ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

20 YEARS AT GOODWOOD –
THE HOME OF ROLLS-ROYCE, 2003-2023

26 January 2023, Goodwood, West Sussex **(Embargo: 09.00 GMT)**

In 1997, BMW Group was presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: to acquire Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. This was much more than just another business deal. Rolls-Royce is an institution, a name famous around the world, with a history going back to 1904. It is also a byword for excellence: brands and products across almost every industry aspire to be 'the Rolls-Royce of…'

As the brand's new owner, BMW Group faced an immediate and daunting challenge: to create a new home for Rolls-Royce, befitting its status and heritage. Towns and cities all over Britain put themselves forward to be the chosen location, with the promise of investment and high-quality local jobs that would follow. It quickly became obvious that only one place would befit the marque – and the clients it was created to serve.

**PERSONAL CONNECTIONS**

Rolls-Royce has a long-standing, personal connection with Chichester and the surrounding area. The company's co-founder, Sir Henry Royce, lived and worked for the last 16 years of his long and illustrious life at his beloved home, Elmstead, in West Wittering. It was here that he produced some of his most memorable work: famously, he sketched the basic design for his Merlin aero engine – which later powered the legendary Spitfire –­ in the sand on West Wittering beach.

That historical link focused attention on Goodwood, eight miles up the road. Motorsport fans worldwide already knew it as the home of the Goodwood Motor Circuit and the Festival of Speed. The wider Goodwood Estate also includes the racecourse and hotel, both at the centre of international society and therefore familiar to Rolls-Royce's clientele. It was obviously the ideal choice.

Rolls-Royce immediately secured an enthusiastic and influential champion for its project in the Estate's owner, the now Duke of Richmond, who identified a parcel of land that perfectly suited the company's needs.

**A FITTING HOME**

Everyone involved knew that this could be no ordinary manufacturing plant. Here, Rolls‑Royce would not just 'build cars': it would design and hand-build the world's most desirable super-luxury goods, for highly exclusive, exceptionally discerning clients from across the globe.

To design the Home of Rolls-Royce, Rolls-Royce commissioned award-winning architects Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners, whose credentials included London's Waterloo International railway station and the Eden Project in Cornwall. They created a striking, contemporary and highly sustainable building that blended effortlessly into the surrounding landscape. It also symbolised the innovative, technologically advanced and meticulously crafted products that would be created inside.

Exactly 20 years later, the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood remains the only place in the world where Rolls-Royce motor cars are designed and built – still by hand. It is also the global headquarters of a business that now operates in more than 50 countries worldwide. In 2016, the company opened its Technology and Logistics Centre in Bognor Regis, to support Goodwood's highly streamlined, fully integrated manufacturing processes.

**THE NEW ERA BEGINS**

As well as a new home, Rolls-Royce needed a new flagship product to re-establish its position as “The best car in the world”. The result was Phantom. At one minute past midnight on 1 January 2003, Rolls-Royce delivered the first-ever Phantom of the Goodwood era to its new owner, who still owns the motor car to this day.

In 2007, the company launched the Phantom Drophead Coupé, and a year later the imposing Phantom Coupé – the latter so revered with customers and the media, it would influence Rolls‑Royce’s design philosophy for the next decade and more.

**MEETING NEW STANDARDS**

The new incarnation of Rolls-Royce increasingly appealed to a new generation of younger, self-made, self-confident people, who brought with them different demands, desires and expectations. In 2010 the company responded with a completely new model, Ghost. Driver-focused and approachable, Ghost was an instant success, and would go on to be the biggest-selling Rolls-Royce in history.

In 2013, Rolls-Royce launched its most powerful model ever, Wraith, followed three years later by the Dawn drophead. And since 2018, the ‘Rolls-Royce of SUVs’, Cullinan, has allowed customers to enjoy the company's signature 'Magic Carpet Ride' off the road as well as on it; Cullinan is now the most in-demand model in the company’s line-up and – together with Phantom – among the most desired luxury goods on the planet.

At the same time, certain clients were looking for something more subversive and rebellious. For these outliers, Rolls-Royce created Black Badge – more potent and uncompromising expressions of Ghost, Wraith, Dawn and Cullinan, which today accounts for more than a third of the cars built at Goodwood.

**A LEADING HOUSE OF LUXURY**

This period signalled a defining point in the renaissance of not just a car company but a celebrated global house of luxury. Rolls-Royce had emphatically reclaimed its status as the reward of choice for captains of industry and a new generation of cultural icons, artists and technologists. These individuals, themselves tastemakers and world-shapers, have been more inspired than ever by a brand with the products and capability to meet their requirement to express personality and individuality in the objects they own.

Over the past 20 years Rolls-Royce has continuously developed and expanded its Bespoke capabilities, giving clients near-infinite ways to personalise their motor car. The ultimate expression of this is Coachbuild, where a small but significant group of individuals can commission not just their motor car's external colour and interior features, but its physical form.

BMW Group's acquisition of Rolls-Royce and subsequent creation of a fitting home for the marque was described at the time as “the last great adventure in automotive manufacturing”. In October 2022, Rolls-Royce embarked on another, perhaps even more ambitious endeavour, with the launch of its genre-defining ultra-luxury electric super coupé, Spectre. This ushered in a new age, in which every new Rolls-Royce model by the end of 2030 will be fully electric.

**THE ROLLS-ROYCE FAMILY**

Perhaps most importantly, Goodwood is also Home to the Rolls-Royce family. That family has grown from 350 people in 2003 to 2,500 today ­– including 150 new posts created in 2022 alone – with more than 50 nationalities represented. That family includes designers, engineers, craftspeople, assembly teams, sales, marketing, finance, IT, human resources and other specialists. Between them, they represent huge reserves of experience and expertise: in 2022, a record number of Service Recognition Awards were presented to colleagues marking 20 years with the company.

Since 2006, almost 200 talented young people have passed through the company's world-class Apprenticeship Programme, many choosing to take up permanent roles and going on to hold supervisory and management positions. Hundreds of university students have used industrial placements at Rolls-Royce to gain invaluable experience and build successful careers with Rolls-Royce, BMW Group and elsewhere. In addition, the company continues to run a highly successful graduate programme.

**FOREVER IMPROVING**

Today, Rolls-Royce stands as the global exemplar for luxury manufacturing excellence; a true House of Luxury, making some of the rarest, most beautiful and precious objects on Earth. But perfection is not finite or fixed. There is no point at which it is ever fully achieved: there is always something to be refined, improved or reimagined. It is this constant striving to Sir Henry Royce’s maxim “take the best that exists and make it better”, that makes the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood such a unique, enthralling and inspiring place to be.

*“Goodwood is both the physical and spiritual Home of Rolls-Royce; the only place in the world where we design and handcraft our unique luxury products, with a unique, personal connection to our long history. Far more than just an advanced manufacturing facility and corporate headquarters, it gives visitors an immediate introduction to our brand: beautiful, elegant and impressive, yet also creative, vibrant and ever-changing. In its design and construction, it embodies our central values of precision, attention-to-detail and pride for this great British institution. It is its own private universe, yet wholly connected to the wider world. We, the Rolls‑Royce family, are privileged to call it home.”***Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

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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. 2,500 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**](https://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/rolls-royce-motor-cars-pressclub).

You can also follow marque on social media: [**LinkedIn**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rolls-royce-motor-cars/); [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/RollsRoyceMotorCars);[**Twitter**](https://twitter.com/rollsroycecars); [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/rollsroycecars/); and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rollsroycemotorcars).

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