

CLASSIC DRIVER

2002 Rolls-Royce Corniche V

- Lot sold
USD 220 584 - 269 603
GBP 180 000 - 220 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 2002
- **Chassis number** SCAZK28E72CH02079
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 301
-
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

The last Rolls-Royce built at the Crewe factory
2002 Rolls-Royce Corniche Final Series Convertible
Chassis no. SCAZK28E72CH02079

The original Corniche convertible had been a major success for Rolls-Royce, so the revival of the model in 1999 after a gap of five years caused considerable excitement. In fact, so enthusiastic was the response from eager customers that the company air freighted the first seven cars to California rather than sending them by sea! One of the final Rolls-Royce models to be developed at the Crewe factory, the Corniche was based on the Bentley Azure that had debuted at Geneva in 1995. The famous Italian styling house of Pininfarina ? a firm with unrivalled experience in the design of soft-top Gran Turismos ? had been chosen to develop the Azure on the four-seater Continental R platform, and there was no questioning that the result was most successful. But although the Corniche was recognisably a close relative, in actual fact nearly every one of its outer panels was different, while the wood-embellished interior was most definitely more traditional Rolls-Royce than modern Bentley.

Beneath the skin the two cars shared the same turbo-charged V8 engine, automatic transmission and adaptively damped suspension, although in every department the Corniche had been subtly altered to provide the more refined and relaxed driving experience preferred by the typical Rolls-Royce owner. Maximum power was down 60bhp from the Azure's 385 horsepower, yet remained sufficient to propel this weighty motor car to a top speed of 135mph with 60 coming up in eight seconds, not that such vulgarities would be of much concern to the majority of Corniche owners. A stiffer bodyshell, new hydraulic engine mounts, lighter steering, softer suspension and special Avon tyres all contributed to characteristics more boulevard than sporting, which is exactly what its target market expected.

Costing £250,000 in the UK at time of launch, the Corniche more than lived up to its illustrious name and proved an immense success, especially in North America where its combination of unmatched luxury, effortless performance and soft-top style was found highly attractive. Sadly, Rolls-Royce's reorganisation

under new owners BMW meant that models powered by the old pushrod V8 would have a limited lifespan, and when production ceased in 2002 a total of only 374 of these '2nd Generation' Corniches had been built.

Chassis number '2079' is historically significant as the last Rolls-Royce to be built at the Crewe factory. The latter had been set up to build Merlin aero engines during WW2, transferring to motor car production at the war's end when Rolls-Royce decided to devote its Derby works exclusively to aero engine manufacture. Following the sale and reorganisation of Rolls-Royce Motors in 1998, Volkswagen ended up owning the Crewe factory, which henceforth would produce only Bentleys.

Finished in Silver Ghost with Spruce hide interior and green convertible hood, the car comes with its factory specification sheet listing the following non-standard features:

- *Solid silver (hallmarked) Spirit of Ecstasy mounted to plinth (rosewood burr, etc) with plaque words to match console
- *Photographic record of build in special hide cover with Corniche brochure and *Certificate of Authenticity
- *Document wallet hide flap to rear of front seats (Silver Ghost theme)
- *Show-car engine bay preparation - to level A standard
- *Unique seat style - modern interpretation Chesterfield buttoned theme (spruce) from the Silver Ghost
- *Solid cherry steering wheel - airbag to match main hide
- *Solid silver (hallmarked) Spirit of Ecstasy mascot to radiator shell
- *Cabinet cherry waist rails
- *Straight grain cherry crossbanding in lieu of oak crossbanding and black boxwood inlay in lieu of standard boxwood inlay
- *Silver text inlay on the radio flap beneath silver and red enamel badge - wording as follows: The final Rolls-Royce Corniche chassis 2079
- *Special tread plates to say car is the last from Crewe - wording as follows: *The final Rolls-Royce Corniche chassis 2079 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Crewe, England 1946-2002
- *Voice activated telephone system - UK language
- *Hide colour-matched interior rear view mirror
- *Hide colour-matched top roll de-mister ducts
- *Unique centre console ? The final Rolls-Royce Corniche chassis 2079 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Crewe, England 1946-2002
- *Main hide to be Spruce Green Chesterfield theme as per Silver Ghost
- *No seat edge piping

Currently in the process of having a registration number allocated by the DVLA, this historic last-of-the-line Rolls-Royce is offered for sale having been stored at the factory from new. The car is expected to be running and MoT'd prior to sale; nevertheless, we would recommend servicing as appropriate following its period of inactivity.

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