ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

Rolls-Royce REFLECTS ON ITS PINNACLE PRODUCT

TO MARK 118th ANNIVERSARY

4 May 2022, Goodwood, West Sussex **(Embargoed until 9.00am BST)**

* Rolls-Royce Motor Cars celebrates the 118th anniversary of the historic first meeting between Henry Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls – which took place on 4 May 1904
* The company they founded together created ‘the best car in the world’, a position still occupied today by the marque’s products
* Phantom, Rolls-Royce’s pinnacle product, has continued to evolve technically, aesthetically and dynamically to maintain its pre-eminence in the Rolls-Royce offering, and in the world of luxury
* The eighth generation of Phantom reflects Royce’s held conviction that “small things make perfection, but perfection is no small thing”.

*“As we reflect on Phantom’s remarkable heritage, I am struck by the unique place it occupies in the hearts and minds of our most demanding Rolls-Royce clients. Phantom is the beneficiary of the most ambitious forms of Rolls-Royce Bespoke, transforming into whatever our clients want it to be. Indeed, Phantom is not only the ‘best car in the world’, but the best car for them in their world.”*

**Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars marks the 118th anniversary of the first meeting between its founders, Henry Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, England in 1904.

Through the combination of Royce’s engineering genius and Rolls’ talent for promotion, their company soon became recognised as the maker of ‘the best car in the world’ – a title that Rolls-Royce Motor Cars proudly retains more than a century later.

Today, the marque’s pinnacle product – Phantom – is the ultimate expression of Bespoke luxury designed and handmade at the Home of Rolls-Royce, Goodwood. As part of its annual reflections on its origins and unique heritage, Rolls-Royce looks back through Phantom’s lineage, exploring how its namesakes evolved over the years to remain consistently at the apex of the Rolls-Royce offering.

THE ORIGINS OF EXCELLENCE

In the automotive industry’s earliest days, luxury car makers produced only the mechanical components (engine, transmission, chassis and so on) known as a rolling chassis, which underpinned the car. The bodies were designed and constructed by independent coachbuilders to the customer’s specification.

For manufacturers, including Rolls-Royce, improvements in design and engineering were directed almost entirely towards technical aspects of the car’s performance. These included reliability, hill-climbing capability, ease of control and a set of ride quality attributes still known collectively as noise, vibration and harshness (NVH).

From the outset, Phantom earned the title ‘the best car in the world’ through the superior quality and designs of the rolling chassis – the finest platform on which coachbuilders could reach the very apex of their craft.

REDRAWING TECHNICAL BOUNDARIES

The Phantom family was born in 1925 when Rolls-Royce launched Phantom I. With its massive low-range torque, cutting-edge technology and ‘Magic Carpet Ride’, the new model immediately established the fundamental traits that would define the family for the next 100 years. Then, as now, Rolls-Royce declined to rest on its laurels, and by 1929, its successor was ready for the market.

Phantom II represented another step-change in engineering and technology. In 1930, the company unveiled the Phantom II Continental, which gave customers a choice of a more performance-orientated model for those who preferred to drive themselves. The ‘standard’ longer-wheelbase car was retained for chauffeur-driven use. This practice set the precedent for today’s Phantom and Phantom Extended.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

While the new Continental could attain speeds up to 95mph, it was still not as fast as some of its rivals. The company decided to resolve the matter once and for all. In 1934, applying its proven experience with aero engines, it developed a new 7.3-litre V12 engine, mounted on a new chassis. The resulting Phantom III, when fitted with lightweight coachwork, was capable of exceeding 100mph.

In 1939, Rolls-Royce produced an experimental car, nicknamed ‘The Scalded Cat’. In later years, this car was often loaned to influential individuals, including HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke was so impressed that he persuaded Rolls-Royce to build him a more formal version; the marque obliged with the first Phantom IV, delivered in July 1950. The car remains on front-line (albeit reduced) duty at The Royal Mews, under its pre-delivery codename, Maharajah. Though originally intended as a one-off, 18 Phantom IV cars were completed: 17 were sumptuously appointed commissions for other royalty and heads of state; the other, somewhat bizarrely, was built as a pick-up truck for use by Rolls-Royce as transport and on-the-road component testing.

A FINAL FLOURISH

In 1959, the marque launched Phantom V, equipped with its most up-to-date V8 engine. In 1967, the car underwent subtle technical changes that were deemed, at the very last minute, sufficient to justify its redesignation as Phantom VI.

