

Cars in Small Scale

188PY - A Gilded Star of India

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Most of you are now aware that Hans-Günter Zach has sold most of his collection of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars. The Star of India is one of them and it is one of the world's most famous Rolls-Royce along with AX201. Only the two cylinder Royce chassis #20154 benefited from as much coverage by the media as this one. It was in December 2007, when it fetched £3,521,000 (plus V.A.T.) at a Bonhams auction.

1934 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental Cabriolet **188PY** is one of five Indian cars owned by Zach. One of the other



Phantom II 188PY made in 1/24 scale by silversmith Nándor Oszvald of vermeil (gilded silver). He used almost a kilogram of pure silver and the better part of two years to painstakingly shape the sheet metal and obtain a superlative representation of 188PY. The length of the model is approximately 10" and the body panels are gilded. Only the wheels, lamps, radiator, bumpers, engine, chassis, transmission, and hood were left in plain silver.



This rear view is particularly spectacular. The art of the coachbuilder and that of the silversmith coincide perfectly.

"*Tout ce qui brille n'est pas or*" as we say in French: Not everything that glitters is gold. This is vermeil, or gilded silver.

Notice that the doors reach all the way down to the running boards. In this respect the larger #K75 Pocher model is incorrect. Under the hood you will find a detailed engine but this late chassis should feature the large horizontal air cleaner that was introduced with chassis 2MY. This is also wrong on the Pocher #K75 model which reused the same engine they had used for their sedanca model #K72. Nobody's perfect!

famous examples is 1926 New Phantom **6YC** which he affectionately called his "Aluminum Sculpture." 188PY has been shown several times in these pages and I'm not going to rewrite its story again. However, it is interesting to note that its early history is hardly known and it seems that there are no period pictures of the car in India. The second point worth noting is that its first owner, Thakur Saheb Dharmendrasinhji Jadeja Lakhajirajsinhji, the 13th Raja of Rajkot only owned one other Rolls-Royce, unlike most of his peers who sometimes bought dozens of them. Its chassis number was #60797.

The Thrupp & Maberly body is a one-off and if it has become famous it is not only because of its striking saffron



color and polished aluminum but because Pocher released a 1/8 scale model of it. In the 1970s you could not walk past a toy shop without seeing an example on display in the shop window. Later, London silversmiths Garrard made a 1/24 scale version in silver, with gilded parts representing the saffron panels. I would not be surprised if that model found its way to Zach's museum too. For the Monaco auction on May 1st RM did not publish an estimate but left it "POA"—Price on Application. The wildest estimates were printed before the sale—I saw \$ 8,500,000 on the internet but the auction house eventually made a more realistic estimate of €450,000–600,000 (\$611,000–815,000). Eventually 188PY sold for €644,000 incl. premium. So if it is out of your budget, you might be interested in a slightly smaller and slightly cheaper model made by Hungarian silversmith Nándor Oszvald.



Purists will regret the pre-2MY type engine (1932). The tub features pleated seat backs and plain cushions. It is impossible to represent walnut veneer in silver, even with acid etching but the door panels are equipped with window lifts and handles. Externally, the door hinges are there but they should have been more obtrusive to be true to the original.



View of the engine bay. The engine comes complete with carburetor, inlet and exhaust manifolds, dynamo, Bijur one-shot system, etc. But who pinched the Autovac? I assume it was fitted later. The chassis is incredibly detailed, down to the bolt heads and nuts. All crossmembers are in the right place and even the gearbox mechanism is represented!

It will be mandatory to display this model on a mirror plinth to get a better view of the exquisite chassis details. Price tag: \$22,000.

If you already own the Italaeri plastic model, you have a fairly good idea of what the car looks like in terms of size and bulk. This is a handmade model, not a mere copy obtained by molding ready-made plastic parts. The amount of hand-labor and skill required to achieve such a masterpiece is considerable. The lines of the real thing are perfectly captured. The Thrupp & Maberly fenders are particularly elegant with their sweeping lines and rolled edges. However, to be totally fair, there are a few inaccuracies. For example, the rear door engraving and at the rear the trunk which can't be opened because the handles are not in the right place and are not the correct type. However, this is not a big issue and the model is very spectacular, which is its main *raison d'être*.

