



ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE BLACK BADGE: THE ORIGIN STORY

21 October 2021, Goodwood, West Sussex

Embargoed until 13:00 BST

- Rolls-Royce reveals origin of Black Badge ahead of announcement on 28 October
- Black Badge channels the subversive spirits of founders C. S. Rolls and Sir Henry Royce
- Black Badge responds to the demands of a new class of disruptors and visionaries
- Design and engineering execution challenges established assumptions about the brand
- Black Badge motor cars now represent 27% of Rolls-Royce product commissions

“Rolls-Royce has always attracted a unique breed of outliers, visionaries and iconoclasts. We are proud to provide these men and women with a perfectly engineered canvas upon which they can express a subversive and confident projection of their success.”

“Black Badge represents a natural evolution for a brand that is defined by a culture of collaboration with its clients. Black Badge is not a sub-brand. It is an attitude that represents an authentic and confident response to the desires of a new group of clients who proudly practise bold self-expression.”

Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



At 13:00 BST on 28 October 2021, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars CEO Torsten Müller-Ötvös will announce a new product in the brand's portfolio. Ahead of this statement, the marque reveals an unexpected history of subversion within Rolls-Royce, including the creation of Rolls-Royce's alter ego: Black Badge.

In addition to the extraordinary origin story of the marque's permanent Bespoke series of motor cars – which now account for 27% of Rolls-Royce commissions worldwide – the brand has elected to bring its learnings together with an animation, created in partnership with highly conceptual non-fungible token (NFT) creator, artist and illustrator Mason London.

A SUBVERSIVE HERITAGE

Rebellion is not a new concept at Rolls-Royce. The very foundations of the company represent a wilful challenge to what was perceived to be possible – or even polite – as founders Sir Henry Royce and C. S. Rolls both rejected the destiny of their births. Royce ascended from humble beginnings to become an engineering giant of his times, creating motor cars for and with the gentry. Rolls, an aristocrat, wore white-tie spattered with oil to grand Cambridge University occasions, earning him the moniker 'Dirty Rolls'.

Today, 'disruptor' has become the popular label for those who refuse to adhere to established conventions. This attribute has made fortunes, slain great institutions and even challenged the very notion of currency. Had the term existed in the early 20th century, Rolls and Royce would have been among the era's arch-disruptors. Through an agonising pursuit of perfection, they proved that a car could credibly replace the reliability and frugality of a horse and carriage.

Indeed, they were so successful that their motor cars instantly became the preserve of those who ruled. Later, Rolls' pursuits as an aviation pioneer were driven by a heroic yet dark urge to further the cause of his era's second great mobility revolution – flight – until he tragically lost his life performing at an air show. In so many respects, Rolls created the firebrand archetype that Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Branson and Larry Ellison strive to emulate today.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



It is no wonder that in every era since these two men met, the outliers, visionaries and iconoclasts who define the modern world have felt so comfortable in Rolls-Royce's company. Though wildly different in character, approach and legacy, individuals such as John Lennon, Karl Lagerfeld, Sammy Davis Jr, Sophia Loren and today's young pioneers in technology, embedded intelligence, fintech and big data are all bound by the rebel spirit of Rolls and Royce.

The case for Black Badge – the marque's first permanent Bespoke series of motor cars – as an authentic and contemporary response to the current generation of this legacy, could not have been clearer.

THE BIRTH OF BLACK BADGE

Before considering Black Badge, it is vital to understand the roots from which it grew, and the trajectory Rolls-Royce took following the relaunch of the brand in 2003. The Goodwood era began with Phantom in 2003: a pinnacle saloon motor car that artfully recalled the grandeur and imperiousness of its forbears. Following Phantom's launch and subsequent success, the marque's specialists listened to a new tone of feedback. Clients requested a less formal expression of brand, which summoned the introduction of Ghost in 2009, the motor car that went on to become the best-selling Rolls-Royce in history.

