

# A British classic, Yugoslav roots



**M**arek Djordjevic has not been back to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, since a civil war ripped apart his homeland a decade ago. He left before serving a mandatory stint in the Yugoslav army.

Today, Djordjevic (pronounced jor-jevic) lives in California, where he is chief stylist of exterior design for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars at BMW's Designworks/USA design studio in Newbury Park. Although he is thousands of miles from his native land, he projects a calm attitude — even when addressing the criticism of the \$320,000 Rolls-Royce Phantom that he designed.

There has been plenty of that since the Phantom's debut in Detroit in January. Automotive journalists and enthusiasts have called the vehicle clunky, its rear too narrow, its front bumper too short.

Djordjevic's mission was to create a car that was unmistakably Rolls-Royce, the flagship for BMW's new brand. It had to draw on nearly 100 years of British tradition and combine some design traits Rolls is known for, notably a long hood and long wheelbase.

Djordjevic took the mission seriously. When he began the project



**Marek Djordjevic, right, likens the rear of the Phantom, above, to the bare back of an elegant gown.**

four years ago at age 30, he abandoned his shoulder-length hair in favor of a short-cropped cut.

Each line and each curve of the Phantom have meaning, Djordjevic says.

Check out the roofline. It increases in depth as it nears the rear of the car, bending into a strong C-pillar designed to shelter rear-seat occupants from view. The gentle downward curve of the roofline is mirrored by a subtle upward curve, running from front to back, along the bottom.

"I really liken Rolls-Royce to a specific type of motoring, which is almost gliding forward and up," the designer says, his hands outstretched. "That is illustrated in profile by almost a sense of dignity, when you see that line of the sill gen-



## Marek Djordjevic

**Age:** 34

**Title:** Chief stylist of exterior design at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

**Career:** Has spent entire career with BMW

**Notable project:** Exterior design for Rolls-Royce Phantom

tly rising toward the front."

Rolls expects to get about 10 years of life from his design, says Djordjevic, who is turning his attention to coming up with ideas for a sibling to the Phantom. He says: "We will be a marque that will continue to have a family rather than a single car." **D**

— Chaz Osburn