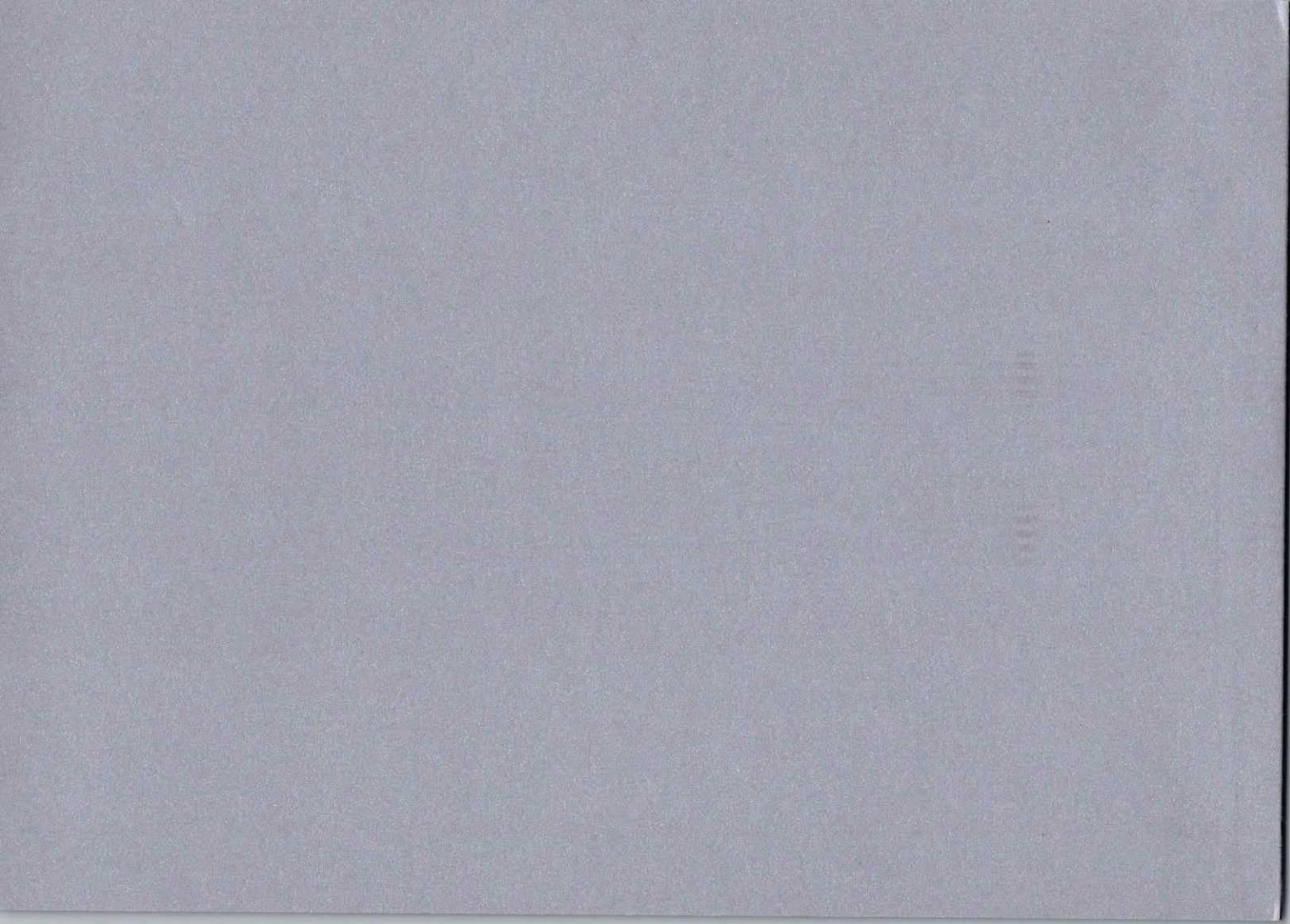


BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GTC



BENTLEY



INTRODUCTION

The Continental GTC, Bentley Motors' new luxury 2+2 convertible, will be officially unveiled at the New York International Automobile Show in April 2006. When the stunning convertible goes on sale later this year it will complete the Bentley Continental model range, following the introduction of the highly successful Continental GT in 2003 and four-door Continental Flying Spur in 2005.

