


CLASSIC DRIVER



1954 Bentley R Type

Lot sold	USD 707 327 - 990 258 GBP 500 000 - 700 000 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1954	Zustand	Gebraucht
Chassisnummer	BC70C	Standort	
Zahl der Sitze	2	Kraftstoff	Benzin
Antrieb	Zweirad	Außenfarbe	Sonstige
Losnummer	363		

Beschreibung

1954 Bentley R-Type Continental Sports Saloon
Coachwork by H J Mulliner
Registration no. MCX 451
Chassis no. BC70C

'The vocabulary of motoring being a lame and limited thing, it is difficult to put into words the gulf that separates a Continental from the average car in all the qualities that have a bearing on safety at speed. In acceleration, in braking, in cornering power, in roadholding, in responsiveness to the controls, this Bentley is the equal of modern racing cars, and superior to some.' Raymond Mays, The Autocar, 2nd October 1953.

Described by The Autocar, 'A new stage in the evolution of the post-war Bentley,' the magnificent Continental sports saloon has been synonymous with effortless high speed cruising in the grand manner since its introduction in 1952 on the R-Type chassis. Of all-welded construction, the latter enabled the incorporation of a much-needed improvement to Rolls-Royce's standard bodywork in the shape of an enlarged boot together with associated changes to rear wings and suspension. The standard R-Type was a lively performer, achieving 106mph in silence and reaching 50mph from standstill in 10 seconds despite a kerb weight approaching two tons.

The Continental raised this already superlative combination of high performance and exceptional refinement to hitherto unattained levels. Unlike the ordinary 'standard steel' R-Type, the Continental was bodied in the traditional manner and first appeared with what many enthusiasts consider to be the model's definitive style of coachwork - the lightweight, aluminium, wind tunnel-developed fastback of H J Mulliner. In developing the Continental, Bentley Motors made every effort to keep its weight to the minimum, knowing that this was the most effective way to achieve the maximum possible performance.

Rolls-Royce's six-cylinder, inlet-over-exhaust engine had been enlarged from 4,257cc to 4,556cc in 1951, and as installed in the Continental benefited from an increase in compression ratio - the maximum power output, of course, remained unquoted but has been estimated at around 153bhp. As the Continental matured, there was inevitably an increase in weight, which was offset by the introduction of a 4,887cc engine on the 'D' and 'E' series cars, commencing in May 1954. The Continental's performance figures would have been considered excellent for an out-and-out sports car but for a full four/five seater saloon they were exceptional: a top speed of 120mph, 100mph achievable in third gear, 50mph reached in a little over 9 seconds and effortless cruising at the 'ton'.

Built for export only at first, the Continental was, once delivery charges and local taxes had been paid, almost certainly the most expensive car in the world as well as the fastest capable of carrying four adults and their luggage. 'The Bentley is a modern magic carpet which annihilates great distances and delivers the occupants well-nigh as fresh as when they started,' concluded Autocar.

Delivered new in May 1954 to one J Hanson Esq., chassis number 'BC70C' is one of just 208 R-Type Continentals produced, passing to George Rhodes in the 1960's. The car has been in the same family ownership since. It has been maintained by George Rhodes & Sons Limited who have traded in the family's hometown since 1925. Early job cards being included in the history file along with various bills, a large quantity of expired MOT certificates and an original Bentley Continental handbook. George believed that cars should be used, driving BC70C on a regular basis locally coupled with trips to London and golfing trips to France, echoing the original design brief. The automatic gear box making the car a pleasure to drive.

The Bentley took part in the R-Type Celebration in 2002 at Silverstone, where the Rajmata of Jaipur presented George with a special award at the British Racing Drivers Club lunch for owning his Continental for the longest time.

Following George's death earlier this year, the family reluctantly offer their piece of motoring and family history for sale.

Very well cared for over the years, the Bentley was last repainted in 1980 and is now well patinated externally, while retaining its original leather seats; it could be used exactly as is or treated to cosmetic refurbishment. Running and driving very well, 'BC70C' represents a rare opportunity to acquire a fine example of the most famous post-war Bentley, possessing impeccable provenance.

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