ROLLS-ROYCE | MEDIA INFORMATION

ROLLS-ROYCE UNVEILS ARCADIA DROPTAIL:

A COACHBUILT HAVEN OF TRANQUILLITY

Thursday 29 February 2024, Goodwood, West Sussex (EMBARGO TO 11.00 GMT)

* Rolls-Royce Motor Cars presents Arcadia, the third Coachbuild Droptail commission
* Celebration of the form: uniquely pure reflection of Droptail’s principal design
* Features most complex clock face in Rolls-Royce history. Assembly alone took five months
* Wood sections took 8,000 hours to create
* Commission named after Arcadia, a place known in Ancient Greek mythology as ‘Heaven on Earth’
* Droptail is the first roadster body style in Rolls-Royce’s modern history
* Coachbuilt masterpiece presented to commissioning client at private ceremony in Singapore

*“Rolls-Royce Coachbuild is the pinnacle expression of this incredible brand, and an unmatched concept in the luxury sector. In this department, the world’s most influential individuals collaborate with our designers, engineers and craftspeople to bring completely new ideas to life. Together, they create exquisite motor cars that not only become a cherished part of the commissioning client’s personal story but also add to the proud history of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Clients curate every facet of these masterpieces, which are brought into being by what I believe is the most talented team of experts in the luxury industry. Arcadia Droptail exemplifies this approach. This motor car is deeply connected to the client’s personality and preferences, and in capturing their character we have been empowered to make inspiring design, craft and engineering statements that show the world our ambition, and our unparalleled abilities.”***Chris Brownridge, Chief Executive, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

*“The Rolls-Royce Arcadia Droptail wonderfully demonstrates the true nature of a Coachbuild proposition in completely transforming the character of a motor car. Each Droptail commission reflects a deeply personal understanding and interpretation of a foundational design. With Arcadia Droptail we witness daring in minimalism and subtlety, informed by the lifestyle of an individual who has a unique appreciation for British luxury. In creating this historic motor car, we once again prove our peerless abilities in synthesising and executing Bespoke design at its highest level.”***Anders Warming, Design Director, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

*“The significance of Rolls-Royce Arcadia Droptail lies in its subtlety. It is a projection of an individual who values clarity and precision in all areas of their life – from their passion for fine cuisine, their highly curated personal and professional spaces and affinity with contemporary design. This motor car is one of the most faithful expressions of an individual’s personal style and sensibilities we have ever created within the Coachbuild department. In capturing their spirit, we reveal a unique appreciation for simplicity, serenity and beautifully restrained elegance – one that was a privilege for me to have been a part of.”***Alex Innes, Head of Coachbuild Design, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars**

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is delighted to present Rolls-Royce Arcadia Droptail, an exquisite coachbuilt expression of tranquillity. Arcadia Droptail is the epitome of quiet irreverence towards expected codes of luxury, celebrating purity of form and natural materials while serving as a bold statement of the client’s personal taste. Commissioned by an individual who possesses a distinct affinity for architecture and design, Arcadia Droptail is a testimony to the patron’s sensibilities and personal codes of luxury, defined by purity and subtle restraint, reflecting their firm belief in distilling complexity to reveal the inherent, fundamental essence.

This coachbuilt commission takes its name from the mythical realm of Arcadia, a place depicted in Ancient Greek mythology as ‘Heaven on Earth’ – a land renowned for its extraordinary natural beauty and perfect harmony. Like the haven that inspires its name, Arcadia Droptail was envisioned by the client as a serene space characterised by reduction, material depth and tactility that would serve as a refuge from the complexities of their business life.

In capturing the theme of tranquillity, Coachbuild designers embarked on an exploration of design, sculpture and architecture from the client’s favourite regions around the world. This included the precision and richness of modernist tropical sky gardens seen in Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam as well as British ‘Biomimetic’ architecture, where organic forms and material honesty are celebrated.

In addition to these references, the client was also inspired by the motor car itself and the purity of the Droptail design concept. The commissioning client insisted that their Coachbuild motor car should be absolutely faithful to the earliest hand-drawn sketch they were first presented with in 2019.

It was the profile of this highly contemporary projection of the roadster body type that resonated so strongly with the commissioning client. They were particularly compelled by the motor car’s bold, low stance, ensconcing cabin design and dramatic body lines. They also immediately recognised the nautical inspiration behind Droptail’s ‘sail cowls’: named after their resemblance to a yacht’s jib, these sharp, angular forms rise behind the doors and curve gently inwards, subtly directing the eye to the motor car’s occupants.

