

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bentley Revises its Continental Flying Spur



In line with the changes made last year to the Continental GT coupé, Bentley has announced a similar updating of its four-door. This must, surely, make it the fastest series-production saloon in the world.

Visually, the 2009 range can be distinguished by a more upright front grille with bright chrome matrix and a new, more slender rear bumper design featuring wraparound brightware, a black valance and bright tail-lamp bezels. The cars will run on new-design 19in 5-spoke alloy wheels with bespoke Pirelli UHP tyres. 20in alloys are available as an option, and are required fitment for the carbon/silicon carbide brakes (CCB) - available as an option for the first time on the Continental Flying Spur.

Under the bonnet, the 6.0-litre W12 is unchanged (552bhp/560PS) in the standard car but uprated in the Speed version to produce 600bhp/610PS @ 6000rpm. Torque is up from 479lb ft/650Nm @ 1600rpm to a colossal 553lb ft/750Nm @ 1750rpm. This endows the faster model with performance figures of 0-100mph (0-160km/h) in 10.5 seconds (10.4 seconds), 50-70mph (80-120km/h) in 2.4 seconds (3.1 seconds) and a top speed of 200mph (322km/h). Phew.





Subtle changes to the suspension and steering on both cars will ensure that the already highly regarded chassis not only keeps up with the increased power of the Speed, but also maintains Bentley's hard-won reputation for its modern cars that retains the marque's core values of 'waftability', comfort and sporting intent.

The speed-sensitive Servotronic steering system has been re-tuned, as has the lightweight aluminium suspension, with the Speed model running a 10mm lower ride height and uprated spring and damper settings, as well as thicker anti-roll bars front and rear.

The cars should be quieter, too, as the standard double-glazing now features a sophisticated acoustic laminate inner layer for all side and rear windows. In addition, new tri-laminate acoustic underbody trays and wheelarch liners absorb road noise.

As always with Bentleys, the final specification of the car is a matter for the buyer and the ever-increasing options available to them from Crewe. For the 2009 model year cars, the company has introduced yet more bespoke choice. New-for-2009 external standard colours include Havana, White Sand and Onyx, along with four unique duo-tone paint combinations (Havana, Dark Sapphire, Onyx and Midnight Emerald) for the first time on the Continental family.

Inside, two new hide colours have been added to the palette (Linen and Imperial Blue), while seat piping is now available in 16 shades.



Dr Ulrich Eichhorn, Member of the Board Engineering, said:

"The new Flying Spur advances its Bentley performance credentials while delivering outstanding refinement and comfort through our unique application of advanced technology and traditional craftsmanship.

"With 600bhp and a sports-tuned chassis, the Flying Spur Speed redefines customer expectations of a large, four-door luxury saloon. The performance, handling and agility set new benchmarks."

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Photos - Bentley Motors

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