

Poll: Do you think the DB Rapide would have been more desirable with any of the older design fronts?

Votes: 2

- No, the final front is just fine (2 votes = 100%)
- Yes, certainly (0 votes = 0%)

Rapide 'old front'

Written by Lagondover at Dec 11, 2012 9:16 pm

Dear all,

In the book "ASTON MARTIN Ever The Thoroughbred" (by Robert Edwards) there is a nice chapter on the Lagonda Rapide, which says that the original drawings of the car show a distinctly DB4-like front. When looking for it on the Internet I also came across a page on an AMOC Forum which mentions other fronts. Does anyone know where such old design drawings may be found (on the Internet?) or is there any Forum User who has pictures available of such old drawings which could be made available for publication on this forum?

Would be nice!

Thanks in advance - Lagondover

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by randall977 at Dec 12, 2012 1:16 am

It seems logical that the starting point for the design of the Rapide was the DB4. The Chinese eye /horsecollar front may have been an attempt to steer away from AM and make it a Lagonda.

Though unusual, the style has come into its own, both the Facel Vega HK500 and RR SC 'Chinese eye' are now very desirable cars.

I've never seen any drawings of alternative fronts but maybe others have. I don't know of any Rapides other than 105 which were altered in the factory - if there is any evidence of this I'd love to see it.

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by David at Dec 12, 2012 11:16 am

137 was also modified by the factory. There were several iterations of the front treatment at the Touring factory, illustrated in a short article (not published on the internet) on Carrozzeria Touring using images from their archive. These different fronts were actually built (on the prototype chassis 101 or on a mule?), and show single & twin headlamp variants with various chrome trims, associated with a grille that is not DB4 exactly but more akin to (in English terms) an Austin Westminster, or drawing on Touring pedigree of the time such as a Lancia. The influence at AML on the final selected front came through various earlier Lagonda designs including "Brown Bomber" whose image can be found on the web and which shows direct lineage and evolution from earlier production (and still-born) models

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by SRD at Dec 12, 2012 1:24 pm

Like everything at AML, it depends where you want to start the birth process of the Rapide design ?

A reference to the Brown Bomber (LAG50/113), and by Tony Tocock, is given below. originally supposed to have been fitted with the failed V12 Lagonda engine.

<http://www.lagonda1949-1958.co.uk/TonyTocock/Tocock.html>

The two cars which he has included pictures of, clearly still have the post-war Lagonda radiator, both date from the period 1951-52. I do like the look

Lagondaforum: Rapide 'old front'

of LAG50/114. The first car was broken up in 1963, a great shame, you could seat four people on the front seat!

I would imagine that there were other cars used, most likely the 4-door 3.0 litre Lagonda's, made until 1958; and of course they have the same chassis design as the earlier 2.6 litre cars. But that is just conjecture of course

David, I think it is anyone's guess whether they used 101 as a development chassis or a mule. That car was so heavily used for publicity, didn't get much of a chance to sit around long in 1961 or '62.

An Austin Westminster is a good reference point. The key issue was the long chrome grill used on 1950's Lagonda's, which was incorporated into the design, and then compressed, giving an exotic look to the Rapide front.

Clearly, with a Touring prototype, an AML Mk2 prototype (105), the standard car - if indeed such a thing exists; and several cars with extra small horizontal vent grills.

There were a lot of thoughts at the time about the front of the car. Then of course there was the inhouse AML designs as well, after the Touring front end design was rejected, 105 being one of several different possibilities.

You also shouldn't forget, that the double headlamp look was very fashionable in the early 1960's, with many car makers including Ferrari, Edsel, Facwel Vega, Gordon Keeble, Lancia, Ford, Humber etc all using it. Some preferred the Chinese eye look, others a more conventional style.

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by David at Dec 12, 2012 1:38 pm

Another point is that the chassis/mule was at Touring in 1959. What is clear from the Touring photos is that the prototype body built there had chrome strakes atop the rear wings, and the last time I saw 101 (at Silverstone around 1998) they were present, but as far as I know 102 did not have them. In suggesting the Lancia as a model, that is because there was a new design for Lancia being produced by Touring at the same time as the Rapide prototype was being designed (& perhaps by the same person whose name escapes me). You are right that there are still gaps in our knowledge of the sequence of events, and Touring may well have used a mule provided by AML (which for convenience we might nickname LR100, because when it came back to NP it was a working car used for a while by DB's chauffeur)

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by randall977 at Dec 13, 2012 4:32 pm

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by randall977 at Dec 15, 2012 12:53 am

Not my work!

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by Lagondover at Dec 16, 2012 11:16 pm

Thanks to all for your interesting posts so far. Somehow I managed to get this front from the web

<http://www.carsablanca.de/Bilderstrecke/lagonda-rapide/1#pathway> - Burgundy, reg. nr 92 MY. I must say I like the final horse collar a lot better than this one. Does anyone know the chassis number of this one? As recently as April, 2011, it was still on Soren's list of unidentified cars (cf. Soren's post dated April 20, 2011 on the topic Wanted >> Lagonda Rapide 61-64 Wanted). And what other details are known about this car?

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by SRD at Dec 17, 2012 9:15 am

This is a well known car, LR105, the works Mk2 prototype.

Re: Rapide 'old front'

Written by Lagondover at Dec 17, 2012 10:13 am

Thanks Simon. "Well known" is obviously a relative concept, but thanks for the information. 😊
