

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Sleeping Beauty №24: Rolls-Royce Camargue](#)



In 1975, with a launch price of £29,250 (\$US147,000), the Rolls-Royce Camargue was the most expensive car in the world. Undervalued for many years, the sizeable two-door now sits nicely alongside Goodwood-produced Phantoms.

The **Camargue** – at over 5.1 metres long – is a large car. **Paolo Martin** at **Pininfarina** was responsible for the design, the first post-War Rolls-Royce not styled in the UK. The slightly raked-forward (by 7deg) **Rolls-Royce** radiator grille and racy lines invited comparisons with **Lady Penelope's 'Thunderbirds' Rolls**. That it was 'futuristic' was true, but compared with the **Silver Spirit** series of saloons that followed mid-way through its 11-year lifespan, it now looks fresher, if anything, than it did at the time.

Underneath the coachbuilt **Mulliner Park Ward** bodywork lie most of the mechanical components of the **Silver Shadow**. The engine is the famous 6.75-litre alloy V8 still in production at Crewe, although in a slightly more powerful state of tune befitting the more sporting coupé. The transmission was a three-speed automatic, and in 1979 the company upgraded the car to incorporate the independent rear suspension of the **Silver Spirit**.

More than any other **Rolls-Royce** of the post-War period it was intended as a driver's car, with superbly appointed accommodation for four adults and their travelling luggage. The company confidently claimed at the time that the automatic split-level air-conditioning system ('climate control' as we would call it now, the first of its kind in the world) was "superior to anything else in the field".

With its astronomic price (in 1982, the car cost £83,122) and slightly controversial looks for the time, just 530 **Camargues** were built between 1975 and 1986 and one car was completed as a **Bentley**. Nowadays, cars can be bought from around 35,000-40,000 euros and are a rare example of a 1970s/80s/90s **Rolls** that looks better now than in period.

The quintessential '**Sleeping Beauty**' and the last in our series.

There's bound to be a Camargue that will fit your requirements. Have a look in the [Classic Driver car database](#) to see what's available.

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