



ROLLS-ROYCE SPECTRE BLACK BADGE

Beautifully built for an unrivalled ride



Paul Blank

I test drive and review many new cars in my capacity as a motoring writer. Occasionally, a quite outstanding car comes my way. One such car is the latest Rolls-Royce Spectre Black Badge that I was recently invited to try out.

The Black Badge name describes a special version of the big electric coupe launched not long ago. The differentiations include its higher performance and sportier visual features.

With 485kW of power (that's 650 horsepower) it's the most powerful Rolls-Royce ever offered. The torque figure of 1075Nm is even more impressive. The company and salespeople are keen to link inspiration from Rolls-Royce's World War 2 aircraft engines.

To unlock the most performance, a steering-wheel mounted button for Infinity Mode needs to be operated. Along with gargantuan performance and acceleration is a subtle in-car noise as if an engine is smoothly thrumming away. Many people find this comforting and well in keeping with big performance (a few other electric cars have it too). The Spectre's 0-100km/h sprint can be achieved in just 4.2 seconds – mightily impressive for a 2.9 tonne car.

There's also a launch control mode, mainly for the sons of owners to use at makeshift drag strips in certain countries.

There are special 23-inch alloy wheels and an uprated suspension for a sportier feel.

Being a new Rolls-Royce, it's beautifully built and appointed. The sky's the limit for customisation at the factory. Speaking of the sky, there are over 5,500 'stars' in the roof lining and side trims.



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The Spectre Black Badge is quite rewarding to drive, with good on-road feel and an unrivalled ride. The huge power helps diminish the car's considerable size on the road. Controls are all easy to use and there are more electronic aids than any previous Rolls-Royce.

The downsides are the very small boot with no spare wheel and the price of \$1.25 million, before any personalisation.

The Spectre has been a success for Rolls-Royce, becoming the company's second bestselling model, behind the Cullinan SUV.

There are a vast range of options and bespoke choices – an illuminated Spirit of Ecstasy on the bonnet (\$10,000) and the lit-up grille is an extra \$5,500. Colour-coded leather seat piping (\$8,500) and stitching (\$4,500), Sindora timber veneer dashboard inlays (\$6,000), lambswool foot mats (\$3,200) and special Commission Collection umbrellas add \$3,000. Special colours and other accessories are virtually unlimited.

For a buyer at the very top end of the market, who likes the idea of electric propulsion, the Spectre makes a good case for itself. ■