ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE DAWN: HEADING INTO THE SUNSET

2 May 2023, Goodwood, West Sussex **(Embargo to 13.00 BST)**

*“In reviving the Dawn nameplate, Rolls-Royce reinvigorated something much more than a motor car – like the glamorous convertible it drew inspiration from, the contemporary Dawn has come to characterise a modern expression of ‘la dolce vita’; a way of living that embraces the beauty and richness of life. Dawn truly reflects the joy of good company, the thrill of adventure and the peace of quiet reflection. Indeed, this motor car is a testament to the modern art of living, recalling ‘la dolce vita’* *spirit in every detail. As production of Dawn draws to a close, we can reflect on an extraordinary chapter in the marque’s history. This beautiful motor car perfectly embodies contemporary luxury while celebrating the marque’s founding principles and heritage.”***Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars signals the end of a glorious, glamorous era as it ceases production of its Dawn convertible. In this retrospective, the marque reflects on the best-selling drophead in the brand’s history as it takes its own unique place in the pantheon of great Rolls-Royce motor cars.

**CONTEMPORARY GLAMOUR AND ROMANCE**

Following the success of Phantom VII, and its stablemates Phantom Coupé and Phantom Drophead Coupé, an increasingly youthful, universally self-confident and sociable client base was drawn to the Rolls-Royce brand. These new super-luxury consumers required a motor car that, like the first transformative models of Rolls-Royce’s Goodwood era, captured the glamour and romance of super-luxury motoring; but did so in a fashion completely in tune with their contemporary tastes and lifestyles.

Rolls-Royce CEO, Torsten Müller-Ötvös, recognised that there was space in the marque's product portfolio to fulfil these clients’ desires. Accordingly, he challenged his designers to create not just a stablemate to Phantom Drophead Coupé, but an entirely new kind of super-luxury convertible. More than simply a beautiful motor car, it should evoke the romance and glamour that informs so much of Rolls-Royce’s legend, while offering a social, approachable and contemporary expression of open-top touring to an ascendant new generation.

Furthermore, it had to be completely new. Three years earlier, Rolls-Royce had launched its fastback coupé Wraith; but the idea of repurposing it was never considered. Instead, the marque’s designers found inspiration much earlier in the company's vast and storied history. Between 1950 and 1954, Rolls-Royce made just 28 examples of the Silver Dawn drophead coupé. The Dawn nameplate, with its connotations of new beginnings, fresh opportunities and glorious vistas, was unanimously approved as the perfect candidate for a 21st Century reincarnation.

The seductively elegant original perfectly embodied the spirit of its age, immortalised in the expression *‘la dolce vita’* – ‘the sweet life’. A reminder to savour every moment and live fully in the present, *‘la dolce vita’* came to signify good company and quiet reflection ­– the importance of taking time to dwell on the pleasures of life in all its beauty and richness.

Most famously, *La Dolce Vita* was also the title of the classic 1960 film directed by Federico Fellini. Now widely regarded as one of the greatest films ever made, it made a global star of actress Anita Eckberg, and the Trevi Fountain, until today one of Rome's most visited tourist attractions. Naturally, it also featured on mood boards within the Rolls-Royce design studio.

**EXQUISITE ELEGANCE PAIRED WITH LUXURIOUS COMFORT**

In the context of the film, *‘la dolce vita’* was a life filled with passion, adventure and romance. It was sensuous and sensual, a celebration of decadence, indulgence and pleasure in all its forms. It was this spirit that Rolls-Royce wanted to capture in its new drophead, expressed through timeless form language, contemporary craft and an effortless yet potent dynamic character.

The boldness of that vision was reflected in Dawn’s design. Its pure, simple form was inspired by fifties and sixties fashion, which evoked glamour by removing superfluous lines and textures, focussing instead on how it amplified the form of the wearer. Similarly, Dawn’s supple, flowing coachwork wraps around its occupants akin to raising a collar on an overcoat, affording those inside a cossetting, private and chic cabin experience.

