
1964 Bentley S3

Lot sold	USD 107 682 - 121 142 GBP 80 000 - 90 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1964	Condition	Used
Chassis number	BC38XC	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	383		

Description

The property of Engelbert Humperdinck
1964 Bentley Series 3 Continental Two-door Saloon
Coachwork by Park Ward Ltd
Registration no. EGC 359B
Chassis no. BC38XC

'A long-time Bentley customer, Australian-born R G McLeod had set a pattern of ordering shortened cars, with the normal wheelbase but a wheel more or less at each corner and coachwork with minimum overhang supplied to his design by H J Mulliner.' Martin Bennett, 'Bentley Continental'.

Offered here is one of R G McLeod's shortened Bentley Continentals, 'BC38XC', which is featured on pages 136 and 137 of Martin Bennett's book.

Described by The Autocar as, '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 on the R-Type chassis in 1952. With the arrival of the final (S-Type) generation of six-cylinder cars in 1955, the Continental lost a little of its individuality but none of its exclusivity, and this trend continued after the arrival of the V8-engined S2.

Introduced in the autumn of 1959, the Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II and Bentley S2 appeared externally unchanged from their Silver Cloud and S-Type predecessors, though their performance was

considerably enhanced by the new 6,230cc aluminium-alloy V8 engine. Power-assisted steering was now standard and there was no longer the option of a manual gearbox, Rolls-Royce's own four-speed automatic transmission being the sole offering. The S2 Continental chassis differed from the standard version by virtue of its four-leading-shoe front brakes, shorter radiator and, up to chassis number 'BC99BY', higher gearing.

The Bentley Continental was, of course, exclusively a coachbuilt automobile. The firms of H J Mulliner, Park Ward, and James Young all offered bodies on the Continental S2 (and later S3) chassis. By far the most striking of the S2 Continentals were those bodied by Rolls-Royce's in-house coachbuilder Park Ward, and this design by Norwegian Vilhelm Koren, with its influential continuous front-to-rear wing line, would continue on the Continental S3. Quad headlamps were the S3's major styling innovation, and on the Continental - now bodied by the merged firm of H J Mulliner, Park Ward - were contained in slanting nacelles, giving rise to this model's 'Chinese Eye' sobriquet. These 'Chinese Eye' models constituted the majority of coachbuilt Rolls-Royce and Bentley variants completed between 1962 and 1966. Headlamps aside, the most significant change was to the S3's engine, which boasted an increased compression ratio and larger carburettors, modifications that raised peak power by some 7%.

Its chassis card (copy on file) described this unique car's body style as 'Continental 2dr saloon with special modified body to drawing no. 2035/F'. As well as its shortened chassis, 'BC38XC' was ordered with electric windows, manual window winder, special rear bumper, glass sunroof, batteries fitted in centre of boot, and sliding front seats with Reutter reclining mechanisms. The dummy second exhaust tailpipe is another signature feature of a McLeod Continental, having appeared on previous examples belonging to him. The full-length sunroof, re-trimmed interior, and repainted body are obvious changes made since the Continental left the factory.

This unique Bentley Continental is offered for sale today by the world famous recording artist and entertainer, Engelbert Humperdinck, who acquired the car in May 1979 from one Southan Morris (see old V5 document on file). Born Arnold George Dorsey in 1936, he began performing in the early 1950s under the name 'Gerry Dorsey' but did not get his big break until his manager suggested he change his name to the more memorable Engelbert Humperdinck, after the 19th Century German composer. The change paid off in 1967 when his version of 'Release Me' topped the UK charts. He followed up that success with 'There Goes My Everything' and 'The Last Waltz', and has remained a fixture of the global pop charts ever since. Now well into his sixth decade as a successful entertainer, Engelbert represented the United Kingdom in the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest with 'Love Will Set You Free'. He continues to record and perform.

A considerable sum of money has been spent on restoring the Bentley in recent years. Undertaken in 2011 by marque specialists Colbrook of Stilton, Peterborough, these works included a major overhaul of the braking system, fitting two new fuel pumps, overhauling the carburettors, fitting an complete new exhaust system, and countless other more minor repairs. That same year the interior and boot were fully re-trimmed by Swann Systems of Beaumont Leys, Leicester, while in 2012 the hubcaps and front bumper were re-chromed. Detailed bills are on file (inspection recommended) and the car also comes with a current V5C registration document. A wonderful opportunity to acquire one of the more unusual variations on the Bentley Continental theme.

Bonhams 1793

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<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24876/>

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