Following the success of Ghost, Rolls-Royce consolidated the revival of the marque by attuning itself to the very different desires of an ascendant generation. These women and men demanded even more dynamic motor cars. Wraith, a gran turismo that channelled the more urgent nature of Rolls' spirit was later followed by the all-terrain Cullinan – itself a pure expression of the marque, reimagined not just for a new client, but for a new purpose. Together, these cars, along with the introduction of a seductive drop-head coupé, Dawn, redefined Rolls-Royce's ever-younger customer base, driving the company to unprecedented commercial success and injecting vibrancy and a renewed sense of purpose into one of the world's most revered institutions.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



BOLD AND BESPOKE

The clients who came to Rolls-Royce in this bold new era were drawn from new industries and geographies. Their success was defined on their own terms. It is only natural that they sought to project their newfound liberty with the same contrarian spirit that had served them so well during their ascent. Simply acquiring the very best was no longer enough. The objects with which they surrounded themselves needed to project their individual sensibilities, tastes and paths to greatness.

The execution of this new vision fell to Rolls-Royce's Bespoke Collective. Increasingly, these experts within the marque were being asked to create cars that countered the expected codes of luxury. The decorative mastery of traditional materials such as lacquered woods gave way to more technical and contemporary expressions of craftsmanship. Exhaustively engineered technical fibres, aircraft-grade aluminium and starker colourways defined a confident new interior aesthetic.

At Rolls-Royce there is no requirement for structured approaches to market research. The brand understands its customers because the very execution of its product is achieved in close personal collaboration with them. Furthermore, its senior executives integrate themselves into their clients' lifestyles, knowing many personally and often defining future projects not by internal codenames but the name of the first client who requested it.

Bespoke had become as much a part of Rolls-Royce as the motor cars on which it was overlaid. But it was through this global archive of commissions that one clear pattern emerged: a desire to respectfully subvert Rolls-Royce. Indeed, this realisation was confirmed following a chance meeting between Rolls-Royce Motor Cars CEO Torsten Müller-Ötvös and a client who had tasked an outside tuning house with cloaking his Wraith in black chrome and darkened wheels.

This tallied with what Müller-Ötvös had experienced during several meetings with individual clients who commissioned their own "darker" Rolls-Royces and confirmed the requirement for a sanctioned answer to this new movement. These clients did not believe Rolls-Royce would

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



agree to their wishes. They were misinformed. The brand's contemporary success is defined by a willingness to listen, participate and define changing cultures and norms. Black Badge was born.

BLACK BADGE AND THE BROADER LUXURY INDUSTRY

As Rolls-Royce's clients became younger, more dynamic and diverse, so did the scope of inspiration. The marque's specialists recognised a movement in fashion and haute couture that was channelling a similar spirit, one that celebrated the tension between rebellion and design tradition. Inspiration was frequently drawn from classic garment silhouettes but led to a fresh and contemporary mood through dark yet innovative materials, often accented with a flash of bold colour. Creators such as John Varvatos, Alexander McQueen, Rick Owens, Yohji Yamamoto and Ann Demeulemeester championed a similar aesthetic. *Comme des Garçons'* protégé Kei Ninomiya was so moved by the theme of darkness he created the Noir label in its honour.

However, this movement extended beyond the catwalks and onto the streets of the world's most exclusive enclaves. From Tokyo to Los Angeles, architecture in monochrome dramatically increased in popularity. In the first half of the 2010s, *yakisugi*, the ancient Japanese technique of charring exterior wood, experienced a considerable resurgence, while the Nashville-based O'More College of Architecture & Design coated its 2017 show house in black.

The women and men popularising this movement also carry this aesthetic with them as they travel, hence Rimowa's iconic black suitcase and Bottega Veneta's black Cassette bag. Increasingly, they travelled in black aircraft – several charter companies, such as Blackbird Air, specialise in provisioning fleets of black private jets. Even in cuisine, the colour now has an immovable status as a rare luxury across the world – as glossy as caviar, as deep as squid ink and as potent as truffle.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



Materials at the very core of traditional, high-luxury products were also being challenged. Three pioneering sailing yachts, Maltese Falcon (88 metres), Black Pearl (106.7 metres) and Sailing Yacht A (142.8 metres), combined the form of a heritage sailing craft with execution in technical fibres. This challenged the established use of woods for key structural components as well as fitted surfaces and freestanding furniture.

The ultimate expression of future-facing style; stripped of excessive decorative effects and pared back to its innate graphic force, this aesthetic represents restraint, intellect, discipline and a way of living in an increasingly complex world. It also captures the spirit of Post Opulence in a turbulent post-pandemic world. In our hyper-stimulated, kaleidoscopic era, enhanced by AI and VR, it has come to represent a place of rest and precious privacy. From black-screen mode to blackout eye masks or simply lying in the dark under the stars, we universally appreciate the value of retreating into our own personal void.

