

A ROLLS-ROYCE WITH AN INTERESTING PEDIGREE

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As a “car guy” and the publisher of five Canadian auto magazines, I have had the pleasure of driving and testing just about every car made for the last 25 years, with one notable exception: a Rolls-Royce. After I discussed this shortcoming with my Riverport chum Charles Stanfield, he went online and forwarded to me a link to a seemingly beautiful Rolls for sale in Halifax. When I heard the story behind this car and had it meticulously checked over I went into negotiations to acquire it.

It is a 1990 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur 11 with a 6.75L V8 , low mileage and very clean. It had spent the first 10 years of its life chauffeur-driven and maintained as the official car of the British ambassador to Turkey in Ankara. The car is the extended limo version with black silk curtains surrounding the back seat. And, to protect the ambassador the car has low caliber bullet proof glass and extra steel sheeting inside the rear doors and across the rear of the trunk.

When this official embassy car was replaced it was sold to a senior member of staff who drove it in Turkey for a while. This gentleman found himself moving to Nova Scotia as a professor at Mount St. Vincent University. He brought the Rolls with him only to find it rather expensive to operate in N.S. (fuel is very cheap in Turkey) and this vehicle gets only 12.5 miles per gallon – downhill with a tail wind. His visa expired after 5 years and he had to return to Turkey. He had no interest in taking the Rolls back with him. With Charles’ help the deal to acquire it was made and he delivered it to my garage in Riverport where I first laid eyes on it some 5 weeks later.

There were some small mechanical and electronic items which required attention and they've been put right by a Lunenburg whiz mechanic. He took the trouble to download the complete service manual, and some parts were sourced from the U.K. Everything works in the car including a host of early electronic items not seen on cars of that vintage. A few generous members of BATANS helped with the powered 8-way front seats. Rolls of that vintage were not leading edge technology, but they did include a host of features not found in other luxury vehicles. These include auto air, power everything, cruise control, reclining rear seats and other items too numerous to list here.

The car is now operating very well with new tires (or tyres, as the Brits say). I've enjoyed driving it in parades, shows, weddings, and to church on Sundays. It has been great fun to watch the reactions of folks when the Rolls pulls into the airport.

One shortcoming is that the car is not equipped with a catalytic converter. They don't worry about those things in Turkey.

With regret the Rolls and some other toys are being sold and hopefully going to new, appreciative owners. If the car hasn't sold before then, it will return to this year's British Motoring Festival; if you try sitting in it, you'll be able to imagine yourself as a character in a John LeCarre novel...