

Rolls-Royce 200EX

200EX is the latest experimental car from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. It explores a design direction for a dynamic, modern, four-door Rolls-Royce engineered for the 21st century.

PHILOSOPHY

Experimental models have always played a significant role in the history of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, from the first – 1EX, built in 1919 – to the most recent – 101EX, built in 2006. Unlike a concept car, the experimental models developed by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars have always been fully functioning vehicles, residing in a tangible world of wood, leather and metals rather than clay and foam. EX cars offer designers and engineers the opportunity for real-world innovation and have been used to showcase new components and engineering techniques as well as exterior and interior designs. “Modern automotive engineering is a balance of creativity, innovation and application. 200EX is an opportunity to assess these new ideas,” explains Helmut Riedl, Director of Engineering.

100EX was the first experimental car unveiled after Rolls-Royce Motor Cars was relaunched under BMW Group ownership in 2003. Revealed at the Geneva motor show in 2004, the two-door, four-seat convertible was built to mark 100 years of Rolls-Royce motor car design and engineering. Just two years later, 101EX was presented, which explored modern coupé design. Both of these cars inspired production models that not only closely resemble their EX progenitors but have also redefined luxury motoring in the modern age.

Following on from this success, the same group of designers and engineers has created 200EX, itself pointing the way to RR4, a new Rolls-Royce model scheduled for production in 2010. The brief for 200EX? To create a modern, lithe and dynamic Rolls-Royce that bears all the hallmarks of the great cars that have

gone before it: effortless performance, unparalleled refinement, exquisite quality and confident design.

DESIGN

“Alluring, inviting, approachable – this car captivates with each encounter” – Chief Designer, Ian Cameron

200EX has a dynamic edge to its styling and is noticeably less formal than previous models. Its size, style and expression broaden the appeal of the car, making it more appropriate for a wider range of circumstances. “200EX is a touring saloon with more than a little panache and perhaps more bravado than one might have expected from Rolls-Royce Motor Cars,” says Cameron. “What you see is a modern car that is immediately recognisable as a true Rolls-Royce, even from angles that obscure the grille and Spirit of Ecstasy. Design elements such as the elevated prow, long bonnet, short front overhang, sharply raked A-pillar and elegant tail give 200EX an air of informal presence – powerful but unobtrusive.”

The exterior design is dominated by large, uninterrupted surfaces, while finely sculptured horizontal lines add definition and geometric precision. In combination, the upward-sweeping sill line and low-cut roof create a powerful profile. The tapered rear is enhanced by powerful shoulders and flanks that draw in sharply, narrowing as they flow from the rear wings to the tail-lights.

The rear-hinged coach doors give the car a natural presence and sense of theatre. Revived in 2003 on the Phantom, this signature feature lends added functionality and style to the design. Opening through a generous 83 degrees, the coach doors offer the widest rear access in the car industry as well as providing the warmest of welcomes to those about to step inside.

At the front, a pair of LED headlamps flank the latest evolution of the world’s most famous grille. “We wanted this to be less reminiscent of the traditional ‘Parthenon’

style and more like a jet intake,” says Ian Cameron. The sides of the intake have been curved inwards and the vanes set back into the opening. It’s a more dynamic form that moves on from the design first seen on the Phantom Drophead Coupé.

The exterior of 200EX is finished in Darkest Tungsten, which contrasts with the silver satin finish applied to the bonnet and A-pillar. Seven-spoke, 20-inch wheels complete the visual impact of the exterior.

Within 200EX, Interior Designer Alan Sheppard has accomplished a contemporary atmosphere, incorporating the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars principles of fine materials and peerless comfort. The space is filled with natural light, which brings in a real sense of the outside world. However, substantial doors and a high shoulder line ensure that occupants feel cosseted and protected. In the rear, the intimate ambience of the lounge seat is emphasised by its position behind the C-pillar, heightening the sense of privacy.

Naturally, the finest materials have been used. Elegant, frosted lamps and chrome door handles feature, while details include traditional violin key switches, eyeball air vents, opaque dials and refined instrumentation.

“As with any Rolls-Royce, detail is crucial,” says Alan Sheppard. “We want the lasting impression for owners to be that their car was made just for them by someone skilled and caring.”

The dashboard has been kept deliberately clear; it is spacious in its design and has an intuitive layout. The controls are neatly sculptured, with more important functions emphasised by accents of chrome. The soft light of the instrument panel glows through the familiar black-rimmed steering wheel, which itself incorporates a number of violin keys as well as an ergonomic roller-ball control.

The interior of 200EX is finished in supple, natural grain Crème Light leather, with Cornsilk carpets and cashmere blend headliner. The featured wood veneer is Santos Palissander, chosen for its contemporary look and striking grain.

“200EX is a modern execution of timeless Rolls-Royce elegance, breaking with some areas of tradition but retaining the core values that make our marque unique,” says Chief Executive Officer Tom Purves. “We expect the more informal, agile design to broaden the appeal of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, attracting people who appreciate its fusion of refinement, new technology and contemporary style.”

200EX TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

No. of doors/seats: 4/5

Vehicle length: 5399mm

Vehicle width 1948mm

Vehicle height: 1550mm

Wheelbase: 3295mm

Engine: new V12

Wheel and tyre size: 20 inch, 255/45 R 20 front and 285/40 R 20 rear

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