Indeed, in creating Dawn, 80% of the panels were entirely unique, including a ‘wake channel’ on the bonnet emanating from the Spirit of Ecstasy, evoking the sensation of quietly gathering energy while provisioning drivers with a permanent vanishing point – a design feature that endures on Rolls-Royce motor cars today.

However, in one vital respect, Dawn broke with a long-established automotive design convention. Almost without exception, convertibles are designed in a 2+2 configuration, with full-size seating for the driver and one passenger in the front, plus two smaller seats for occasional passengers or children in the rear. The lack of rear-seat space, and particularly legroom, reduces the car’s comfort and practicality – a shortcoming Rolls-Royce refused to accept. Dawn was therefore a full four-seater with comfortable, individual seating for all occupants.

The very simplicity of Dawn’s design belied a host of complex engineering challenges, most notably the intricate roof mechanism, dubbed the ‘Silent Ballet’ for its precision, elegance and noiseless operation. A convertible hardtop had been briefly considered, however the marque’s designers decided Dawn’s roof should be created from fabric to retain the romance of listening to rain drops on canvas. Instead, a unique blend of materials, including fabric, cashmere and high-performance acoustic composites, made Dawn the world’s quietest convertible: with its roof closed, Dawn equalled the Rolls-Royce Wraith for noise-isolating performance.

**A MODEL TESTING PROGRAMME**

In quintessential Rolls-Royce style, engineers spent months optimising the convertible experience with an exhaustive testing programme – neither eliminating airflow completely nor permitting disruptive levels into the cabin. To achieve this, the test subject was a modified mannequin provisioned with a wig of long, flowing hair. It was chauffeured for hundreds of hours while a bank of sensors and cameras faithfully recorded how the hair was displaced by the moving air. The resulting data enabled engineers to make Dawn the world leader in aerodynamic comfort with the roof open.

Rolls-Royce also recognised the centrality of the driving experience for many of the younger clients Dawn was created for. Thus, beneath its svelte, minimal lines, Dawn received the marque’s near-silent 6.6-litre, 563bhp twin-turbo V12 engine. The chassis, naturally, delivered the brand’s signature ‘Magic Carpet Ride’, combining responsiveness and engagement with an almost supernatural smoothness.

Indeed, during a product experience later in Dawn’s life, an American journalist passed through an area as it was struck by an earthquake measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale, followed by a 2.7 aftershock; such was the smoothness of the ride, he learned of this only when he read about it in the press the following morning.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**BLACK BADGE DAWN**

In 2017, Rolls-Royce added a Black Badge variant of Dawn to its model family. Like the Ghost and Wraith that preceded it, Dawn’s alter ego derived its character from a series of engineering and design treatments. An entirely new exhaust system added a bass baritone quality to the engine note; the engine itself was tuned to deliver an extra 30bhp and boost torque to 840Nm. While appealing to the rebel spirit that attracts so many to this noire expression of the brand, Black Badge Dawn created its own singular place in the Rolls-Royce Pantheon – one characterised by the romance and seduction of the city at night.

**A LASTING LEGACY**

Beyond its desirability, Dawn brought the spirit of *‘la dolce vita’* to Rolls-Royce’s contemporary brand promise through an exquisite marriage of seductive design, contemporary materials, and a social, open-air driving experience. In doing so, Dawn has ensured its legacy by compelling an entirely new generation to the marque.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

* Rolls-Royce Dawn: NEDC (combined): CO2 emission: 372-367 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.3-17.5 mpg / 16.3-16.1 l/100km. WLTP (combined): CO2 emission: 381-367 g/km; Fuel consumption: 16.9-16.2 mpg / 16.7-17.4 l/100km.
* Black Badge Dawn: NEDC (combined) CO2 emission: 371 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.3 mpg / 16.3 l/100km. WLTP (combined) CO2 emission: 382-380 g/km; Fuel consumption: 16.7-16.9 mpg / 16.9-16.8 l/100km.

## 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).

## 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 2,500 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.CONTACTS | GOODWOOD

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1. <https://www.thedrive.com/new-cars/18327/the-2018-rolls-royce-dawn-review-driving-a-416100-convertible-through-an-earthquake> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)