

CLASSY—WITH A MEAN STREAK

same way we at MLE do—namely, that the car needs a little extra oomph.

“I started hearing enthusiasts request a faster, more powerful Vantage and I thought it would be a perfect project for ESX,” Afshar says. “So the supercharged ESX Super Vantage idea was born. I bought one and went to work. Six months later, you’re looking at it!”

BRIGHT MINDS, SERIOUS HORSEPOWER

Supercharging a Vantage was completely uncharted territory, so the ESX team had to rely on its own ingenuity and expertise (as well as the help of some of the industry’s best minds) to design a quality package that makes serious power. “ESX makes the whole system, but we had dozens—and I mean dozens—of the brightest minds helping us out with this project,” Afshar says. The list includes Chris, Craig and John from Vortech, Nick from Red Zone, Chris from Race Concepts and Osh from RMS to name but a few.

They opted to go with a centrifugal supercharger, which actually works on the same principal as a turbocharger by

compressing air as it enters the engine. This is hardly surprising considering the success ESX has had with turbocharged engines in the past. The down side of centrifugal blowers is that they don’t produce a lot of power at low rpm. On the plus side, however, they are more efficient, allowing the ESX Super Vantage to churn out 545 hp—and that’s a conservative estimate.

ESX dyno-tested its stock 380hp Vantage and came out with an unimpressive result of 308 hp. After bolting on the blower, the Super Vantage saw a drastic increase—all the way up to 473 hp at the wheels, which by our calculations is closer to 557 hp. The stock torque number was a paltry 242 ft-lbs, which was then raised to 343 ft-lbs, or 403 crank ft-lbs by ESX standards (although, again, we’d put it just a smidge higher).

When we met with the folks at ESX, they hadn’t done any performance tests on the car yet, but with a stock 0–60 number of 4.8 seconds, the Super Vantage should be good for at least a 4.2-second run. Considering the way centrifugal superchargers work,



SPECIFICATIONS & DETAILS

'08 ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE

ENGINE
4.3-liter V-8

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS
ESX Supercharger, Fluidyne Intercooler

ECU MODIFICATIONS
ESX ECU

NUMBERS
Horsepower: 545 at 7200 rpm
Torque: 403 ft-lbs at 6800 rpm
0–60 mph: 4.2 sec. (est.)
0–100 mph: 10.9 sec. (est.)
Top speed: 175 mph

WHEELS, TIRES AND BRAKES
(f) Kinesis K88 20x8.5" wheels w/ 255/30/20 Nitto Invo tires; (r) Kinesis K88 20x10" wheels w/ 285/35/20 Nitto Invo tires

BODY AND CHASSIS
The Vantage Collection rear carbon-fiber diffuser and carbon-fiber mirrors

INTERIOR
The Vantage Collection carbon-fiber doorsills and fire extinguisher

ESX ISN'T DONE WITH ITS SUPER VANTAGE PROJECT YET, THOUGH. AFSHAR TELLS US THAT A MORE EXTREME VERSION WILL BE OFFERED IN THE FUTURE.

however, we expect to see the most significant performance increases in higher speed tests.

Another advantage to the ESX supercharger system is that it is a self-contained unit, meaning it operates on its own oil supply, and other than the mounting points and the belt that runs it, it’s not connected to the engine.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

While Afshar aims to sell the ESX Super Vantage as a complete package, it won’t necessarily look identical to this one. For starters, the ESX model will come with factory wheels—not the Kinesis models shown here, which were

thrown on for the photo shoot and don’t seem to fit quite right.

There are, however, a few very nice aesthetic tweaks on this model that Afshar says he will be offering as options. On the exterior of the car, the factory rear diffuser has been replaced with a more aggressive carbon-fiber unit and the mirrors have also been replaced with carbon-fiber replicas. (These are not just covers.)

Greeting you as you open the door are carbon-fiber doorsills that feature cutouts in the center so the factory stainless steel Aston Martin plaques can show through. A miniature fire extinguisher is another option found on this

car to help give it a real race feeling. All these parts (and others, including a sexy carbon-fiber front splitter) can also be ordered separately from The Vantage Collection.

ESX isn’t big on changing its cars’ look and The Vantage Collection parts look almost stock—for a good reason. Company founder Nicholas David has worked designing concept cars for manufacturers for years and holds a master’s in vehicle design from the Royal College of Art in London. “ESX has never been much into exterior mods,” Afshar says. “I think keeping the cars looking primarily stock and streetable is more appealing and practical.”

