ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

MODELS OF THE MARQUE – 2004 - PRESENT:

THE GOODWOOD-ERA ‘EX’ EXPERIMENTAL CARS

Monday 14 April 2025, Goodwood, West Sussex

* A brief history of the Rolls-Royce ‘EX’ experimental cars, built from 2004 onwards
* The Goodwood-era continuation of a long line of EX models
* Each edition has left its own legacy, with some becoming series motor cars
* Final chapter in a series celebrating landmark models from the marque’s history
* Year-long retrospective marks the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between Henry Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls in 1904

*“Experimental models have always played a significant role in the history of Rolls-Royce. Immediately identifiable by the ‘EX’ designation, the line began with 1EX in 1919, and continued for almost 40 years, ending with 45EX in 1958. In the Goodwood era, we’ve maintained the tradition with our own EX motor cars, the first of which, 100EX, was unveiled in 2004, barely a year after production began at the Home of Rolls-Royce. Experimental models are not and never have been concept cars at Rolls-Royce; they have always been fully functioning vehicles, offering our designers and engineers the opportunity for real-world innovation. They have been used to demonstrate new components and engineering techniques, including entirely new drivetrain technologies, as well as pushing the boundaries of exterior and interior design. Though every EX model is unique, they all uphold the Rolls-Royce philosophy of respecting the past while constantly focusing on the future. Thus, they are the perfect subjects on which to conclude this landmark heritage series.”*

**Andrew Ball, Head of Corporate Relations and Heritage, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Unlike the rest of the ‘Models of the Marque’ series, this final instalment considers a highly significant group of Rolls-Royce motor cars, rather than a single model that represents the decade in which it was first launched.

Rolls-Royce engineers designed and built numerous experimental cars up to the late 1950s. In 1927, for example, they created 15EX, 16EX, and 17EX in a bid to develop a lightweight sports variant of Phantom. All of the EX models featured below were conceived and crafted in the post-2003 Goodwood era, during the marque’s modern renaissance at the Home of Rolls-Royce. Some progressed to full production, while others were created as bold statements of intent, embodying the marque’s vision for the future of luxury mobility. The drivetrains, batteries and other systems prototyped in the all-electric models were ground-breaking in their own right, and laid the foundations for the subsequent development of Spectre.

Like their predecessors, all Goodwood-era experimental cars are designated ‘EX’ and bear the red ‘Double-R’ badge reserved exclusively for these pioneering models.

**100EX, 2004**

In March 2004, Rolls-Royce unveiled 100EX at the Geneva Motor Show. Coming just 15 months after the start of production of the new Phantom VII at the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood, it was a remarkable technical achievement, and a fitting way to commemorate the marque’s centenary year.

Like Phantom VII, 100EX was built on a lightweight aluminium spaceframe and featured some of the same meticulously engineered components to deliver the marque’s signature Magic Carpet Ride. The chassis was shorter by 165mm (6.5in) and 71mm (3in) lower, and Phantom’s 6.75-litre V12 engine was replaced with a significantly larger 9-litre V16, 64-valve naturally aspirated unit. Most obviously, 100EX was not a closed, formal saloon, but an open-top, four-seat, two-door drophead.

The exterior design, intended to evoke a classic motor yacht at speed, featured a dynamic rise in the waistline over the rear wheels, and graceful lines sweeping up towards the front. In true nautical fashion, the tonneau cover, luggage compartment lining and rear passenger cabin were all finished in bleached teak decking.

The rear tapered into a boat-tail style that would inspire a suite of Coachbuild masterpieces almost two decades later. The split ‘Countryman’ luggage compartment featured a separate lower tailgate which, when opened, provided a completely flat surface with inlaid fibre matting, ideal for picnics or as an elevated viewing platform.

The tailored roof was made from an innovative fabric incorporating fine metallic threads, and lined with a cashmere/wool blend. The folding mechanism was carefully designed so the roof could be concealed in an extremely small storage area, minimising intrusion into the luggage and passenger spaces.

100EX would later evolve into the fabled Phantom Drophead Coupé, launched in 2007 and now one of the rarest and most desirable models of the Goodwood era.

**101EX, 2006**

Two years later, the successor to 100EX made its debut, also at the Geneva Salon. With 101EX, Rolls-Royce designers set out to explore a potential design direction for a future coupé model. The result was a full four-seat coupé with twin coach doors, a lower roofline and shallower glass area than Phantom VII. The Pantheon grille was discreetly reclined and extended back across a brushed aluminium bonnet and windscreen surround. Though adopting the same aluminium spaceframe, 101EX was 240mm (9.45in) shorter than Phantom VII; this, combined with bodywork constructed from carbon fibre composite and the proven 6.75-litre V12 engine, gave it more of a performance and driver-focused character.

