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Happy Birthday Charles Rolls and the Rolls-Royce Legacy

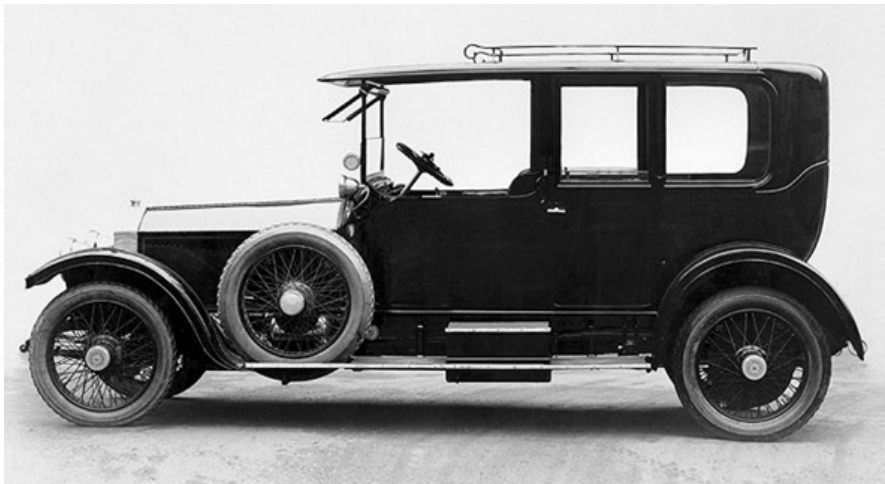
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The phrase “they don’t make them like they used to” can equally be applied to the man, Charles Stewart Rolls, and the cars that he helped create. Today, August 28th is the birthday of the money and inspiration part of the [Rolls-Royce](#) dynasty. Rolls helped finance and gave the aristocratic weight to what would become known as “the best car in the world.”

After mastering the formation of a world renowned automotive company, Rolls dedicated his interests toward aviation. He set the record for being the first man to fly across the English Channel and back. Unfortunately, he met a tragic demise at the early age of 32 when the tail of his plane broke during a flying exhibition. However, his influence and lofty ideals live on in the cars his company created. Here are a few of “the best cars in the world.”

[1907 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost 40/50](#)



The Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost is the stuff of legend. Feeling unsatisfied with the smoothness of the operation of their 30 hp six-cylinder engine, Henry Royce went back to the drawing board. At this point, he basically invented the idea of “no replacement for displacement” and made a super-smooth 7.0L, L-head, six-cylinder engine. The engine was so quiet, it was ghostly, hence the name for the car. A version of the Silver Ghost was used as a demonstrator for the company and drove for 14,371 miles virtually non-stop. This was an amazing feat in the days when your car’s reliability changed more regularly than your underpants. That incredible endurance car still exists today and is owned by Bentley. Currently, it is valued as the most expensive car in the world, and was insured in 2005 for \$35 million.

North American P-51D Mustang



I'll bet a lot of you didn't know that if it weren't for Rolls-Royce, America might not have won the air war in WWII. Well, what we have here is the aircraft that changed the course of WWII, and it was powered by a supercharged Rolls-Royce engine. Of course, Rolls-Royce didn't ship a bunch of engines to the US of A. The phenomenal Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engine was built under license by Packard and transformed the early version of the P-51 into amazing fighter escorts. The P-51D chewed up the German Luftwaffe faster than a hungry Nazi could chew up schnitzel. So, thanks to Charles Rolls' aviation interest, and the awesome power of the "Merlin" engine, American bombers had the protection they needed to get the job done.

1949-1955 Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn



The Silver Dawn was notable in Rolls-Royce history because it was the first car to be delivered with factory bodywork. All Rolls-Royce vehicles produced before this model had mechanicals engineered and manufactured by Rolls-Royce, but bodywork designed and created by external coachbuilders. The Silver Dawn actually shared the same bodywork with the Bentley Mk. VI, and then later the Bentley 'R' Type. Equipped with a 4.3L straight six (which was later expanded to 4.6L), performance wasn't sporty in the least. Then again, that's not why you buy a Rolls-Royce, and this was the first complete car that would carry the name.

1959-1968 Rolls-Royce Phantom V



The Phantom V is where Rolls-Royce really got some international and celebrity credibility. This car was owned by many famous aristocrats like Queen Elizabeth II and the Queen Mum. Other head's of state from Norway to Yugoslavia, Iran to Hong Kong, found the Phantom V the perfect vehicle to gaze upon their populace with thinly-veiled disdain. Celebrities also got in on the act, as Yoko Ono love interest and notable Beatle, John Lennon, added one to his personal collection. Then, presumably on Yoko's advice, went on a "trip" and decided to have it painted in psychedelic livery. Despite that, the Phantom V set the style for stately elegance and the "moneyed" look for decades to come.

2008 Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead Coupe



The 1970's through the 1990's were not great time for Rolls-Royce, so let's not talk about them. Luckily for us, [BMW](#) gained control of the famed brand and starting manufacturing a new generation of amazing automobiles under the Rolls-Royce name. One of our favorite examples is the beautiful Phantom Drophead Coupe seen above (Drophead is fancy-talk for convertible). Borrowing major mechanical parts from [BMW's 7-Series](#), modern reliability and amenities could finally be surrounded in sensuous wood, leather and metal making it the perfect blend of "old world" craftsmanship and "new world" technology. This new chapter in Rolls-Royce's life looks very bright, and if the automotive tastes of Beverly Hills socialites are any indication, Rolls-Royce should be around for another century.

[Click here to see our gallery full of the history of Rolls-Royce motor cars.](#)

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