

CLASSIC DRIVER



This Franay-bodied Bentley marries English elegance and French pizzazz

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This opulent Bentley R-Type Continental by Franay was not only one of the few that escaped England to be bodied on the continent, but was also the very last example of the milestone model ever produced...

Coincidentally, it was also the final model ever designed by Marius Franay, the son of the French house's founder Jean Baptiste who, following the decline of traditional coachbuilding in the post-War era, turned his hand to photography instead. Franay's reputation for building the most exquisite French bodies earned it a rather regal clientele, including the kings of England, Sweden, Egypt and Morocco. If that's a list you wouldn't mind joining, you could be in luck...

Appropriately imperious





Delivered, quite literally, as a rolling chassis to Franay's workshop in Paris (the driver sat on a crate and drove it himself from the docks), this R-Type Continental is notable for its then-fashionable tail fins, French-type headlights and Wilmot-Breedon Continental bumpers. It was deemed special enough to be displayed on Franay's stand at the 1955 Paris Motor Show, held at the appropriately imperious Grand Palais.



In more recent years, it's been exhibited at Villa d'Este and the [Chantilly Arts & Elegance](#). At the latter, the fabulous, matching-numbers example participated in the French Coachwork Masterpieces class, earning its entrants - Classic Driver dealers Helmut Larkamp of [Thiesen Berlin](#) and Laurent Auxière of [FA Automobile](#) - a worthy second in class. If, for whatever reason, the 'regular' model (if an R-type Continental can ever be described as that) is not quite vivacious enough for your discerning taste, this unique example injects a touch of French pizzazz into its otherwise abundant English elegance.

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