

# Bentley GT V8 S CONVERTIBLE

Tim Barnes-Clay experiences deluxe convertible motoring at its best

The GT V8 S is built to slice through corners as brutally as every Continental GT already sees off the straights. With 2.5 tonnes weighing down on its four rubber corners the convertible is no small fry, so stiffer springs, revised dampers and suspension bushes keep the beautiful beast under control.

While the GT V8 S Convertible is not intended to take-on much lighter competitors, like the Porsche Boxster, it's produced to give a new perspective on the already thriving Continental GT – and the driving experience is notably different.

The drop-top body style is a big seller – especially with the British summer just around the corner. Regardless of its higher price

compared with the hard-top, many of Bentley's other sun-soaked markets are crying out for deluxe topless motoring too. What's more, the grandiloquent V8 pulse from the V8 S's tailpipes can be better appreciated without a tin top.

Inside, the dials and displays in the V8 S are all just about flawless. Everything is very functional, clear and edifying, but debatably it's not as stirring as it could have been. All the controls fall into benchmark Volkswagen Group positions so it's extremely easy to drive, even for past VW Golf owners.

The Bentley is trouble-free to get in and out of too. The seats are sculpted to avoid getting in the way of either front or rear seat passengers. The lengthy doors extend well past the typical position of the front seats, so entry to the back

of the Bentley is surprisingly effortless. And, to overcome the struggle for people in the front reaching for their seat belts, smart automated arms thrust the belts forward, to within reach.

Satellite navigation comes as part of the package, so naturally the big screen that it operates through is standard. The stereo systems, including the predictably good Naim Audio upgrade with built-in hard drive are, to a degree, controlled via this touch screen interface, with some portions of the functionality retained for conventional buttons. It can sometimes feel like an awkward and uncalled-for recipe but the screen is vibrant and clear, and the system does allow CD and auxiliary inputs as well as SD cards and Bluetooth.



Waterfront



While the disparities between the hard top and soft top GT V8 S on paper might be tiny, the general change in driving impressions is massive. The convertible is brilliantly harnessed in corners, concealing its weight extraordinarily well, while offering an adjustable suspension system that allows both marvellous cruising comfort and firm handling dynamics.

The S uses a comparable adjustable suspension setup to the standard V8, with four selections between 'Comfort' and 'Sport'. Regardless of the S model's additional capabilities at the Comfort end of the spectrum, the ride quality is awe-inspiring.

There are hardly any vibrations and you can barely feel road imperfections. The seats are multi-way adjustable and wide, yet cossetting.

The GT V8 S Convertible is set up to be an athletic drive, with an absence of turbo lag and a flourish of torque throughout the rev range ensuring its rapidity. But the Bentley's real draw comes through fast sweeping bends where the chassis is both superlatively stable and brilliantly balanced.

Indeed, there are few better cars to cross continents in luxury with the family in tow. ISOfix child seat mounts are standard on the

rear seats, and there is ample room for four-up, plus luggage. The GT V8 S is resplendent in sumptuous quilted leather upholstery and high gloss wood, and the trim details, including the aviation-inspired push-pull air vent switches, look superb. That said; the expensive materials are possibly susceptible to damage from little sticky hands scratching away, but for older children there are no negative aspects.

The GT V8 S Convertible is aimed at the young-at-heart driver, so, colour-wise, as well as Bentley's customary debonair shades, there are some more audacious hues that look mind-blowing on the GT V8 S's well-formed body. My test car came with the most dazzling electric blue metallic paintjob – it looked utterly magnificent, especially against its folding black canvas roof.

Of course, if you have the means, then this opulent drop-top is perfect, providing you like al fresco, dynamic, exclusive motoring. But, more importantly, you will also be buying into an iconic British name that is the most sought-after luxury car brand in the world.



**BENTLEY GT V8 S CONVERTIBLE**  
 Max speed: 191 mph  
 0-62 mph: 4.7 secs  
 Combined mpg: 25.4  
 Engine: 3993cc 8 cylinder, 32 valve, twin-turbocharged petrol  
 Max. power (bhp): 521  
 Max. torque (lb.ft): 501  
 CO2: 254 g/km  
 Price: £164,800

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48 Monthly Payments	£449
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JAGUAR

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Official fuel economy figures for the Jaguar XF range in mpg (l/100km): Urban from 16.7 (16.9) to 48.7 (5.8). Extra Urban from 32.8 (8.6) to 64.2 (4.4). Combined from 24.4 (11.6) to 57.7 (4.9). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 270 to 129 (g/km). Official EU Test Figures. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ.