

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Malcolm Tucker reviews an important addition to the Rolls-Royce library.

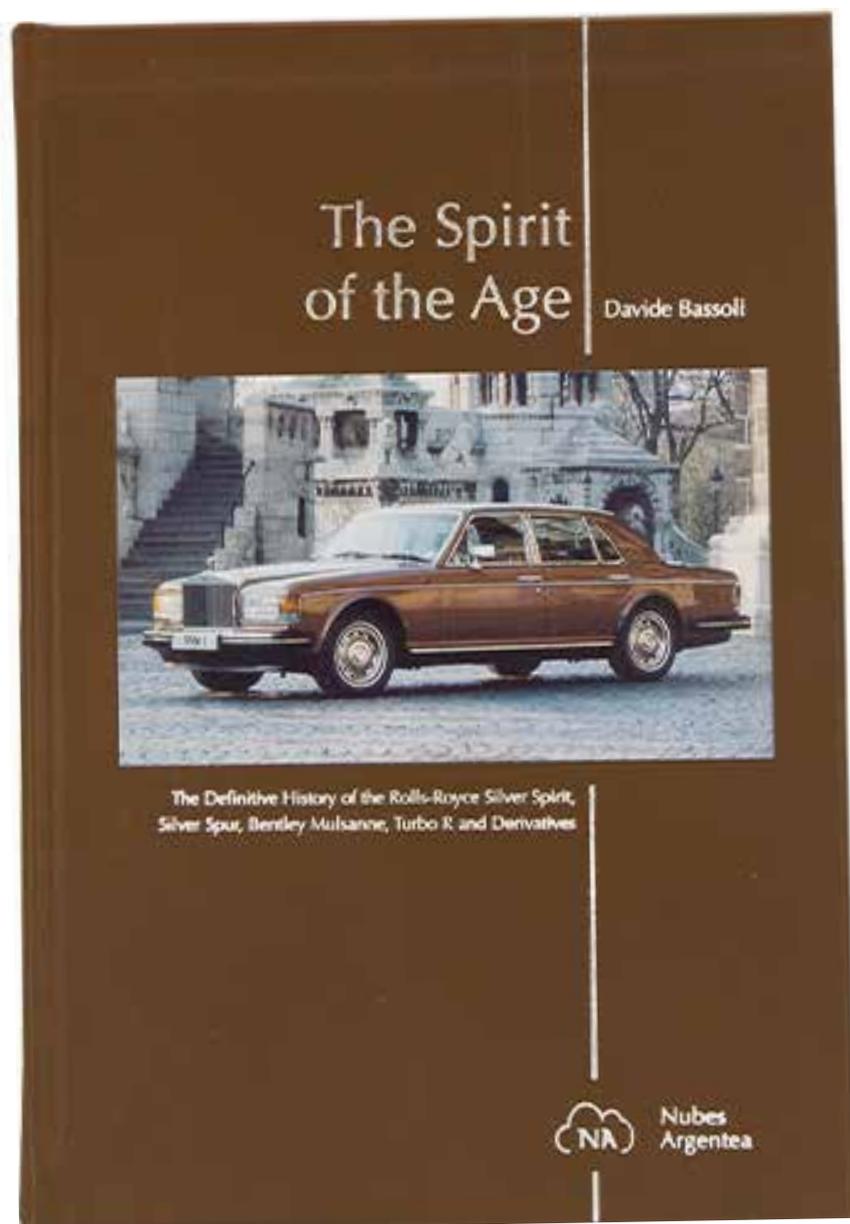
***The Definitive History of the Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit, Silver Spur, Bentley Mulsanne, Turbo R and Derivatives* by Davide Bassoli, published by Nubes Argentea, €190 plus P&P to UK €30, 220mm x 330mm, 262 pages.**

THE AUTHORS DESCRIPTION OF THIS book as being ‘The Definitive History’ is correct, as he covers every aspect of the SZ range of cars from the earliest design scale-models to the last car produced some eighteen years after production began.

Rolls-Royce Chief Stylist at the time, Fritz Feller said at the model launch “We will have succeeded in our task of maintaining the Rolls-Royce tradition if, late on a winter’s evening, in a dimly lit street, someone looks out of a window and catches a glimpse of a dark and travel-stained Silver Spirit and says, ‘a Rolls-Royce has just gone by’.”

Bassoli tells how this was achieved in ten chapters, all with sub-headings on every aspect of the cars design, development, production, improvements, and derivative models. Every page has one, two or three captioned colour images to illustrate the text. In one of the twelve appendices colour swatches, gloss for paint and wood, matt for leather, show the full range of standard finishes offered. Another appendix dips its toe in the history of *Brunei’s Special Cars*. Codenamed *Blackpool*, these one-off designs were the greatest single contributor to the financial health of Rolls-Royce during the late 80s and early 90s.

The SZ cars had to follow the Silver Shadow (SY) range, which had



been the company's most successful model over its fifteen year production run. Using the SY floorpan, very slightly enlarged, Bassoli tells how clever design made the new model look much lower, wider and longer than its predecessor. He even includes a fold-out see-thru drawing to show the complexity of the model. He notes that for Silver Spirit II,

some 2,200 changes were made to the original design.

The all important and fascinating tale of how the popularity of the Bentley versions was achieved, starting at about 4% of total production to about 70% is covered in just as much detail as all the other aspects.

The presentation of the book is of the usual high quality that we have come to expect of Nubes Argentea, the

cover is in linen, as is the slipcase. The page layouts are as fresh as ever, and when trying to find a criticism to avoid shouts of bias from Spirit & Speed readers, all I can say is that a few typos have slipped through, none of which detract from the enjoyment of the text.

This book is highly recommended for every one of our Club's 1,688 members of the SZ Register and should be considered an absolute must for anyone considering purchasing an SZ car.

