



SMOOTH: When it came to uneven roads, the Cullinan II glided over deep ruts sending only slight judders through the cabin with seats more comfortable than my sofa.

Muddy potholed roads a piece of cake for Rolls

BY MATTHEW
MACCONNELL

The Cullinan, originally launched in 2018, sits on the aptly named Architecture of Luxury platform, which also underpins the Phantom, Ghost, and Spectre.

The platform utilises an aluminium spaceframe chassis and accommodates all-wheel drive or rear-wheel drive setups, the former in the Cullinan's case. In 2024, the latest Series II arrived delivering an array of changes adding even more zest.

The main change is upfront. The grille has more sheer surfacing and is less rounded. Likewise,

there are new daytime running lights, which add further dynamic to the Cullinan's steep nose. At the back, there are new exhaust surrounds while the new seven-spoke wheels, available in part-finished or all-polished finishes, add further class.

Other changes include a new dashboard fascia, like that found in the Ghost and Spectre, and buyers can now have non-leather upholstery – a first for a Goodwood-era Rolls-Royce – with fabric made from bamboo.

Over several days, I put the luxury giant's latest SUV through its paces over

country roads and motorways through tight towns and cities, and there was even light off-roading.

HOW MUCH IS IT?

It's priced from £330,000, but there's an array of options to choose from like coloured brake callipers, coachline colours, alloy wheels, interior contrasts, headlining, wood veneer, a silver satin bonnet and various dashboard-integrated clocks. You can even go as far as selecting the Spirit of Ecstasy's material. Fully equipped, it's close to £400,000.

My test car was dressed in Emperor Truffle

paintwork, a colour that divided opinion when combined with a Cashmere Grey, Chartreuse, and Scivaro Grey interior.

IS IT GOOD TO DRIVE?

Peering through the Rolls-Royce Cullinan II's large windshield, down its long bonnet and on to the Spirit of Ecstasy was somewhat life-affirming. A real pinch-yourself moment.

I'm no stranger to the bonnet mascot having driven some of the brand's older luxury waft mobiles, but it felt oddly satisfying seeing it dirt spattered.

And that's where this car excels. I never scaled Ben

Nevis during my time with it, nor did I wade rivers, but I did encounter many muddy potholed farm roads – a piece of cake for the stilted Rolls. Even with large 23-inch wheels, the Cullinan II provided a cossetting ride as it glided over deep ruts, sending only slight judders through the cabin.

Similarly, booting the throttle saw the 563bhp V12 emit a gentle hum as it hauled the Cullinan II's 2,732kg mass at what felt like a stately pace. That's not to say it's slow, far from it.

The way it gathers momentum is seriously

impressive, but its power delivery is perfectly linear. And yes, it's heavy, but this is only notable when the body adjusts to road contours; it behaves a bit like a large ship tackling waves.

This said, Rolls-Royce's engineers have done a fine job regarding handling. Of course, there's some body roll, but it never feels like it's going to fall over. The steering is natural and relaxed, but precise.

The Cullinan II is 5,355mm long, 2,164mm wide and 1,835mm tall. It's bigger than a Bentley Bentayga but it's packed with cameras, which help

when parking. I also quickly learned where the side of the road was by using the Spirit of Ecstasy's wing tips.

Likewise, noise insulation is superior. When cruising at motorway speed, my sound measuring device recorded lows of 58db and highs of 64db, while the average was 62db.

It's worth mentioning efficiency. Rolls-Royce claims the Cullinan II returns 18.6mpg combined. On some runs, I saw the economy figure dip into the low 13s although I returned a 19.4mpg average at the end of my testing.

WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

Once you've opened the large doors, climbed inside, and used the button under the dashboard to close said doors again, everything becomes quiet. The cogs in your mind slow, and your muscles relax.

Low-volume syncopated jazz filled the cabin during my time with the Cullinan II. A combo that's as well-suited as vintage port is to matured Roquefort cheese.

The massaging seats eased my 30s back pain, while the softness of the cabin materials soothed my eyes.

Things were even better at the rear as my car was

fitted with Sanctuary Seats, basically two lounge-like seats. Between the backrests was a champagne cooler, complete with two flutes, and popping the middle compartment revealed a Rolls-Royce engraved whisky decanter and glasses.

Two electronically deployable 12-inch rear monitors controlled the rear massaging seats and entertainment system, a feature my younger passengers thoroughly enjoyed.

I wasn't convinced by the door speakers. These are metal and sharp, and my skin kept catching when

reaching for the door handle, my only gripe with the Cullinan II, however.

During the day, the Cullinan II's chrome organ stop ventilation controls sparkled in the sun, and its interior was bright and airy. At night, the cabin filled with smooth ambient lighting. I often found myself gazing at the fake starlit sky, spotting shooting stars as they whizzed down the car's headliner.

I'd often sit for a while after a long drive admiring the Rolls-Royce craftsmanship – and the seats were also comfier than my couch.



LUXURIOUS: Between the backrests was a champagne cooler, complete with two flutes, and popping the middle compartment revealed a Rolls-Royce engraved whisky decanter and glasses.

The rear 'Sanctuary seats' come with built-in massagers controlled by 12-inch monitors.



The Facts

Model: Cullinan Series II

Price: £330,000

0-60mph: 5.1 seconds

Top speed: 155mph

Economy: 19.4mpg

CO₂ emissions:

368-377 g/km