



MOTORING

# Made-to-measure motoring

The apparel oft proclaims the man – and Tim Barnes-Clay reveals that bespoke automotive opulence also plays a part

**S**liding behind the wheel of your most prized possession never fails to take you to paradise. The scent of your Bentley's made-to-order walnut and cream leather interior almost intoxicates you as you tap your diamond-covered key to the rhythm emanating from the custom audio system. You appreciate that the marque represents the essence of exotic ultra-luxury but you recognise it goes deeper than that – it's about the emotional connections you've made with the brand. This is why you've had your car tailored to complement your character, and this is why there's a whole industry dedicated to bespoke automotive opulence.

For example, Ferrari Tailor-Made is developed for motorists wishing to create a Ferrari that will be a clear expression of their own unique personality and taste. Accessories range from carbon-fibre trim to rubberised leather; Alcantara; Kevlar; satin-finish and matte metals.

The famous 250 Testa Rossa, which sold at auction at Pebble Beach in 2011 for a record \$16.4 million, provided the inspiration for the 458 Spider, sporting blue and white stripes over an historic Rosso Racing body colour. The latter's seats are upholstered in the same leather used in the Formula 1 cars of the past – a trim that's light, breathable and feels like chamois leather to the touch. The original 250 Testa Rossa had an aluminium dashboard, which has now been given an innovative twist in the form of Alutex, a tough, light fibreglass and aluminium material. The cabin is also trimmed with a diamond-quilted fabric inspired by the original Testa Rossa motif.

Porsche offers a similar service via its Exclusive department, which can match a colour sample of clothing to a paint hue, and gives customers the chance to specify a shade from the back catalogue of Porsche colours. Paint-jobs reminiscent of key periods in Porsche's history are Pastel Orange and Mexico Blue, typically associated with the celebrated 911 from the early 1970s.

Sometimes, though, even motor manufacturers need help from specialists to meet unusual requests. Camaél London serves its clientele with products including a customised Ferrari car key. Encrusted with 1,160 diamonds, the total weight of the key is seven carats. Then there's the statement-making Bentley key. This can be coated with



Ferrari 458 Spider Tailor-Made

*'Encrusted with 1,160 diamonds, the total weight of the key is seven carats'*

a stunning array of 250 flawless diamonds, giving a total carat weight of 1.75. If that's not enough, there's always the Bentley jewelled torch. The flashlight has a powerful LED spot beam but, for an extra dash of style and practicality, the Bentley 'B' can be lasered into the lens, offset by the brand's unique knurling around the bezel.

Of course, it's not all about looks; it can involve other senses too. 'Sitting behind the wheel of a Bentley is one of the ultimate driving experiences,' commented a spokesman at Naim Audio. 'Naim for Bentley features an 1100 Watt, hand-crafted amplification system – one of the most powerful automotive production amplifiers on the planet. The speaker set-up is designed to perfectly fill the cabin of each model in the Bentley range and will automatically respond to road speed and roof position of convertible models.'

Naturally, luxury British car producer Rolls-Royce is no stranger to the world of

exclusivity either. 'Bespoke is the jewel in our crown, the perfect complement to our luxury product line-up,' explained Torsten Müller-Ötvös, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars CEO. 'Customers expect a Rolls-Royce to be tailored to their individual desires and our team of craftspeople are more than happy to deliver.'

Indeed, whether Rolls-Royce is turning its famous bonnet ornament, the Spirit of Ecstasy, from stainless steel into gold, or making lavish picnic sets to match the interior specification of a car, there is always a dedicated team on hand to help turn visions into reality.

So, in the rarefied field of motoring royalty, standing out from the pack needn't be difficult. Some elite car makers emphasise performance but most aim to deliver a different experience than everyone else. To that end, the possibilities of being distinctive in the high-end luxury vehicle market are infinite.

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