

INTERNET

## Rolls-Royce refines luxury with visions of future vehicles

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*Rolls-Royce Vision concept*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is preparing to revolutionize the future of mobility.

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At an event at the London Roundhouse on June 16, the BMW AG subsidiary unveiled its Vision Next 100 plans for the next century, embodied by a "vision vehicle" codenamed 103EX. The Vision Next 100 shows both a lineage with and adherence to the Rolls-Royce heritage and a transformation into a luxury concept that goes beyond automobiles.

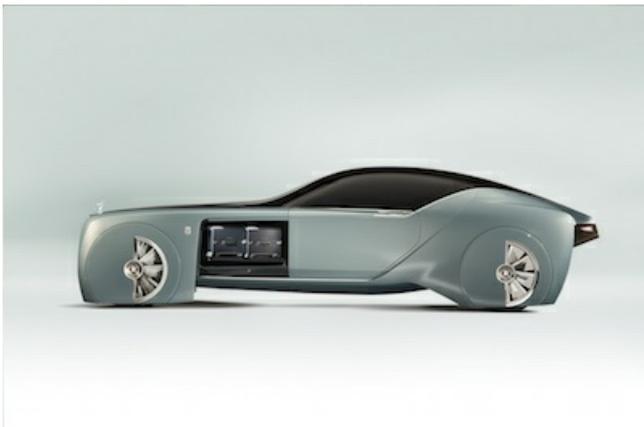
"EX stands for experimental design, and it is intended to convey the concept and the features in our vision of what a Rolls-Royce would look like in the year 2040," said Gerry Spahn, head of communications for **Rolls-Royce Motor Cars NA**, Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey.

"We are reaching out 24 years in the future to see how a luxury motor car will be, so it's not an exercise in technological showcasing, and it's not even married or committed to any types of technology," he said.

"It's more about the interaction of automotive and luxury in the lives of ultra-high-net-worth individuals in the future."

Vision Next 100

For Rolls-Royce, the end of production of the seventh generation Phantom marks the completion of the first phase of the brand under the BMW umbrella, with the 103EX representing the goal of the next phase.



*Rolls-Royce 103EX*

Similar to BMW's own Vision Next 100 ([see story](#)), Rolls-Royce is sharing a vision of a personalized, emissions-free, and autonomous vehicle that exemplifies the continuing possibilities of the brand.

A brief video, beginning with the words "sometime in the future," conveys Rolls-Royce's vision of the future. Over images of the Spirit of Ecstasy and brief glimpses of the 103EX, a voiceover intones, "The people I've moved have changed the world and walked the road no one else dare tread."

As the voiceover recalls these people turning "what if's into what's' next'" and turning "imaginings of the future into history," the camera offers full looks of the 103EX, welcoming the viewer to the Next 100.

*"The visionary Rolls-Royce 103EX. Journey into the future of luxury"*

The Vision Next 100 focuses on four aspects of Rolls-Royce: The Personal Vision, The Effortless Journey, The Grand Sanctuary and The Grand Arrival. It sees travel as a personalized rather than utilitarian and anonymous experience.

The Personal Vision implies a point where all Rolls-Royce vehicles will be emissions-free and designed according to each individual customer's desires. The Effortless Journey, meanwhile, represents the transformation of the Spirit of Ecstasy, modeled on actress and model Eleanor Thornton, into "The Voice of Eleanor."



*Rolls-Royce 103EX*

The Voice of Eleanor A.I. will serve as a personal concierge, creating itineraries and schedules, sharing options with drivers and even bringing the car to the doorstep just prior to a journey. Eleanor also serves as virtual chauffeur, ushering in the era of autonomous vehicles.

The Grand Sanctuary speaks to the wood paneling, silk sofa and OLED screens that decorate the interior. Steering wheels and other newly unnecessary components will be absent, allowing for the passenger to enjoy the scenario if she chooses.

The Grand Arrival, meanwhile, will continue because of the vehicle's distinct aesthetic and the larger Spirit of Ecstasy, which will recall Rolls-Royce Phantoms of the 1920s. When the vehicle parks, a glass canopy will lift so the occupant can stand while inside the vehicle, with a step emerging from the vehicle and a red light creating a makeshift red carpet to define the arrival.



*103EX Rolls-Royce interior*

To share its vision, Rolls-Royce has created a 360-degree video featuring the voice of Eleanor Thornton. It begins with an overhead view of Goodwood, UK, the home of Rolls-Royce.

After a brief introduction, the user is transported inside the 103EX, where the voice of Eleanor says that in the future, time will be the primary luxury. The silk sofa, spacious layout and elegant design ensure the owner is free to make the most of it while being driven.

*Enter 103EX: An effortless virtual reality 360 experience*

Now on the outside, The Voice of Eleanor further explains its autonomous and emissions-free features before a brief animation of the 103EX on the road concludes the video.

Luxury item

Recently, Rolls-Royce has turned its eye very consciously toward the future in everything from design and performance to marketing.

Earlier this year, the brand showed its dark side to attract risk takers and self-empowered, self-confident youth.

"Black Badge," a darker, more confident and more powerful Rolls-Royce, will take shape in a permanent Bespoke series targeting goal-oriented and self-made young affluents. The new series is a significant makeover for Rolls-Royce, but is being implemented in response to a changing consumer base and habits ([see story](#)).

Relatedly, Rolls-Royce's inclusion of emissions-free and autonomous vehicles is of no surprise, as automakers are nearly unanimous in their treatment of such technologies as inexorable future developments.

For example, German automaker Audi is continuing to pave the way for piloted vehicles with its latest A7 developments.

The piloted Audi A7 concept has been tested alongside other road users and now is capable of adaptive driving, creating a more human driving resemblance. Autonomous vehicles are now publicly visible and tangibly close to availability, meaning that the details of piloted driving are now the target of the spotlight ([see story](#)).

Additionally, Norway has announced that it plans to ban petroleum-fueled automobiles within a decade. Norway's small population and history of ecological progressivism make its ambition more feasible, but the development nonetheless points to trends in both the automotive and political spheres ([see story](#)).

"Even when we reach the point of autonomous driving and the point of zero emissions, there will be people who want to depart and arrive in a Rolls-Royce," Mr. Spahn said. "Luxury will remain part of what we do, and we will become even more of a luxury item and a luxury lifestyle as the future goes on.

"Today we say we are not very much a car; we are very much a luxury item," he said. "And that will be the case more and more in the future."