



## Rolls-Royce

### Media Information

# THE FINAL PHANTOM VII MARKS THE END OF AN ERA AS ROLLS-ROYCE ENTERS ITS NEXT PHASE

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*"From its introduction a little over 90 years ago, every motor car that has borne the title 'Phantom' has reset the standard by which all other luxury goods are judged," said Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. "As Phantom VII gracefully leaves the stage, having defined the first chapter in the renaissance of Rolls-Royce, we look forward to building on its remarkable success with the imminent arrival of its successor. A bold, new statement built on an all-new architecture promises to light the future of the world's most celebrated name in luxury."*

From the creation of 'New Phantom' in 1925, every generation of this most fabled name in luxury has served to define its moment, not only in Rolls-Royce's history, but in world history. Quite simply, it has been the choice of the people who have defined our world and made it turn for the last 90 years.

Phantom I (or 'New Phantom' as it was then known) carried the weight of expectation of living up to its eminent predecessor's billing as 'The Best Car in the World'. Needless to say it emphatically succeeded. In doing so, elevating Rolls-Royce to a

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place beyond a maker of superlative motor cars, to the very standard by which all luxury endeavours are judged.

78 years later, Phantom VII, the first Goodwood Phantom heralded the renaissance of Rolls-Royce and established its own legend, returning the marque to its rightful place as the only conceivable mode of conveyance for the world's most famous, wealthy and influential individuals.

Today, after 13 years defining luxury, Phantom VII leaves the stage with a fittingly artful tribute to the skills of the craftspeople at the Home of Rolls-Royce. This very last seventh generation Phantom signals the end of the first successful chapter in the renaissance of Rolls-Royce under new custodianship and the establishment of a true global centre of luxury excellence in West Sussex, England.

### **Phantom - at the pinnacle of luxury for over 90 years**

Like its modern successor, that first generation Phantom was developed in an environment of fevered secrecy, borne of the weight of expectation surrounding such an important car. Lead engineer Ernest Hives even went as far as to scatter armoured plating around the factory to substantiate the project's codename *Eastern Armoured Car (EAC)*. This kind of fervour and global scrutiny surrounding its development was perhaps not seen again for over seven decades, when a small team of engineers and designers ensconced themselves in total secrecy in a disused bank in central London. Their task was to create a

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Phantom, worthy of the name and reverential to its history, whilst making a truly bold statement on Rolls-Royce's pinnacle position in a new luxury landscape.

The mission would have been familiar to Hives, who himself was tasked with creating a modern Rolls-Royce for an era of profound change. Both Phantoms I and VII had to plot the marque's course amidst a backdrop of the shifting tastes and sensibilities of its wealthy patrons.

In designing Phantom VII, the task set before Ian Cameron and his team of designers cannot be overstated. Rolls-Royce, under new custodianship, had just five years to successfully design, develop, engineer and test a motor car worthy of re-entering the consciousness of a rapidly emerging yet increasingly global elite. The world was watching.

Rowing to the safety of pastiche or even tribute to Phantom I and its successors would have been a grave error. The 21<sup>st</sup> century's wealthy and influential demanded authenticity and sovereignty in the luxury houses they choose to patronise, so a thoroughly contemporary, singular vision of Rolls-Royce luxury was the only possible path.

3 January 2003 saw Cameron's vision finally unveiled to the world as the global media descended upon the marque's factory on only its third day of official operation. Like Hives and his ruse to keep the press off the scent, Phantom VII was designed and developed under a cloak of absolute secrecy. On unveiling that first car, the press were unanimous in their reaction, praising

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Rolls-Royce and its new custodians for bringing to the world a thoroughly modern interpretation of the classic lines and proportions that had maintained a stately presence at the world's great occasions for three quarters of a century.

Underneath that imposing yet elegant coachwork lay the foundations on which the opening passages of the next great chapter in Rolls-Royce history was built. A totally new aluminium spaceframe, designed and engineered for strength and weight-saving, and propelled by a magnificent 6.75l naturally-aspirated V12 Rolls-Royce engine developed the abundant yet whisper-quiet performance that has become the hallmark of modern Rolls-Royces.

Behind Phantom's now emblematic coach-doors lay an exquisitely crafted interior - realised by using only the finest materials by a new artisanal workforce drawn from the local area's boat-building and saddle-making industries. These first craftspeople, part of a workforce on that first day of just 350, served as the masters to a burgeoning new generation of 1,700 skilled craftspeople, their careers made possible by the success of the all-important seventh-generation Phantom.

For the first time since the age of the coachbuilder, patrons of luxury were offered true personalisation through the marque's Bespoke programme, with Phantom serving as an exquisite blank canvas from which its patrons' boldest visions could be expressed.

Media and customer acclaim soon affirmed that, like Hives, Cameron and his team had re-established the legend of the 'Best Car in the World'. It was stated at the time, that the

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establishment of the marque's centre of excellence and the concurrent development and launch of Phantom in just five years, stood as the 'last great automotive adventure.' Phantom once again represented the start of a bold new era - a period many close to the marque acknowledge as the most significant in its history. In just 13 years, Rolls-Royce had established itself once again as the yardstick by which all other luxury goods are judged.

### **The final Phantom VII - a study in luxury**

Now, as this most significant motor car prepares to gracefully leave the stage, it is fitting that the final Phantom VII, a beautifully appointed extended wheelbase limousine, has been created to celebrate the golden age of travel that Phantom defined.

This remarkable example, commissioned by a renowned contemporary Rolls-Royce collector, perfectly serves to illustrate the extraordinary attention-to-detail and deftness of touch that has defined the first chapter at the marque's home in Goodwood, West Sussex.

The art of marquetry - so beautifully used throughout Phantom's life - depicts a stylised 1930s ocean liner, reflecting this particular patron's fascination with the design and iconography of this grand era. The nautical theme continues with the application of tone-on-tone embroidery evoking the movement of the sea, exquisitely applied to the interior's Powder Blue leather.

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In true Phantom style, every possible detail has been considered. The clocks, featured in both the front cabin and the partition wall have been designed to echo the style of the radio clocks that adorned grand ocean liners. The Bezel, expressing 24 time zones, sits proud of the main clock, and reminiscent of HG Well's time machine, allows the owner to rotate it in either direction depending on where they find themselves in the world.

The maritime theme even extends to Phantom's indulgent lambswool carpets which feature a hand-cut wake effect elegantly created by the marque's master craftspeople - perhaps a nod to the fact that this final Phantom has passed, leaving the world in its own wake.

The exterior is finished in a stunning Blue Velvet, completed with a twin coachline with ocean liner motif to the shoulder, and offset beautifully by pinstripe tyres and a solid silver Spirit of Ecstasy. This carefully tended hand-crafted scheme completes a stunning final expression for the last Phantom of its kind.

The completion of this very final motor car, and the decommissioning of the Phantom production line after 13 years, sets the stage for the introduction of Phantom VIII, underpinned by an all-new aluminium architecture of luxury. Like its predecessor it will advance the standards set by its illustrious forbears.

Its arrival will herald the beginning of yet another great chapter in the history of the world's most compelling and celebrated name in luxury. - Ends

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