The interior featured the first example of what would become 101EX’s most enduring contribution to the Rolls-Royce design canon: the Starlight Headliner. Comprising hundreds of fibre-optic ‘stars’, it proved an instant sensation and is now among the most frequently commissioned Bespoke features within a Rolls-Royce motor car, with its own almost unlimited potential for Bespoke individualisation.

101EX would also find lasting fame as a series production motor car, providing the basis for the legendary Phantom (Fixed-Head) Coupé launched in 2008. Rarer even than its Drophead sibling, it was later succeeded by the Wraith grand tourer; in 2017, a one-off Phantom Coupé commission, ‘Sweptail’, ushered in a new era of contemporary coachbuilding at Goodwood.

**200EX, 2009**

Continuing what was now becoming an established tradition, Rolls-Royce once again chose the Geneva Motor Show to present 200EX in March 2009. Unlike 100EX and 101EX, it was explicitly intended to enter production, and served as a design study for a contemporary four-door saloon due for launch the following year.

The designers’ brief for 200EX was to create ‘a modern, lithe and dynamic Rolls-Royce bearing all the hallmarks of the great cars that had gone before it: effortless performance, unparalleled refinement, exquisite quality and confident design’.

Accordingly, 200EX was more dynamic and noticeably less formal than Phantom, with dimensions and styling clearly designed to broaden the brand’s appeal to an emerging, younger audience. The exterior was dominated by large, uninterrupted surfaces, with finely sculptured horizontal lines adding definition and geometric precision; the powerful shoulders and flanks narrowed sharply as they flowed from the rear wings to the taillights. The edges of the Pantheon grille curved inwards, with the vanes set back within the opening to give it a more dynamic form. Inside, the fascia was deliberately clear, spacious and intuitive, with important functions emphasised by chrome accents.

200EX was, of course, the basis for the first-generation Ghost, formally launched in 2010. Having shaped a new chapter in the marque’s story, it concluded its first-generation journey in 2019, becoming the most commercially successful model in Rolls-Royce’s history.

**102EX, 2011**

In 2011, Rolls-Royce produced a motor car that perfectly embodied the pioneering ‘EX’ spirit. Yet another Geneva Motor Show debutant, 102EX was a one-off Phantom with a full electric drivetrain, designed to gather customer insights to inform alternative propulsion systems for future Rolls-Royce motor cars.

Also known as the Phantom Experimental Electric (EE), 102EX broke new ground as the world’s first super-luxury battery electric vehicle (BEV). As well as providing a testbed for the new technology, a crucial part of its mission was to garner opinions and reactions from owners, enthusiasts, members of the public and the media regarding electric power. From Geneva, 102EX embarked on a global tour, taking in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America, giving people the opportunity to experience an alternative drivetrain technology and provide feedback directly to Rolls-Royce engineers.

Before setting off, 102EX underwent exhaustive laboratory testing at the world-renowned Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA) facility in Warwickshire to assess battery performance in extremes of humidity and temperature. These showed that the motor car could be driven normally in relative humidity as low as 30% – the average reading in Las Vegas, for example – and, in theory at least, temperatures of up to 500°C.

The real-world technical and user data gathered by 102EX on its epic journey would be instrumental in the development of Spectre, and the fulfilment of Charles Rolls’ prophecy, made in 1900, that electricity would, one day, provide the ideal means of propulsion for luxury motor cars.

**103EX, 2016**

Before the advent of Spectre in 2021, however, Rolls-Royce had already taken another significant step towards making Rolls’ far-sighted prediction a reality. The marque’s parent company, BMW Group, celebrated its own centenary in 2016 by commissioning a special ‘Vision Vehicle’ from each of its brands. For Rolls-Royce, the year also marked the end of production of Phantom VII, pending its replacement in 2017.

The marque’s Vision Vehicle, debuting at a special event at London’s Roundhouse, was 103EX, designed to ‘define the future of luxury mobility’. Hand-built using the most advanced materials, and powered by a zero-emissions powertrain, it offered a glimpse of a future in which Rolls-Royce offered clients a completely personal, effortless and autonomous experience, built around three innovative elements.

The passenger cabin, dubbed ‘The Grand Sanctuary’, surrounded occupants with precious and contemporary materials carefully chosen to create a feeling of lightness, simplicity and effortless elegance. The seats were replaced with an opulent sofa, which, thanks to artful lighting, appeared to ‘float’ within the cocoon of the cabin.

At 5.9m (19.36ft) long and 1.6m (5.25ft) high – the same dimensions as Phantom Extended Wheelbase – 103EX guaranteed a grand arrival for its owner. For the first time, the Spirit of Ecstasy was made in glass and illuminated from below; the Pantheon grille was also reimagined, and graced with the red ‘Double-R’ badge traditionally reserved for EX cars.

As well as an all-electric powertrain, 103EX included other experimental technology providing a compelling glimpse into the marque’s vision for the future. A digital assistant called ‘Eleanor’ – named after Eleanor Thornton, believed to have been Charles Sykes’ muse for the original Spirit of Ecstasy figurine – provided not only fully autonomous driving, but also a digital connection between car and owner, foreshadowing today’s Whispers app.

Innovation and development are continuous processes at the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood. In the future, it is possible that the emergence of new technologies, materials and manufacturing methods may require exploration through the creation of dedicated experimental cars. If and when that happens, the next Rolls-Royce EX model will surely take its place in a unique, fascinating and ultimately transformative automotive dynasty.

**CELEBRATING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE**

Given their historical importance, and the length of time that has elapsed since they were made, the EX motor cars represent the first true ‘heritage’ models of the Goodwood era. They thus provide the perfect conclusion for this year-long retrospective of great motor cars from Rolls-Royce’s first 12 decades.

These experimental cars were far more than just technical essays and historical curiosities. Like their 20th Century forebears, they were all fully functioning vehicles and, as test beds for new components, engineering approaches and Bespoke features, they laid the foundations for Rolls-Royce’s renaissance and subsequent success. All the current Rolls-Royce product portfolio, as well as models no longer in production such as the first-generation Ghost, Dawn drophead, Wraith fastback and the Phantom Coupés, can trace their origins to one or more of these pioneering projects.

The EX programmes also gave designers and engineers the skills, experience and confidence to put Bespoke at the heart of Rolls-Royce’s offering, and paved the way for the revival of coachbuilding as a discrete, permanent service. It is in these capabilities, and their unmatched potential to create value both for clients and the business, that Rolls-Royce is now investing with its landmark extension at Goodwood.

The new facility is also designed to support production of the new generation of battery-electric motor cars. These will be crucial to boosting Rolls-Royce’s already significant contribution to the UK economy, which currently stands at over £500 million annually. Yet they will still owe much to lessons learned from 102EX and 103EX, thereby embodying Rolls-Royce’s proven approach of drawing on its rich heritage, without being bound by it, to inform and shape the future.

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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); [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/rollsroycecars/); and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rollsroycemotorcars).

EDITORS’ NOTES

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a true luxury house, creating the world’s most recognised, revered and desirable handcrafted Bespoke products for its international clientele.

There are over 2,500 people working at the Home of Rolls-Royce at Goodwood, West Sussex. This comprises both its global headquarters and Centre of Luxury Manufacturing Excellence – the only place in the world where Rolls-Royce motor cars are designed, engineered and meticulously built by hand. An [independent study](https://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/rolls-royce-motor-cars-pressclub/article/detail/T0414618EN/%C2%A34bn-for-uk-plc%E2%80%99%3A-rolls-royce-motor-cars-%E2%80%93-the-great-british-success-story) by the London School of Economics & Political Science confirms that since the company first launched at Goodwood in 2003, it has contributed more than £4 billion to the UK economy and adds more than £500 million in economic value every year.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is a wholly owned subsidiary of the BMW Group and is a completely separate, unrelated company from Rolls-Royce plc, the manufacturer of aircraft engines and propulsion systems.

120TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2024, Rolls-Royce marks the 120th anniversary of the first meeting between its founders, Henry (later Sir Henry) Royce and The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls on 4 May 1904. The meeting, at The Midland Hotel in Manchester, was arranged by a mutual friend, Henry Edmunds. Rolls agreed to sell all the cars Royce could make and the rest is, literally, history. Together, Royce and Rolls created what was soon dubbed ‘the best car in the world’ and gave their names to a dynasty of motor cars that continues to define superluxury motoring across the world.

The Rolls-Royce ‘Makers of the Marque’ series:

* Henry Edmunds, born 19 March 1853
* Sir Henry Royce, born 27 March 1863
* Eleanor Thornton, born 15 April 1880
* Ernest Hives, born 21 April 1886
* Lord John Walter Edward Douglas-Scott-Montagu, born 10 June 1866
* The Hon. Charles Stewart Rolls, born 27 August 1877
* Claude Johnson, born 24 October 1864
* Charles Sykes, born 18 December 1875
* Eric Platford, born 25 February 1883

The Rolls-Royce ‘Models of the Marque’ series:

* 1900s: Royce 10 H.P. / Rolls-Royce 10 H.P.
* 1910s: Rolls-Royce 40/50 H.P. ‘Silver Ghost’
* 1920s: Rolls-Royce 20 H.P. the ‘Twenty’
* 1930s: Rolls-Royce Phantom III
* 1940s: Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn
* 1950s: Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud
* 1960s: Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow
* 1970s: Rolls-Royce Camargue
* 1980s: Rolls-Royce Phantom VI
* 1990s: Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph
* 2000s: Phantom VII
* 2004 - Present: The Goodwood-Era ‘Ex’ Experiential Cars

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