



HERITAGE TRUST

1961 Daimler SP 250 Sports

Fibreglass bodied 2 seater with 2½ litre V8 engine

This car dates from April 1961 and was originally sold in Wolverhampton. From 1974 to 1989 it was owned by the well-known Daimler specialist David Manners. It was then bought by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, and came to the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust in 1991. It was later refurbished in the original colour of Mountain Blue, although with red trim rather than grey, with the assistance of Jaguar's Special Vehicle Operations Department.

By the late 1950s, the Daimler Company was in trouble. A confused model policy had led to dwindling sales. There was not much money available to invest in much-needed new models. However, a brace of new all-aluminium V8 engines, of 2½ litres and 4½ litres, designed by Edward Turner, were under development. The question was - in what cars should these engines be fitted?

After trying to adapt a Vauxhall body for a new saloon, Daimler decided to launch the smaller of the new engines in a sports car, conceived with the American market in mind. The new car was in every respect a departure from traditional Daimler practice. The chassis was inspired by the Triumph TR3A, and the strikingly styled body was made from fibreglass. The new model was launched at the New York Motor Show in April 1959 and was at first called the Daimler Dart - until the Chrysler Corporation protested that they had this name registered for a Dodge, and Daimler was obliged to change their new model's name to SP 250.

Sadly, no sooner had Daimler introduced the car than the US market went into recession, and the hoped-for large scale sales in the USA never materialised. This was perhaps just as well, since there were numerous build quality problems, mainly with the body. These were partly addressed when Jaguar bought Daimler in 1960.

The final production figure of 2,654 cars made until 1964 was far short of Daimler's original expectations.

Registration mark: 4777 JW (19/04/1961)
Chassis number: 102741
Owner: The Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust

Engine: 2,547 cc V8
Price new: £1,539 1s 0d
Inventory no: 058/D.28