few laps in, the BMS Scuderia Italia DBR9 spun and sustained too much damage to be repaired, necessitating a Safety Car period. Turner had been having problems with his radio and only heard the instructions to pit after he had passed the pitlane entrance. In trying to still follow instructions, he crossed the kerbs, damaging the sump. Come late evening and the order had settled into Corvette first in class with 009 applying pressure ahead of DBR9/03, all on the same lap after 6 hours of racing. At 23:00 009 was in tenth place overall, just 26 seconds behind the class-leading Corvette. By 05:00, 009 was in the lead and DBR9/3, having suffered a puncture, was 5th in GT1 but caught up to 009 by 08:00 and was running in 3rd.

Clever use of a Safety Car period meant that 009 had almost a whole lap on the Corvette behind, but disaster struck and the leader suffered clutch failure. At the finish, it was 2nd in GT1 for DBR9/03 and 5th in GT1 for 009.

Back in America, Enge and Turner continued their success with a podium at Lime Rock and an emphatic win at Salt Lake City, a podium at Portland, Road America and Mosport. But the crowning achievement of the season was a win for the pair at Petit Le Mans.

DBR9/03's only race in 2007 was at Le Mans. Appearing received an aerodynamic update for Le Mans, most noticeable of which was the radically restyled wing Mirrors. Run by AMR Labre Competition, and raced by Fabrizio Gollin, Casper Elgaard, and Christophe Bouchut, DBR9/3 was one of two DBR9s on the podium, with the Brabham/Rydell/Turner team finally taking the class win and DBR9/03 finishing 3rd in GT1.

Rested until 2010, DBR9/03 was called back into action for the Young Driver AMR team and reunited with Darren Turner and Tomáš Enge. The pair scored a podium at BRNO, won at the Nürburgring, and claimed a further podium at Interlagos. Still with Young Driver but now driven by Enge and Alex Müller, DBR9/03 picked up four further podiums in its final season at Zolder, in the Tourist Trophy, at Paul Ricard and in Beijing.

In 2024, DBR9/03 was subject to a full restoration by ex-Prodrive engineers Stuart Gale and his team at Venture Engineering and is now back in her resplendent Aston Martin Playstation Livery. With appearances at Heveningham Concours and Hampton Court, this two time Le Mans Podium, and Petit Le Mans winner is an incredible piece of history from the defining era of GT1.

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