By 1968 the only true coachbuilder left in Britain was Rolls-Royce’s own in-house company, Mulliner Park Ward. These magnificent cars soldiered on through the mid-1980s, until production dwindled to a mere two or three cars a year, and finally ceased altogether in 1992.

BRINGING VISIONS TO LIFE

Every generation up to Phantom VI was essentially a rolling chassis. The bodies were built to the owner’s individual requirements by some of the most famous and prestigious names in British and European coachbuilding.

While this was normal practice in the luxury automotive world, Phantom stood apart through its ability – thanks to Royce’s engineering genius and the excellence of the chassis’ components and construction – to carry coachwork of the very finest quality, weight and complexity.

At every stage in Phantom’s development, owners exploited its potential to the full, creating some of the most magnificent, eye-catching and radical motor cars ever to grace the road. And since the chassis and body were separate, it was possible for a subsequent owner to change the car’s appearance to suit their own taste and requirements.

Many Phantoms took on more than one guise over their long, often globe-trotting lives: in some cases, they were merely repainted; in others, the whole car was rebuilt from the chassis upwards, taking on an entirely new form and character. And for all their extraordinary diversity, every one of the examples shown below is a true Rolls-Royce in terms of its underlying engineering, materials and construction, performance, ride quality and comfort – and, above all, in being exactly as the owner wanted it.

**1930 Phantom II (62GY)**

This handsome Phantom II was coachbuilt by Hooper of London with a Dual Cowl Tourer body. At the request of the owner, a wealthy timber merchant from Texas, 50 additions were specified with touring intentions. These include a larger fuel tank, louvered bonnet and radiator two inches taller than standard. The car was originally purchased for the owner’s honeymoon and went on to tour the Continent extensively until 1939. The present custodian acquired the car in 1998 and has since won prestigious awards including the Louis Vuitton Classic Parfums Givenchy Trophy pre-war tourers and Most Sporting Tourer in the Biarritz Concours.

**1933 Phantom II Continental (55MW)**

This ‘concealed-head boat body’ was a speciality of coachbuilder Park Ward. Its main feature was the compact folding hood that, when fully retracted, was entirely concealed under the rear deck, giving the coachwork its distinctive uninterrupted line. The original upholstery was textured pigskin.

*Source: ‘Park Ward The Innovative Coachbuilder’ by Malcolm Tucker.*

**1933 Phantom Ill (3BT103)**

This rare two-door sedanca coupé was coachbuilt by HJ Mulliner for Apsley Cherry-Garrard, one of the surviving members of Captain Scott's last, fateful expedition to the South Pole in 1912. The car was originally finished in Primrose Yellow with a dyed Vaulmol leather interior; in the late 1940s it was repainted in black. The car was briefly owned by the legendary actor Sir Ralph Richardson; it then spent time in Wales and the USA before returning to the UK in the late 70s / early 80s. It sat neglected in a barn until 2018 when it was bought by its present owner, and has now been painstakingly restored using many authentic components, including original numbered engine parts.

*Source: Alpine Eagle Ltd.*

**1937 Phantom III (3BT85)**

London coachbuilder Hooper & Co built several bodies in this striking saloon-with-division style, which looks fast even when standing still thanks to its semi-razor edge styling and swooping curves. The art-deco chrome-plated flashes to the body and wings simply enhance the sense of kinetic energy.

*Source: ‘The Spectre Arises’ by Steve Stuckey.*

**1965 Phantom V (5VD63)**

This Phantom was originally owned by Wing Commander Patrick Barthropp. In 1968, John Lennon purchased the car from Barthropp coinciding with the launch of The Beatles’ White Album. In September 1969 he sold the car to Allen Klein, an American businessman.

The car appeared in the Oscar-winning film Georgy Girl (1966), the classic Let It Be (1970), starring The Beatles, Performance (1970), featuring Mick Jagger, and then prominently featured in The Greek Tycoon (1978) starring Anthony Quinn.

In 2016 after extensive restoration, Jody Klein, a longtime Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club member brought the car to the Concurs d'Elegance, Lincolnshire, where it was awarded first place for ‘Best In Class’.

The car currently resides in the United Kingdom.

*Source: Photographs courtesy of ABKCO © 2022. All rights reserved.*

**1966 Phantom V (5LVF65)**

James Young, established in 1863, is renowned for creating some of the most elegant coachwork to ever grace a motor car chassis. Perhaps the pinnacle of their achievements was realised in their PV23 design, developed especially for the Rolls-Royce Phantom V chassis, with 22 such bodies being built.

This model was usually finished in black, but for 5LVF65 the lighter shade of Ivory further enhances the classic elegance of every curve and line from the pen of its acclaimed designer, A. F. McNeil.

The interior contains a remarkably spacious rear compartment, with the finest cabinetry work below the division glass. Champagne cloth to the rear compartment is chosen for greater comfort than the similarly coloured and more resilient leather that the chauffeur would enjoy.

*Source: P&A Wood.*

**2015 Phantom VII (Serenity Phantom)**

Rolls-Royce created this magnificent Bespoke Phantom VII Extended for its display at the 2015 Geneva Motor Show. Inspired by opulent motor cars made for international royalty in the early 1900s, the rear passenger cabin is finished in a unique Smoke Green raw silk, specially handwoven and decorated with hand-embroidered and hand-painted Chinoiserie blossom motifs that took up to 600 hours to complete. The design also appears in the fascia and marquetry inlays in the rear doors; smoked cherrywood and bamboo elements, and details echoing the raked gravel in Japanese gardens complete the interior’s calm, natural ambiance. At the time, the Mother of Pearl exterior paint finish was the most complex – and expensive – the marque had ever produced.

**2021 Phantom VIII (Phantom Oribe)**

A unique collaboration saw the House of Rolls-Royce and the House of Hermès co-create a Bespoke Phantom for Japanese entrepreneur Yusaku Maezawa. Named Phantom Oribe, the motor car features a Bespoke two-tone exterior finish, inspired by the client’s world-class collection of ancient Japanese ceramics, Oribe ware. In an unusual move, the Rolls-Royce paint was made available for use on the client’s private jet that the Phantom is paired with.

The interior is finished predominantly in Hermès Enea Green leather. The Gallery features an artwork based on a design by the celebrated French artist and illustrator Pierre Péron (1905–1988), who created many of Hermès’ iconic scarves.

AN ICON REBORN

At one minute past midnight, on 1 January 2003, the first Phantom VII was handed over to its new owner – the first motor car to be produced at the brand-new Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood, West Sussex, England. A thoroughly modern interpretation of the marque’s signature lines and proportions, as first set down by Sir Henry Royce himself, it was built entirely in-house by Rolls-Royce, with monocoque bodywork to a standard design rather than coachbuilt. In one important sense, however, it retained a link with its heritage, in that every car was hand-built by a team of skilled craftspeople. Furthermore, the marque’s Bespoke programme meant Phantom was effectively a canvas upon which patrons could realise their own visions and desires.

Over its 13-year lifespan, Phantom VII cemented Rolls-Royce as the world’s pre-eminent superluxury motor manufacturer, and its own place as the marque’s pinnacle product. But just like their predecessors, Rolls-Royce’s designers and engineers understood that perfection is a moving target: that Phantom was never ‘done’.

In 2016, Rolls-Royce presented Phantom VIII. This was the first Rolls-Royce to be built on the marque’s proprietary Architecture of Luxury, an all-aluminium spaceframe designed to underpin every future motor car produced at Goodwood.

Phantom VIII was specifically designed to be the ultimate platform for Bespoke commissions. This has resulted in some of the most technically ambitious and challenging projects ever undertaken by the marque’s designers, engineers and specialist craftspeople. It is also the only Rolls-Royce model to feature the Gallery – an uninterrupted swathe of glass that runs the full width of the fascia, behind which the client can display a commissioned work of art or design.

- ENDS -

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

* **Phantom:** NEDCcorr (combined) CO2 emission: 329-328 g/km; Fuel consumption: 19.5-19.6 mpg / 14.5-14.4 l/100km. WLTP (combined) CO2 emission: 356-341 g/km; Fuel consumption: 18.0-18.8 mpg / 15.7-15.0 l/100km.
* **Phantom Extended:** NEDCcorr (combined) CO2 emission: 330-328 g/km; Fuel consumption: 19.5 mpg / 14.5 l/100km. WLTP (combined) CO2 emission: 361-344 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.8-18.6 mpg / 15.9-15.2 l/100km.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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## EDITORS’ NOTES

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