**Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

## Media Information

**ROLLS-ROYCE MARKS 115 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

**3 May 2019, Goodwood**

On 4 May 1904, Charles Rolls and Henry Royce met for the first time at The Midland Hotel, Manchester; an encounter that would change the course of automotive history. Exactly 115 years later, the marque they agreed to form that day continues to set global standards for innovation and excellence, and uphold their legacy as the originators of ‘the best car in the world’.

Rolls and Royce would doubtless be astonished at the cars produced under their names in 2019. The century (and more) that has elapsed since their first 10hp machine made its debut at the Paris Salon has seen materials, technology and manufacturing methods utterly transformed. Yet in several key areas, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars retains unbroken links to those pioneering days; and in its approach, instincts and values, it would be immediately – and pleasingly – recognisable to its founding fathers.

**A return to coachbuilding**

The lines and styling of the first Rolls-Royce cars are clearly influenced by the horse-drawn carriages they replaced. This is no coincidence, since they were handcrafted by the same master coachbuilders, who effortlessly transferred their skills and artistry from the outgoing tradition to the new technology. Coachbuilding at Rolls-Royce ended in the 1960s, but in 2017, the craft made a triumphant return in the form of ‘Sweptail’ – a fully bespoke, coachbuilt commission for a customer seeking ‘the ultimate grand tourer’.

‘Sweptail’ is a truly unique creation, with a never-to-be-repeated silhouette and individual interior touches, including a champagne cooler specifically proportioned to hold only a bottle of Dom Pérignon ’73. Nevertheless, with its Pantheon grille and rear overhang, it remains absolutely true to the Rolls-Royce brand and design language.

**The Architecture of Luxury**

Henry Royce began his automotive career by building an improved version of the 10hp two-cylinder French Decauville – the first car he bought when his eponymous electrical company became successful. When Rolls saw and drove Royce’s machine, he knew he had found a British car that could outshine the continental competition and agreed to sell all the cars Royce could build. In its first two years, Rolls-Royce produced a mere 10 cars: in 2018, it delivered 4,107 – the highest annual total in its history – to customers in over 50 countries.

To satisfy global demand for its products, the company has developed a common platform that underpins all new models. Known as The Architecture of Luxury, it comprises an aluminium spaceframe that can be scaled to fit different applications by using different-sized floor pans and cross members: new production processes ensure stiffness and integrity, as well as delivering the company’s signature Magic Carpet Ride.

**Black Badge**

Black Badge is Rolls-Royce’s response to a small and select group of clients who have asked the marque for motor cars with specific, focused characteristics that reflect their different take on life, success and the luxury they consume. These people choose to define themselves differently from their wider social group; a subset within a subset.

For over a century such individuals, possessed of a dark and restless spirit, have been drawn to Rolls-Royce’s unique allure. Luminaries including Sir Malcolm Campbell, Howard Hughes and Muhammad Ali have all shared the marque’s founding philosophy; an uncompromising refusal to accept the status quo and a constant yearn to innovate, create and advance.

Their restless spirit was also shared by the marque’s co-founder; himself one of the great disrupters of his day. The Honourable C.S. Rolls was a man in a hurry. Not satisfied with fundamentally altering the road-car landscape, he sought more and pursued his appetite for advancement and adventure in the air; a passion that would ultimately lead to his untimely demise aged just 33.

It is this indomitable spirit that, since the launch of Black Badge, has captivated so many of today’s young owners, who are drawn to Rolls-Royce in the knowledge that no other luxury house is possessed of the vision and flexibility to meet their demands both in design and engineering terms. Indeed, Black Badge serves to amplify the inherent characteristics that have driven so many new, younger patrons of luxury to the marque.

In conceiving Black Badge versions of Wraith, Ghost and Dawn, the marque’s Bespoke designers and engineers drew upon their instinctive understanding of the unique lives of these extraordinary men and women to create both design and engineering treatments that perfectly amplify the inherent values of these great Rolls-Royces.

Black Badge models are the ‘alter egos’ of the standard models: darker, edgier, with more power and torque and enhanced driving dynamics to open up the Rolls-Royce brand to new audiences.

Styling details include a dark-chrome Spirit of Ecstasy, wheels and carbon-fibre interior components, plus the ‘inverted’ black-on-silver ‘RR’ logo: as with every other Rolls-Royce, however, customers can add whatever Bespoke elements they wish, so even a Black Badge car can be any colour you desire.

**Effortless, everywhere**

In July 1917, a British diplomat, Hugh Lloyd-Thomas, was dining in a Cairo club with his wife, Aileen, when a man in flowing robes swept in and demanded: “Whose Rolls-Royce is this outside?” When Aileen said it was hers, the man announced that he was commandeering it “in the name of His Majesty’s armed forces” and drove away. He was, of course, T. E. Lawrence, more familiar to millions as Lawrence of Arabia; both he and the car would be immortalised in one of the most famous photographs of the First World War.

A century after Lawrence’s exploits, Rolls-Royce once again produced a car capable of conquering the most hostile environments on Earth. The Cullinan super-luxury SUV caused an international sensation on its launch in 2018, and set the new global standard in luxury off-road motoring. Cullinan was engineered from scratch to enable customers to go anywhere, see anything and do everything they desire with total confidence, while cocooned in the comfort and splendour embodied in the Rolls-Royce name. To prove its all-terrain credentials, the car completed a 12,000-mile odyssey through some of the world’s most challenging terrain, in partnership with National Geographic. As well as the Scottish Highlands, the Austrian Alps and the American West, Cullinan’s itinerary included the arid wastes of the Middle East, where it effortlessly confirmed Lawrence’s assertion that 'a Rolls in the desert is above rubies.'

“We are deeply conscious of our heritage: it is a tremendous privilege to be continuing and building on work that began 115 years ago,” says Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive, Rolls‑Royce Motor Cars. “But we also understand that our founders were visionaries, always looking to do things in new and different ways. It’s that spirit of excellence and innovation that Rolls-Royce Motor Cars embodies and celebrates today.”

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**Editors’ notes:**

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the BMW Group and is a completely separate company from Rolls-Royce plc, the manufacturer of aircraft engines and propulsion systems. Over 2,000 skilled men and women are employed at the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars’ head office and manufacturing plant at Goodwood, West Sussex, the only place in the world where the company’s super-luxury motor cars are hand-built.

**Further information:**

You can find all our press releases and press kits, as well as a wide selection of high resolution, downloadable photographs and video footage at our media website, [PressClub](http://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/). You can also find the communications team at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars on [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/RollsRoyceMedia) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/RollsRoyceMedia/)

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