**EXTERIOR: A TRIBUTE TO DROPTAIL**

In order to fulfil the client’s ambition to honour Droptail’s form, Rolls-Royce Coachbuild designers developed a calm, natural duotone colourway for the motor car’s coachwork. The client’s aspiration was to define a timeless white, appearing as a solid colour at first glance, but creating a level of intrigue upon further study under natural light. To achieve this, the main body colour is a solid white infused with aluminium and glass particles. This not only creates an effervescent shimmer when the light strikes the coachwork but, upon close inspection, creates the illusion of unending depth in the paint. Rolls-Royce specialists developed a more faceted, striking metallic using larger sizing of aluminium particles. The client was very particular and involved in their request for the Bespoke silver to contrast against the white, not only in colour, but also in terms of intensity.

In a key departure from the other three coachbuilt Droptails in this series, the carbon fibre used to construct the lower sections of Droptail is painted in the solid Bespoke silver colour rather than left fully or partially exposed, visually ‘lifting’ the motor car in profile to intensify its lithe, dynamic intent.

In tribute to the brilliant mirror finish of brightwork on historical Rolls-Royces, which particularly fascinate the client, the exterior grille surround, ‘kinked’ vane pieces and 22-inch alloy wheels have been fully mirror-polished.

While Arcadia Droptail’s exterior palette is rich in subtle detail, its primary intention is to celebrate the form and proportions of the coachwork. The client was particularly compelled by Droptail’s clean, monolithic surfacing and bold use of negative sculpture – features that are amplified by the motor car’s muted paint colours, which reflect sunlight and cast dramatic shadows, highlighting Droptail’s many subtle design gestures.

**INTERIOR: THE CENTRALITY OF WOOD**

As the exterior of Rolls-Royce Arcadia Droptail celebrates the motor car’s form, the interior is a deeply personal reflection of the client’s individual aesthetic, reflective of the style they have curated in their residences and business spaces around the world. Arcadia Droptail’s colour palette and material treatment was envisioned to be a truly personal statement and instantly recognisable as a personal signature of the commissioning client.

Wood development was central to Arcadia Droptail’s interior and the client’s focus, whose very specific expectations concentrated on the texture, grain, colour and richness of the material itself. The client shared many examples of preferences and inspiration from architecture, residences and classic cars, to guide Rolls-Royce Coachbuild designers and material specialists.

Santos Straight Grain was eventually selected as the most modern statement, based upon its rich texture and visual intrigue, which is derived from its unique, interlocking grain pattern.

Using this high-density hardwood on Droptail’s interior posed a significant challenge for the marque’s craftspeople. Santos Straight Grain has one of the finest grain types of all the wood species used within a Rolls-Royce – if not handled with the greatest care, it easily tears when machined and ‘checks’ (a crack that appears parallel to the grain) during the drying process. Despite the challenges of working with this delicate material, Santos Straight Grain is used throughout Droptail, including the aerodynamically functional rear deck section, where the grain of the open pore veneer is laid at a perfect 55° angle. To achieve a perfect composition over complex geometry, Rolls-Royce artisans used a total of 233 wood pieces throughout Arcadia Droptail, with 76 pieces applied to the rear deck alone.

Given that Arcadia Droptail will be used internationally, including some tropical climates, specific attention was paid to developing a protection system and testing process for the exterior wood surfaces. Coatings used on superyachts were initially considered but rejected given that they require regular servicing and re-application. Instead, a Bespoke lacquer was developed that requires just one application for the lifetime of the motor car.

To validate this coating, Rolls-Royce specialists conceived a unique testing protocol wherein veneer pieces were subject to a punishing cycle inside a specialist machine simulating global weather extremes. This involved spraying sample wood pieces with water intermittently, between periods of leaving them to dry in darkness and exposing them to heat and bright light.

This was repeated for 1,000 hours on 18 different samples before the marque’s specialists were satisfied with the endurance of the pieces. In total, the wood pieces and protective coating required more than 8,000 hours of development.

**INTERIOR: A STUDY IN WHITE**

The leather interior is finished in two entirely Bespoke hues, named after the client and reserved exclusively for their use. The main leather colour is a Bespoke White hue, continuing the exterior paint theme, while the contrast leather is a Bespoke tan colour, developed to perfectly complement the selected wood.

The interior also includes the exquisite shawl panel that unites all four Droptail motor cars and is the largest continuous wood section ever seen on a Rolls-Royce motor car. In Arcadia Droptail, it is made in the same Santos Straight Grain open pore veneer as the rear deck, book-matched at the same 55° angle, with individually shaped leave stripes running seamlessly into the door linings. CAD tools were used to map the placement of each wood piece, and although it appears to be constructed from just two mirrored sections of veneer, this panel alone is made up of 40 sections, each digitally mapped before being fixed to the motor car.

