
1926 Bentley 6 1/2 Litre

Lot sold	USD 0 EUR 0 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1926	Condition	Restored
Lot number	197	Location	
		Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Convertible / Roadster

Description

British title
Chassis no WK 2661
Engine no FR 2635

- Great vintage Bentley
- Matching numbers
- Engine rebuilt in 2010 for 70,000 euros

Walter Owen Bentley, railway engineer turned motor engineer, a designer of aero engines in the First World War, turned his experience as a motorist to his advantage when he designed a three litre four cylinder sports car in 1919. Its engine was inspired by a Mercedes overhead camshaft engine designed in 1914. The Bentley had the peculiarity of having its block and head cast in one piece, and of having four valves to each cylinder. The name of Vintage Bentley covers all Bentleys built between 1921 and 1931, before the company was taken over by Rolls Royce in 1931. These cars had no connection with Rolls Royce and the 6 1/2 litre and 8 litre were the Rolls Royce Phantom II's competitors. The 3048 cars which W.O. built in this ten year period are the real Bentleys.

"A glorious sound to die to" the matron exclaimed at her patient's hospital bed when she heard the Bentley 3 litre Exp 1 start up for the first time. This was in the Mews garage close by in London's Baker Street. It seems that the prototype's engine was particularly noisy. The exhausts of Bentleys with ever larger engines would continue to thunder until 1931. After then it was a memory to recall on the Stands Straight after the Maison Blanche curves. Bentley discovered their soul at Le Mans. In

1923 in the first running of the 24 Hours the only Bentley entered fought for the lead for a long time with the Chenards, but failed in the end to be placed in the first three. In 1924 the better prepared Bentley, only foreign car amongst 39 competitors, won the race. Setbacks in 1925 and 1926 didn't discourage W.O. Bentley, who brought his cars back to the Sarthe to win four years running. In 1927 the Davis and Benjafield Bentley managed to extricate itself from the Maison Blanche pile-up to win the race despite a twisted chassis, a smashed headlight and a broken spring. England fêted its Bentley Boys: Dr. Benjafield, "Tim" Birkin and especially Woolf Barnato, the fabulously rich playboy who won Le Mans every year he competed; 1928, 1929 and 1930, the year he beat Caracciola's Mercedes in his Speed Six. Woolf Barnato, "Babe", backed the firm from 1926 on and took shares in it. In fact W.O. had lost the control of the operations, but Barnato's backing made it possible for him to introduce a new model in 1926, the 6 1/2 litre. Its majestic six cylinder engine had overhead camshaft driven by a complicated and expensive but very quiet system (with a concentric con rod). The 6 1/2 litre was a commercial success and its chassis was a favourite of the top coach builders. The 12ft 6 chassis (382 cm) of WK 2661 came out of Cricklewood in November 1926 with engine no FR 2635. Its first owner, Major Creyke, specified a Weymann type saloon body from H.J.Mulliner. It remained in England for a long time before being taken to Sweden by its new owner, who had R.C.Moss convert it to a Vanden Plas style tourer in the early Sixties. It reappeared in 1970 at the Kensington Gardens Parade in London in its tourer guise. Its present owner, a Dutchman, bought it twenty-three years ago in December 1993 from well known London dealer Gregor Fiske. He has used it profitably to enjoy Concours d'Elegance and Rallies as far afield as the Bentley International Tour of South Africa in 2001. In 2007 he had the coach work restored and a complete rebuild of the engine in 2010 cost 70,000 . He took this opportunity to fit twin carburetors. The upholstery is in mouse grey leather and nicely patinated, as are the body and the paintwork. This 6 1/2 litre is all original mechanically , so it's a true " matching numbers". It gets its charm from its distinctive bodywork which pays tribute to the Le Mans Speed Sixes, and partly from its torque and the way it drives. That's what these W.O.Bentleys are about. It's a marvelous machine, waiting to seek out new adventures and pile on the miles !

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