


# CLASSIC DRIVER

## 1938 Bentley 4 1/4 Litre

- Lot sold  
USD 0  
GBP 0 (listed)  
**Year of manufacture** 1938
- **Mileage** 65 583 mi / 105 546 km
- **Gearbox** Manual
- **Lot number** 200
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- **Drive** RHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
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### Description

"Launched in 1933, the first of what would become known as the 'Derby' Bentleys continued the marque's sporting associations, but in a manner even more refined than before. Even W O Bentley himself acknowledged that the new 3½ litre model - popularly known as the 'Silent Sports Car' - was the marque's finest ever, commenting: taking all things into consideration, I would rather own this Bentley car than any car produced under that name. By the end of the 1930s the 'Derby' Bentley had undergone a number of significant developments, not the least of which was an increase in bore size in 1936 that upped the capacity to 4,257cc, a move that coincided with the adoption of superior Hall's Metal bearings. This new engine was shared with the equivalent Rolls-Royce and enjoyed a superior specification in Bentley form, boasting twin SU carburettors, a raised compression ratio, and a more 'sporting' camshaft. Thus the new 4¼ litre model offered more power than before while retaining the well-proven chassis with its faultless gear-change and servo-assisted brakes. Essentially an owner-driver sports car, the 3½ litre and later 4¼ litre Bentleys found favour with such motoring celebrities as Briggs Cunningham, N S Embiricos, Eddie Hall, Woolf Barnato, and Land Speed Record specialist Sir Malcolm Campbell. In Rolls-Royce and Bentley tradition, customers chose their own bespoke coachbuilders. The likes of Park Ward, Vanden Plas, Gurney Nutting, Barker, and Freestone & Webb were firm favourites in the UK, while European coachbuilders responsible for some memorable designs on the 'Derby' chassis included Van Vooren, Kellner, and Ficoni at Falaschi. Unique among 'Derby' Bentleys is this four-door cabriolet by Carrosserie Worblaufen; this being the only pre-war Bentley to carry the Swiss coachbuilder's distinctly Teutonic-style coachwork. Carrosserie Worblaufen had been established in 1929

by Fritz Ramseier, formerly employed by Gangloff of Geneva, and his brothers Hans and Ernst. From humble beginnings Worblaufen swiftly moved upmarket, benefiting from a strong demand for its drophead coupés on quality chassis from the likes of Isotta-Fraschini, Alfa Romeo, Delage, Talbot-Lago, and Mercedes-Benz.

This stunning example was despatched to Switzerland via Dover and Dunkirk aboard the SS Shepperton. Bentley Motors' guarantee was issued on 15th September 1938 when the car was delivered via agents S. A. Perrot Duval & Cie of Geneva to its first owner, Professor Dr Hans Wildbolz, a prominent physician.

Presented with four-door convertible coachwork, a stunning configuration rarely seen on the 4¼ litre chassis. It is finished in silver-grey while the interior is trimmed in deep red pigskin with chrome framed windows and taut cabriolet hood which when raised gives a sleek coupé appearance, provides ideal snug accommodation while still retaining a stunning appearance, and when lowered provides comfortable motoring in warmer climes. This car also features a most practical wind-up rear screen affording weather protection for the rear passengers while the functional luggage boot contains two fitted silk-lined suitcases. The correct dashboard instrumentation is metrically calibrated, and a coachwork feature is the ingenious door hinging where opening the back door automatically closes the front door and vice versa - something that impresses even the most avid car collector.

In 1975, B125LE was first registered with the Bentley Drivers' Club in USA in the ownership of C F Brown of Ohio. In 1985 the Bentley passed to E H Adolph of Connecticut, who then owned the car until 2003 when it passed to well-known West Coast collector, Barrie Hon. In 2004 the car was shipped to Europe and exhibited by invitation on the Concours d'Élégance lawns at Ville d'Este in Italy and was also exhibited that same year at the prestigious Concours d'Élégance at Pebble Beach. In 2007 further restoration was carried out by Chris Kidd's Tired Iron Works of Monrovia, California. Fresh from restoration, the car appeared again at the 2007 Pebble Beach Concours d'Élégance, finishing third in class against formidable competition in one of the world's most notable Concours events.

Upon inspection the car is in excellent condition throughout, supremely elegant Swiss coachwork twinned with the best of British engineering which was fully restored with the intent to present and rub shoulders with the very best. Privately owned by our vendor since 2012 with concourse invites both sides of the Atlantic, B125LE is ready again to participate in the more demanding long-distance motor tour or grace the lawns at Pebble Beach or Ville d'Este. The car is currently UK registered and is offered with a most comprehensive history file containing restoration invoices and copies of the Factory Order and Build Sheets and a (copy) FIVA Identity Card dated July 2004. Viewing is certainly advised for a truly unique offering."

Historics Auctioneers

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