With a top speed of 195mph (312km/h), a sophisticated all-wheel drive system, state-of-the-art 12-cylinder engine, advanced air suspension and ultra-stiff body structure, the Continental GTC displays all the poise, exhilarating performance and dynamic handling of the Continental GT. In common with its stable mates, the interior of the new Continental GTC provides an unrivalled standard of craftsmanship, utilising natural wood veneers and leather hides of the finest quality, which are on full display when you lower the elegant, electro-hydraulically operated soft-top roof.





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“The Continental GTC is the most distinctive new Bentley yet,” explains Bentley Motors’ Chairman and Chief Executive, Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen. “It is very elegant and at the same time effortlessly modern. It will appeal to many different customers: people who are tired of driving sports cars that require too much effort; people who want to move up from more standard convertibles; and people who want to make a statement about what they drive, yet still own a car that they can use every day of the year.”

The Continental GTC becomes the second convertible to grace the current Bentley range. It follows the recently announced return of the evocative Azure name for Bentley’s Arnage-derived flagship four-seater convertible.

While the Azure offers the ultimate glamour, sophistication and accommodation for adults in supreme comfort, the 2+2 Continental GTC is designed for customers looking to enjoy the phenomenal performance, style and excitement of the Continental GT with the additional benefits of classic open-top Bentley motoring.

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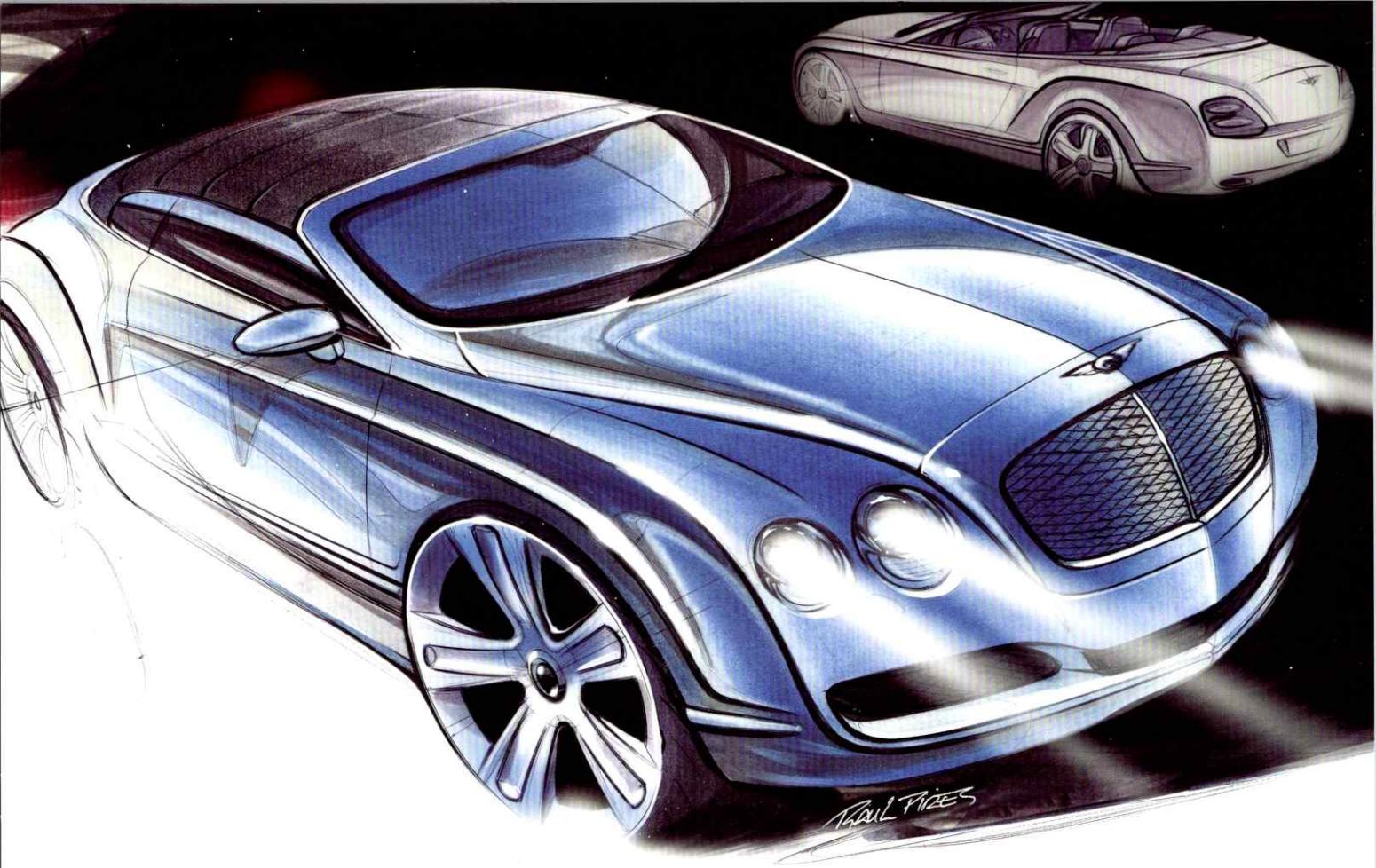
OVERVIEW

- An all-new 2+2 convertible version of the Continental GT coupé that blends peerless Bentley craftsmanship and design with modern technologies to provide unparalleled open-top comfort.
- Ultra-stiff body structure benefits vehicle refinement and dynamic performance.
- Stunning cabin uses exquisite Bentley design to create a spacious, welcoming interior. A classic mix of leather hides and wood veneers give a contemporary but timeless appearance.
- Unique seven-bow, three-layer, soft fabric roof with heated glass rear screen operates electro-hydraulically and provides peerless acoustic damping and exceptional refinement during use.
- Wide variety of exterior and interior roof colours gives the customer more design choice.
- Outstanding performance thanks to a top speed (roof up) of 195mph (312km/h) and a 0-60mph time of 4.8 seconds (0-100km/h in 5.1 seconds).
- With the roof down the top speed is still a remarkable 190mph (306km/h).
- Powered by the awesome Crewe-built, W12 twin-turbocharged 6-litre engine, tuned to provide 552bhp (560PS/411kW) and 479lb ft (650Nm) at 1600rev/min for that legendary Bentley torque wave.
- New rear suspension improves ride and refinement and increases roof stowage space without impacting on 235-litre luggage compartment, which can carry skis and golf bags or travel bags simultaneously.





- High-tech, all-wheel-drive system with Torsen differential for exceptional stability and grip is driven by an advanced six-speed automatic gearbox with manual change mode and paddleshift controls.
- Air suspension with continuous damping control (four adjustable settings).
- The Continental GTC shares its massive braking system with the GT coupé. The 405mm ventilated front brake discs are the largest diameter discs of any series production passenger car on sale today.
- A range of Mulliner options is available from launch, enabling each customer to personalise the specification of his or her new Continental GTC. These comprise:
 - Aluminium fascia panels
 - Contrast stitching to seats and door panels
 - Embossed 'BENTLEY' to seat facings
 - 4-spoke wood and hide steering wheel
 - Lambswool rugs for front footwells
 - Deep-pile carpet mats with hide trimming
 - Choice of premium veneers
 - Mulliner alloy fuel filler cap
- The Bentley Continental GTC will begin its global roll-out from the end of 2006.



DESIGN CONCEPT

The Continental GTC is an open-top 2+2 in true Bentley tradition. Its convertible nature means that every sensation of driving is transmitted to the driver and passengers yet the Continental GTC succeeds in offering something more for the senses, as Bentley Motors' Design Director Dirk van Braeckel reveals:

"The sporting stance of the Continental GTC is unique and quite different from the Continental GT coupé, with its compact soft top and longer rear deck. And with the roof down the exterior becomes a showcase for the hand-crafted interior."

The new car blends clear Continental lineage with its own personality and character – a unique mix of sporting dynamism and the added elegance you expect from a convertible. That means the new car has simple, clean lines that are unimpeded by the shutlines and creases that so many convertibles and retractable hard-tops are forced to adopt in order to package the roof when it is folded. Head of Exterior Design, Raul Pires, explains the process:

"Our ambition was to produce a design that was simple and elegant – that was very important. We worked very closely with the engineers to get a very clean rear deck and bootlid. If you look at the front and the rear of the car you can see we achieved this by echoing the flow of the bonnet lines into the radiator at the front with the bootlid lines into the rear bumper. It gives the car real balance."

