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Bentley's new Continental GT is anti-aging at its finest

Lead

The act of face-lifting, redesigning, or refreshing a well-known automotive design is a fine balancing act, which can cause some manufacturers to besmirch the good name of a popular model. Fortunately for Bentley, the new Continental GT, much like its forefathers, seems to only get better with age...

Gracefully moving with the times



Since its inception in 2003, over 66,000 Bentley Continental GTs have been handmade at the company's Crewe headquarters, and throughout that time, the clientele of the great British brand has changed somewhat. In line with this, this third-generation model is geared towards these new customers. The design itself is unmistakably Continental, with the adoption of design cues from the popular EXP 10 Speed 6 concept car to further enhance the muscular haunches while also lowering and streamlining the silhouette. This distinctive profile is now lower and longer, with the front wheels 135mm further forward and the all-new aluminium bodywork forming an extended bonnet and lowered nose, saving 80kg in weight over the previous model. The headlights and new elliptical taillights, designed to mirror the curvature of the exhaust pipes, feature a design inspired by finely cut crystal glasses, with intricate internal detailing creating a diamond-like appearance. The interior is opulence incarnate, as expected, with over 10 metres of wood in each car, 15 carpet options, a unique 'diamond in diamond' leather quilt, and an all-new centre console finish option inspired by the mechanical surfacing of automatic Swiss watches. This all sounds very old-school Bentley, but from here, things start get very 21st century.



Analogue gauges have been replaced with fully digital variants, while the centre of the dashboard is occupied by the newest cutting-edge technology: a three-sided Bentley Rotating Display. An eight-speed dual clutch gearbox replaces the old unit, and a most un-gentlemanly of options has been specified as standard: launch control. Powered by an enhanced version of the thunderous W12, now with 626bhp and 900Nm of torque, the new Continental GT will be officially unveiled at this year's Frankfurt Motor Show, and it's a perfect example of what Bentley's new customers are demanding — a Saville row suit, with a tailored pocket for your iPhone...

Photos: Bentley

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