

EVENTS / CAUSES

Royal Mail fetes Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin via stamp series

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Britain's Royal Mail is honoring 10 revered British automakers, including Aston Martin and Rolls-Royce, with a set of stamps that showcases vehicles from an industry heyday in the 1960s and '70s.

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The "British Auto Legends" collection celebrates Jaguar Land Rover, Lotus, Rolls-Royce and other top automakers. Since stamp collecting is a hobby cherished around the world, the stamp series will likely gain esteem from outside of Britain while still elevating each honored brand's native reputation.

"Royal Mail's stamps exist to celebrate the best of British," said Philip Parker, head of stamp strategy at the [Royal Mail](#), UK.

"We look at great events and anniversaries as the springboard for stamp issues," he said. "We wanted to look at vehicles that represent the British motor industry when it was in its height, which was the 1960s.

"We wanted to feature cars that are admired today and can also be seen on British roads and be remembered, so we did not want to go back to any vintage era."

Not for mail

The collection coincides with Aston Martin's centenary and the 150th birth anniversary of Rolls-Royce co-founder Sir Henry Royce.

When determining which vehicles to showcase, the Royal Mail reviewed "greatest cars" lists produced by enthusiasts and classic car magazines and consulted the classic car expert and writer Richard Heseltine.

Photographer James Mann was then commissioned to capture the vehicles in as pristine condition as possible.

The main "Thoroughbred" stamp set features the Jaguar E-Type, Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, Aston Martin DB5, MG MGB, Morgan Plus 8 and the Lotus Esprit.



Rolls Royce Silver Shadow

The "Workhorse" mini sheet celebrates the Austin FX4 black cab and Land Rover Defender 110.



Aston Martin DB5

The Royal Mail's Special Stamp program has celebrated integral cultural events and anniversaries for almost 50 years.



Jaguar E-Type

There are an estimated 2.5 million stamp collectors and gifters in Britain. The Queen approves all British stamp designs before they are printed.

Selling history

Unlike partnerships that depend upon brand input, the British Auto Legends enterprise more clearly conveys status since the automakers are honored by a neutral source.

Other brands have recently celebrated historic models.

For instance, Bentley Motors is showcasing its racing history with six limited-edition models that are featured on a new microsite.

Each of the models is inspired by a driver from the British automaker's six victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans race in France. Bentley created a microsite dedicated to the limited-edition models that tells its history with the Le Mans race and offers detailed information on each vehicle ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Bugatti Automobiles is celebrating six brand legends with limited-edition vehicles to evoke an appreciation for the company's history.

Les Légendes de Bugatti will honor these figures at events over the next year, starting with Jean-Pierre Wimille. Distilling a history in segmented events gives fans and consumers multiple opportunities to interact with the brand ([see story](#)).

For the Royal Mail, finding candidates to commemorate was a challenge because of the range of British luxury vehicles.

"As we had the Rolls Royce and Aston anniversaries at the core we started to build a stamp set around them, and we chose the AstonDB5 because it celebrates its 50th birthday in 2013 too and is such an iconic vehicle and influential, an archetypal Grand Tourer," Mr. Parker said.

"We selected the Silver Shadow as it is so admired as one of the finest modern Rolls-Royce vehicles and immensely successful for them," he said.

"The E-type Jaguar was almost a must-have, given the heritage and status and arguable one of the world's most beautiful vehicles."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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