To ensure that the design was not compromised in any way, the Continental GTC's engineering team was charged with creating a completely new rear suspension package that allowed the rear design of the car to be kept as compact as possible while still giving enough space to stow the roof when folded. Similarly, a great deal of time was spent on ensuring that the soft fabric roof is perfectly taut and not 'bowed' or 'pitched' when raised.

"When you see the Continental GTC with the roof up, the weight bias is moved towards the back," explains Raul Pires. "The glass area appears to be a little smaller than on the coupé version and the cabin looks so low that it has this great sportscar feel."

As on the entire Continental range, the GTC's design has also been influenced by the need to ensure perfect aerodynamic balance at speeds close to 200mph (320km/h). The convertible spent many hours in the wind tunnel to ensure a low drag coefficient and like the coupé and four-door versions it utilises an underbody diffuser and specially sculpted rear bumper and bootlid edge to provide downforce and stability at high speed.

INTERIOR DESIGN

By its very nature a convertible Bentley is the perfect car to demonstrate the unparalleled craftsmanship and luxury which abounds throughout its cabin. Robin Page, Head of Interior Design, explains the importance of ensuring that the exterior and interior designs work in harmony:

"With the roof stowed you immediately notice how the interior is beautifully framed by a continuous strip of stainless steel that runs around the waist line. Within this frame the interior is a combination of the finest handcrafted leather, wood and polished metals. It is the ultimate showcase for the skills of Bentley's incredible craftsmen and craftswomen."

The symmetrical theme of the fascia, which echoes the shape of the Bentley wings, is reflected through the cabin and onto the leather hide tonneau cover. As with a tailor-made suit, the tonneau cover has carefully positioned stitch lines, highlighting its form and craftsmanship. The front seats have a new sculpted rear which produces an additional 30mm (1.2 inches) of knee-space in the rear.

In the rear of the Continental GTC the centre console finishes with a veneered panel just behind the front armrests, therefore leaving the rear seats as an uninterrupted surface of leather hide, optimising the maximum space for the proportion of the car.





As with all Bentley interior design, great attention to detail has been paid to the jewellery in the car, using a mix of polished and satin metals such as you might find in modern watch design. Between the rear seats there is access to allow skis to be passed through from the boot area. The boot can also hold two golf bags, and of course plenty of luggage, making this a truly practical convertible.

The inner roof of the Continental GTC is trimmed with a very high quality fabric that looks like the slung headliner in the original coachbuilt Bentleys. Customers have a choice of eight headlining colours enabling them to create a luxuriously light feel or a darker, more sporting ambience.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Naturally, wood veneers and leather hides remain an integral part of the Bentley furniture and, when on show in the convertible Continental GTC, prove that these most traditional materials can convey a truly contemporary feel. Though craftsmanship remains as important as ever, these enduring skills have been complemented by some 21st century technology allowing, for instance, wood veneer to be dramatically curved in a way that would simply not have been possible in the past.

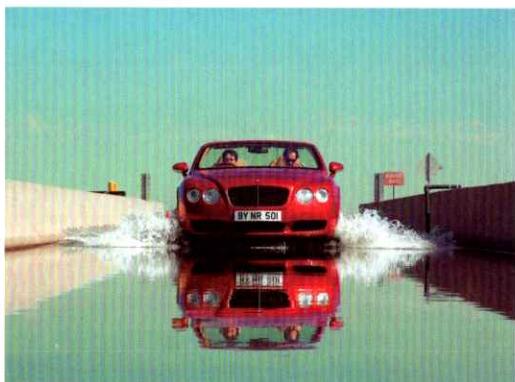
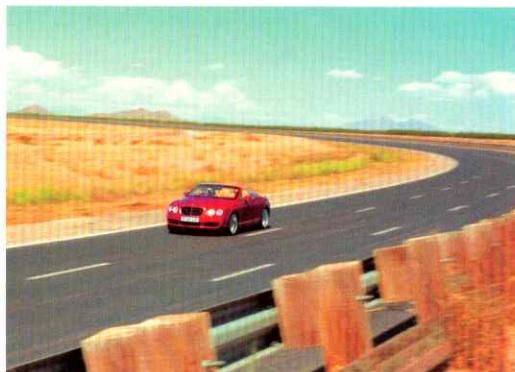
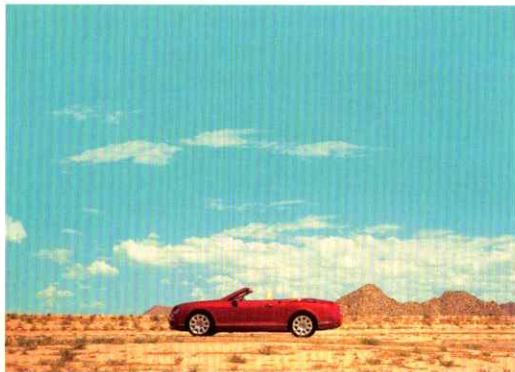
Small but ingenious design touches highlight the difference between a Bentley and other cars. For example, a beautiful satin metal wind-stop can be attached across the rear seats. Made of chrome and aluminium, it folds and stores in the boot when not in use.

BODY ENGINEERING

There was one clear target when Bentley's engineering team began work on the Continental GTC: to create a convertible that drives exactly like its coupé counterpart. By removing the roof – an integral part of the body structure that provides stiffness to the chassis – a convertible has a tendency to shake or vibrate when driven.

Consequently, the Continental GTC's engineers were determined to rid the car of any such 'scuttle shake' and began an extensive development programme aimed at ensuring the Continental GTC's steel body had a torsional stiffness in the region of 30Hz – an incredible figure for a convertible.

To hit that target the engineers added significant steel reinforcement to the sills as well as additional cross braces that run beneath the cabin. Strengthened steel tubing was also used in the A-pillars and windscreen surround. To remove unwanted resonance – as vital a task as ensuring stiffness – a great deal of time was also spent improving the mountings for the rear subframe. Despite the significant reinforcement to the car's body, the weight of the car has risen by just 110kg over the Continental GT coupé, to 2495kg (5500lb). Vibration, too, was eradicated, resulting in exceptional levels of ride and refinement.



CONVERTIBLE ROOF WITH ROLLOVER PROTECTION

The second target for the engineering team was to ensure that the car's folding roof was as refined as possible while still fitting into a small stowage area behind the rear seats. Folding flat in just 25 seconds is a remarkable feat in itself for this complex, seven-bow, fabric roof. But just as impressive is its state-of-the-art three layer construction. The Continental GTC's roof has superb acoustic-damping fabrics, with a thicker, more padded outer layer than is used in any other convertible. The 'sandwich' is also a thick, insulating layer while the third inner layer is made from the highest quality cloth material which echoes the roof lining on Bentleys of yesteryear.

Not only are the materials the best available, but the construction and packaging of the roof are second to none. Its designers were keen that absolutely all working parts would be covered, which means that whether you are inside the car as the roof is in operation or watching from the outside, not one piece of the mechanism will be visible.



The roof comes with a heated glass rear window and also an interior roflamp in the headlining. It can be operated after pulling away from standstill at speeds up to 30km/h (20mph).

To ensure occupant safety, an advanced rollover protection system is installed beneath the rear headrests. If the car's onboard computer senses that the car is about to roll during an accident, two reinforced steel hoops are deployed in a split second, thereby working in conjunction with the exceptionally strong windshield frame to protect passengers in the front and rear seats.

NEW REAR SUSPENSION

To cater for the Continental GTC's sleek design and packaging requirements, a new rear suspension has been created. The convertible shares the same suspension system as its coupé equivalent – a four-link arrangement at the front and a trapezoidal multi-link rear axle with computer-controlled air springs and fully variable, electronically controlled shock absorbers in place of conventional coils.



On previous Continental models, however, the air damper unit was mounted to the upper lever of the rear suspension. On the convertible, the entire damper has been lowered by 210mm and is now mounted to a brand new lower trapezoidal link with an advanced aluminium-cast mounting point that provides the strength and stiffness to hold the damper in place.

With a slightly altered weight distribution and a need to ensure the convertible is as luxurious and comfortable as it is sporting and dynamic, the Continental GTC has revised air spring pistons and damper hydraulics at the front and rear.

