



Park-Ward Motors owner Rodd Sala at his new museum and showroom. Pictured here is a 1973 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow.

## A Passion for the Marque

WHEN RODD SALA WAS 9 and living in Perth, Australia, he had a life-changing experience. A neighbor's wealthy relative drove up to show off his new car, a 1967 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. Sala poked his head inside the passenger compartment and marveled at the wood, chrome, and leather that made the interior luxurious.

"The car was more than just a car, it was like a piece of beautiful hand-built furniture on wheels,"

he recalls. "That was the day I fell in love with Rolls-Royce."

Now 54 and living in Barrington, Sala has turned that love into a business. He restores and sells classic Rolls-Royces, as well as Bentleys, at his Crystal Lake-based company, Park-Ward Motors.

"We do something very unique that no one's done before," Sala says. "The last thing we ever want to be referred to is a typical car dealership."

Specializing in Rolls-Royces and Bentleys



made prior to 1990, Park-Ward restores every car it acquires as close to its original condition as possible before selling it. Sala says his customers know that when they buy from him, they buy a vehicle in top condition. "They want to buy the car and not spend thousands of dollars restoring it," he says.

Sala's background in Rolls-Royces began as a collector. He bought his first Rolls-Royce in his 20s. By 1996, he had become Australia's largest private collector of Rolls-Royces with 49. He began restoring and selling the cars in Australia, but back then it was a hobby, a sideline to his highly profitable career as a venture capitalist.

Before Sala moved to America in 2006 for family interests, he sold his auto collection, but bought another Rolls-Royce after settling in Barrington. When the U.S. economy melted down in 2008, Sala lost his fortune. "I went from being a wealthy guy to pretty much almost losing everything," he says.

Sala sold his Rolls-Royce on eBay for what he calls "a very healthy profit," and he realized his old hobby could become a new career. He opened Park-Ward in Barrington, moved it to Cary in 2010, and then moved it to its new location at 6115 Lou Ave. in Crystal Lake in December. The building's interior is designed to resemble a 1970s-era Rolls-Royce dealership that could have been found in one of London's fashionable districts. The cars in the showroom sit beneath crystal chandeliers.

Sala employs a full-time staff of 10, including a team of mechanics who share his passion for the "marque" (Sala would never refer to Rolls-Royce as a brand). "Everyone here is like a craftsman-geek in terms of Rolls-Royce," he says. The shop is based on the original factory at Crewe, England, where Rolls-Royces were built until BMW bought the company in 1999 (Volkswagen took over the Bentley name). "What we have here is a mini-Crewe," Sala says, "and that's something I'm really proud of."

Park-Ward sells to Rolls-Royce enthusiasts across the country and to world-wide markets including all of Europe, the Gulf States of Kuwait, Dubai, and Bahrain, and as far away as to Japan and Australia. Rolls-Royce owners from around the world also ship their cars to Park-Ward for repairs or restoration. Sala says his clients tend to be men in their 50s and 60s who have wanted a Rolls-Royce since childhood. "A lot of the people who are buying Rolls-Royces are fulfilling a nostalgic impulse or dream."

What attracts these buyers to Rolls-Royce is the legacy of hand-made British luxury. "The single main reason is the degree of craftsmanship that no automaker has ever done before or since," Sala says. "Every single car was a one-off, hand-built car."

Sala intends to carry on that unmatched commitment to quality at Park-Ward. "This is all built on passion and love for the cars," he says.

*The Park-Ward Motors Museum Showroom is located at 6115 Lou Avenue in Crystal Lake, IL, 60014. For Administration, call +1-815-893-0311. For Sales, call +1-779-994-7986. Email: info@parkwardmotors.com. Visit [www.park-ward.com](http://www.park-ward.com)*

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Refinished interior wood



1972 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow 6.25-Litre V8



1979 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II



1967 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow