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CARS, JETS AND YACHTS

Torsten Müller-Otvos, who took ultra-luxe bespoke to new level, departs Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

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Torsten Müller-Otvos

By STAFF REPORTS

Torsten Müller-Otvos, the CEO responsible for making Rolls-Royce Motor Cars the most successful in its entire history with an exclusive focus on ultra-luxe bespoke, will leave the British automaker Nov. 30 after a 14-year run.

Under his leadership, BMW-owned Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' annual sales surged from 1,000 in 2009 to more than 6,000 last year all of the cars being bespoke commissions from wealthy and UHNW clients worldwide. He will be succeeded by BMW UK CEO Chris Brownridge, who takes over the marque Dec. 1.

"I am proud of the role my exceptional team and I have played in contributing significantly to the UK economy and to the global recognition of Britain's ability to produce the world's best luxury products," Mr. Müller-Otvos said in a statement.

The new Rolls-Royce Motor Cars boss is a 30-year veteran of BMW, having joined the group as a graduate in 1995.

Mr. Brownridge has run BMW UK since 2021, previously serving as a member of the U.K. board in various roles since 2011, including sales director of BMW UK and BMW U.K. marketing as well as Mini regional director for the U.K. and Ireland.



Chris Brownridge

Spirited performance

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars was created as a wholly owned subsidiary of BMW in 1998 after BMW licensed the rights to the Rolls-Royce brand name and logo from Rolls-Royce Holdings plc. BMW also acquired the rights to the Spirit of Ecstasy and Rolls-Royce grille shape trademarks from Volkswagen AG.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' new leader has big shoes to fill.

When Mr. Müller-tvs took over, the factory at Goodwood in West Sussex produced only two models, the Phantom and the Ghost. He expanded the product line with the introduction of the Rolls-Royce Wraith and Dawn, as well as the Cullinan, which was the first SUV in the brand's history.

This year sees the introduction of Spectre, the world's first ultra-luxury electric super coup that begins Rolls-Royce's transition to a fully electric product portfolio by the end of 2030.

Mr. Müller-tvs also saw Black Badge, the edgier, more subversive Rolls-Royce alter-ego, conceived and launched a move that has widened the brand's appeal.

The executive made changes in the Rolls-Royce retail experience, veering toward new Private Office boutiques. New technology came in the form of the automaker's Whispers app, designed as a digital members' club reserved for those who own a Goodwood-era Rolls-Royce.

These new models, expansion of the bespoke business, embracing new technology, different approach to customer acquisition, unique retail experience and a clear shift into the super-luxury sector attracted new clients and also boosted sales volume.



Rolls-Royce Spectre

Priceless vs. pricey

In 2010, the average price of a Rolls-Royce was around \$263,000 and the average client was aged 56. Currently, the average price has doubled to around \$525,000 and the average age of a Rolls-Royce client is only 43.

Rolls-Royce claims that under Mr. Müller-tvs, the company contributes more than \$600 million annually to the United Kingdom's economy.

The brand is also one of the largest employers in West Sussex, taking land on lease from the Duke of Richmond and Gordon from his Goodwood estate. Company employee strength has grown from 300 to more than 2,500, with more than 50 nationalities represented.

Employees stick around for a while as well.

Mr. Müller-tvs, for example, is the longest-serving chief executive of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars since Claude Johnson, the person who brought Charles Rolls and Henry Royce together in 1904.

"We have recently submitted our plans to extend our Goodwood site significantly in order to accommodate not only further electric production, but also to fulfil demand for even more bespoke and Coachbuild products," Mr. Müller-tvs said in the statement. "These areas of our business truly set us apart, and I am exceptionally proud of them."

"As I leave Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, I look forward to the opportunity for new professional challenges, as well as having a little more time to visit the world's great fly-fishing rivers," he said.

"I wish Chris Brownridge the very best as he takes the helm of this wonderful marque. The team we have built over the last 14 years includes some of the most talented, dedicated and innovative minds in the luxury and automotive industries. I'm confident that, together, they will add further remarkable chapters to the extraordinary story of a company like no other in the world."

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