Applying wood to the complex curvatures of Droptail’s interior required Rolls-Royce engineers to develop an entirely new substructure for several components. The dramatic geometry of the dashboard, door linings and central cantilevered ‘plinth’ armrest had to be incredibly rigid to ensure the stability of the wood pieces once they were laid in place. Engineers called on carbon fibre layering techniques used in Formula 1 motor racing to develop an incredibly stiff base onto which the wood could be applied, ensuring that it remained secure regardless of the dynamic extremes the motor car experienced.

**BESPOKE TIMEPIECE: A PRECISION INSTRUMENT**

The Santos Straight Grain veneer fascia incorporates a clock conceived and developed by Rolls-Royce Coachbuild designers and craftspeople. This expression of haute horlogerie is the most complex Rolls-Royce clock face ever created: the assembly alone was a five-month process, which was preceded by more than two years of development.

The clock incorporates an exquisite geometric guilloché pattern in raw metal with 119 facets. This is a symbolic nod to the marque’s heritage; as the client first saw a preview of the motor car in late 2023 – the year when Rolls-Royce celebrated its 119-year anniversary. The specially designed clock face also includes partly polished, partly brushed hands and 12 ‘chaplets’ – or hour markers – each just 0.1mm thick. To ensure the readability of the timepiece, specialists gave each chaplet an infill bridge and painted them by hand using a camera capable of magnifying an image by up to 100x.

While many haute horlogerie methods were used to develop the timepiece, the testing and validation standards at Rolls-Royce are higher than those of the watch world. This required the marque’s specialists to draw on an expansive palette of materials. For example, instead of anodizing the timepiece’s minute marker, which is common practice in watch manufacturing, it is finished in a ceramic coating chosen because of its stability over time as well as its aesthetic merits. Small areas of the coating were laser-etched away to reveal the mirror finish of the aluminium material beneath it. Like every piece within the timepiece, including the Bespoke ‘double R’ monogram, they were individually machined from solid stainless-steel billet and polished by hand prior to assembly.

Themes from the clock are paired with the instrument dials, sharing materials, techniques and execution. They feature the same repeated guilloché pattern, as well as brushed and polished brightwork and frosted white inserts, recalling the colourway of the motor car.

**STATEMENT OF A COSMOPOLITAN LIFESTYLE**

Reflecting the patron’s international lifestyle, the motor car is specified with left-hand drive to facilitate its use around the world. This international dimension was so important to the commissioning client that the Coachbuild Collective wanted them to experience the motor car in multiple locations around the world before it was built. Coachbuild designers used the marque’s ‘holodeck’ to facilitate this – a unique virtual 3D environment in which the client uses an advanced virtual reality (VR) headset to view the motor car as it would appear in specific locations around the world.

**ARCADIA DROPTAIL: AN ELEGANT SPACE IN THE DROPTAIL CANON**

While every Rolls-Royce client is different, they each share a powerful strength of conviction, and this individual’s requirements were clearly stated from the outset. However, translating these complex, highly personal sensibilities into a coherent, workable design was the product of a significant body of work. It was here that the Coachbuild process, with its unprecedented investment of time – over four years in total – and uniquely close relationship between the client and the marque, paid incalculable dividends.

Coachbuild designers invested many months examining and interrogating the client’s tastes in everything from clothes and furnishings to food and travel destinations. From this, they defined and codified an aesthetic rooted in the client’s truth and experience; an objective portrait of their internal world and external surroundings, backed by the certainty and authority of the design team’s own discernment, understanding and professional judgment. Other family members, notably the client’s daughter, also become engaged with the process. When the final design was ready, the client’s wider family were invited to review it: all agreed that it perfectly captured the client’s aesthetic and character.

The client derived enormous pleasure from having their tastes and identity so clearly rationalised and projected back to them. Indeed, the process revealed the client had a far more modern outlook than they realised, defined by lightness, the use of natural materials and a clear passion for precision. Arcadia Droptail has since become a reference point for the client’s commissions from other luxury houses and architects.

This unique expression of Rolls-Royce Droptail reflects this remarkable client’s confidence, clarity of vision and long-term relationship with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Its significance lies both in its exquisitely minimal execution and the unique skill of Rolls-Royce Coachbuild designers in capturing the sensibilities and soul of an individual.

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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 the marque on social media: [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rolls-royce-motor-cars/); [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/RollsRoyceMotorCars);[X (Twitter)](https://twitter.com/rollsroycecars); [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. Its continuous investment in its facilities, products and people has resulted in a series of ‘record years’ for global sales, peaking in 2023 with over 6,000 motor cars sold worldwide.

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.

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