As with the other Continentals in the range, the Continental GTC will allow the driver to select from four pre-programmed suspension settings ranging from Comfort through to Sport. These settings automatically adjust the computer-controlled shock absorbers to ensure that the car reacts in the right way to your driving style. At speeds above 152mph (245km/h), the suspension automatically lowers the car to ensure that aerodynamic lift is kept to a minimum, benefitting high-speed stability.

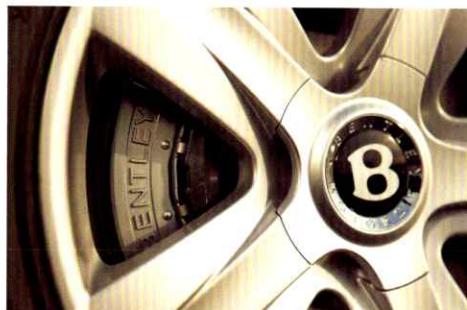
The advanced continuous all-wheel drive system endows the Continental GTC with astonishing traction and poise whatever the weather. In standard conditions the drive is transferred equally between the front and rear axles via a highly sensitive centre Torsen differential. If, however, the differential detects a deviation in torque demand between the two axles it automatically sends more power to the wheels indicating greater grip.

The Continental GTC also incorporates traction control and an Electronic Stability Programme (ESP),

both of which can be disabled at the discretion of the driver. Operating discreetly, these driver aids offer additional security and governance over the car's dynamic potential without being intrusive, thereby ensuring the unique Bentley driving experience remains undisturbed.

The Continental GTC shares the revised steering system that was introduced with the four-door Continental Flying Spur. To improve driver feel, friction was reduced in the steering column, rack and ball joints and its responsiveness was also enhanced, with a slightly lighter weighting for more relaxed driving at high speeds while providing a more linear increase in loading as it begins to corner.

In common with its Continental stablemates, the GTC has the largest diameter disc brakes of any series production passenger car on sale today. The front discs are 405mm in diameter and 36mm wide, and the rear discs 335mm in diameter and 22mm wide. The aluminium callipers are branded with cast aluminium 'Bentley' logos at the front.



The braking system features a Bosch anti-lock system with Brake Assist and electronic pressure distribution. The Continental GTC also has an 'intelligent' electronic parking brake with move-off assist (except USA). The parking brake system can also be operated as an emergency brake. In this instance braking is applied to all four wheels and the car's electronic safety systems remain fully operational allowing the driver to steer as normal.

A tyre-pressure monitoring system is standard equipment, and constantly measures the tyre pressures in all four wheels, instantly warning the driver should a significant reduction occur.

"The refinement and dynamics that we have succeeded in engineering into a large convertible are amazing," says Dr Ulrich Eichhorn, Member of the Board, Engineering. "It has the dual character that every Bentley possesses. You can drive along in something that is better appointed than your drawing room and then you can give a supercar a run for its money whenever you want. And when the roads are bumpy and wet who could challenge you with four-wheel drive and incredible grip?"

POWERTRAIN

The Continental GTC is powered by Bentley's magnificent W12 twin-turbocharged 6.0-litre engine, which will propel the car to 60mph in 4.8 seconds and on to a top speed of 195mph (312km/h). This awe-inspiring piece of engineering is identical to the unit used in the coupé and four-door versions of the Continental and delivers phenomenal power (552bhp/411kW) as well as that legendary wave of torque (479lb ft/650Nm) from low revs that is the hallmark of every Bentley.

The 12-cylinder block has a 48-valve head with four camshafts that operate using continually variable valve-timing. Power is transmitted via a seven-bearing crankshaft to the car's six-speed automatic transmission. To ensure compliance with stringent emissions regulations, the twin turbochargers are designed with a unique bypass valve that automatically sends exhaust gases to heat the catalytic converters when the car is started from cold. This valve then operates as the turbocharger wastegate at all other times.

The Borg-Warner turbochargers are also the ideal solution for producing the flat torque curve, ensuring that the driver has instantly available performance without a hint of turbo lag or having to shift down through the gears. That mighty torque curve is constant, with no drop-off from its maximum output of 479lb ft (650Nm) at just 1600 rev/min all the way up to 6000 rev/min.

The Continental GTC's prodigious power is channelled through a six-speed automatic transmission built for Bentley by ZF. The transmission can be left in fully automatic mode or used as a clutchless manual where gear changes take place only on the command of the driver, via either the gearlever or paddles mounted behind the steering wheel.

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Dr Ulrich Eichhorn, Member of the Board, Engineering, Bentley Motors



CONCLUSION

The launch of the Continental GTC means that the Continental range is now complete. Three years after the introduction of the Continental GT coupé, Bentley customers are now able to choose from three remarkable Continentals, all undeniably Bentleys, but all unique in character and appeal. Bentley Chairman and Chief Executive, Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen explains how each car will have its own unique place in the Bentley stable:

"The proportions of the Continental GTC are the epitome of the elegant, modern convertible and clearly distinguishable from the GT coupé. As the first model in the Continental family, the GT has been responsible for building the Bentley brand across the globe, but it is the Continental GTC that is the most emotional car in the range.

"The GT coupé may be the driver's car and the Continental Flying Spur the more practical four-door Grand Tourer, but the new Continental GTC is the showpiece for Bentley design."

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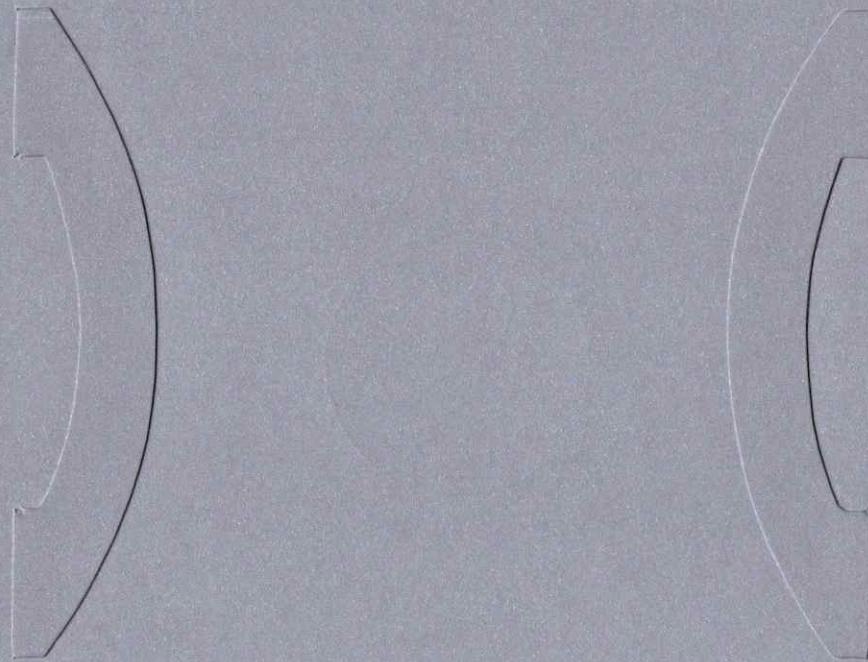
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

MODEL TYPE		SUSPENSION	
Body type	Two-door, 2+2 Grand Tourer convertible	Springs	Progressive air springs
ENGINE			
Type	Twin-turbocharged 6-litre W12	ROOF	
Bore/stroke - mm	84/90.2	Structure	Fabric roof with leather hide tonneau cover
Capacity - cc	5998		Full automated electro-hydraulic operation
Compression ratio	9.0:1		
Valve gear	DOHC per bank, 4 valves per cylinder	DIMENSIONS	
Emission controls	EU4 and LEV2	Wheelbase	2745mm (108.07in)
Power	552bhp/560PS/411kW @ 6100 rev/min	Front track	1623mm (63.90in)
Torque	650Nm/479lb ft @ 1600 rev/min	Rear track	1607mm (63.27in)
Top speed (roof up)	195mph (312km/h)	Overall length	4804mm (189.13in)
Top speed (roof down)	190mph (306km/h)	Width (across mirrors)	2101mm (82.72in)
0-60mph (0-100km/h)	4.8sec (5.1sec)	Overall height	1398mm (55.04in)
DRIVETRAIN		Overall weight	2495kg (5500lb)
Transmission	ZF 6-speed automatic with 'manual' paddleshift feature	Luggage compartment volume	235 litres

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GTC CD-ROM

 JPEGS 300/72 DPI

 TEXT - ALL LANGUAGES



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