A TRULY CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENT

Similarly, at Rolls-Royce, colour palettes that deferred to heritage were replaced with a darker aesthetic that communicated presence without distracting from the motor car's silhouette. While black products have reflected a traditional code of luxury, particularly in fashion, Rolls-Royce's designers now work to subvert it through the injection of bold colour. In the same way that Chanel's little black dress has evolved, Rolls-Royce's clients have become increasingly bold, integrating neon flashes with the noir mood of Black Badge.

For the first time, a Bespoke response to changing customer demand was expressed with equal weight by the engineering team as by the design collective. These new individuals sought more immediacy and dynamism. Rolls-Royce responded with uprated power, brakes, suspension and by allowing into the interior suite a little more of the aural character of the V12 powertrain.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



This deeply authentic, holistic approach reflected the changing environments in which a Rolls-Royce operates, from country estate to night-time urban playground. Indeed, it is through Black Badge that the marque came to define the pinnacle of this new way of living and channel the spirit of its founders, disrupting itself to thrive in times of unprecedented change.

The next chapter in Black Badge's remarkable history will be announced at 13:00 BST on 28 October 2021. Visit www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com for more.

- ENDS -

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS

The Drive, Westhampnett, Chichester, PO18 0SH, UK +44 (0)1243 384000 enquiries@rolls-roycemotorcars.com www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited. Registered in England and Wales. Company number 3522604. Registered address: Summit ONE, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0FB.
Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its credit broking activities in the UK



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Wraith: NEDCcorr(combined) CO2 emission: 365-363g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.7-17.8 mpg/16.0-15.9 l/100km. WLTP(combined) CO2 emission: 369-357g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.3-17.9mpg/16.3-15.8l/100km.

Dawn: NEDCcorr (combined): CO2 emission: 372-367 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.3-17.5 mpg / 16.3-16.1 l/100km. WLTP (combined): CO2 emission: 381-372 g/km; Fuel consumption: 16.7-17.1 mpg / 16.9-16.5 l/100km.

Cullinan: NEDCcorr (combined) CO2 emission: 341 g/km; Fuel consumption: 18.8 mpg / 15.0 l/100km. WLTP (combined) CO2 emission: 377-355 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.0-18.1 mpg / 16.6-15.6 l/100km.

Ghost: NEDCcorr (combined) CO2 emission: 343 g/km; Fuel consumption: 18.8 mpg / 15.0 l/100km. WLTP (combined) CO2 emission: 347-359 g/km; Fuel consumption: 17.9-18.6 mpg / 15.2-15.8 l/100km.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



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](#).

You can also follow marque on social media: [LinkedIn](#); [YouTube](#); [Twitter](#); [Instagram](#); and [Facebook](#).

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.

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS



CONTACTS | Goodwood

Director of Global Communications

Richard Carter

+44 (0) 1243 384060 / [Email](#)

Head of Corporate Relations

Andrew Ball

+44 (0) 7185 244064 / [Email](#)

Head of Global Lifestyle Communications

Emma Rickett

+44 (0) 7815 244061 / [Email](#)

Head of Global Product Communications

Matthew Jones

+44 (0) 7815 245929 / [Email](#)

United Kingdom

Isabel Matthews

+44 (0) 7815 245127 / [Email](#)

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS

The Drive, Westhampnett, Chichester, PO18 0SH, UK +44 (0)1243 384000 enquiries@rolls-roycemotorcars.com www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited. Registered in England and Wales. Company number 3522604. Registered address: Summit ONE, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0FB.
Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its credit broking activities in the UK



CONTACTS | REGIONAL

Asia Pacific – North

Rosemary Mitchell

+81 (0) 3 6259 8888 / [Email](#)

Asia Pacific – South

Hal Serudin

+65 8161 2843 / [Email](#)

Central and Western Europe

Ruth Hilse

+49 (0) 89 382 60064 / [Email](#)

Central/Eastern Europe and CIS

Frank Tiemann

+49 (0) 160 9697 5807 / [Email](#)

China

Anna Xu

+86 10 84558037 / [Email](#)

Middle East and Africa

Rami Joudi

+971 56 171 7883 / [Email](#)

Russia

Malika Abdullaeva

+7 916 449 86 22 / [Email](#)

The Americas

Gerry Spahn

+1 201 930 8308 / [Email](#)

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS