



BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT V8 S CONVERTIBLE

You can't help but be exhilarated by the new V8 S, says Tim Barnes-Clay

The Bentley Continental V8 S is tuned for potency and performance, with a boosted engine output and reworked suspension offering a more alert, clear-cut driving experience. The model is presented as either a Convertible or a Coupé. Here we look at the drop top version.

The Continental GT V8 S Convertible is characterised by a black gloss matrix grille with chrome frame and centre bar, a red enamel Bentley 'B' badge, and a black matrix three-segment lower front bumper separated by body-coloured strakes. At the back, chromed 'figure-eight' tailpipes, a red enamel 'B' boot lid badge and a dark lower valance accentuate the athletic, modern identity of the car.

The Bentley is a stunner in every way, and my week with the Continental GT V8 S Convertible literally blew me away. As a motoring journalist, you're lent all sorts of vehicles to test, and driving a different set of wheels each week never gets uninteresting. But some cars have contours that just don't hit the spot. Even the occasionally Bentley isn't all it might be. But, with the GT V8 S Convertible, I'm pleased to say that it more than lived up to my hopes.



**BENTLEY CONTINENTAL
GT V8 S CONVERTIBLE**
FAST FACTS
Max speed: 191mph
0-62 mph: 4.7 secs
Combined mpg: 25.4
Engine layout: 3993cc
twin-turbocharged V8
Max. power (PS): 528
CO2: 254 g/km
Price: £164,800



Riding on the Continental GT V8 Coupe's winning formula, the latest GT V8 S Convertible includes a commanding version of Bentley's 4-litre, twin-turbo V8 powerplant. It develops a smile-generating 528PS, carried through an eight-speed automatic transmission

The powertrain delivers high-performance with a continuous delivery of oomph. Flip into S mode, by way of the gear selector, and the V8 S Convertible repays you with a razor-sharp throttle response, while cogs are held on to for longer.

All of this means the Bentley GT V8 S Convertible does the vital zero to 62mph benchmark charge in a blazing 4.7 seconds; it then goes on to a fearsome maximum speed of 191mph. And, assigned to all Continentals, the car's all-wheel drive set-up ensures the delivery of dynamic, yet safe, handling in all road conditions.

The hot and heady performance is accomplished without impairing the GT V8 S Convertible's fuel economy and emissions, or its flair for covering 500 miles between fuel fill-ups. The Bentley returns up to 25.4mpg on the combined cycle and CO₂ emissions are 254g/km.

Behind the leather-swathed steering wheel it is always immense fun and this is increased under acceleration, because that's when the nature of the exhaust system changes melodramatically. The twin turbo-charged V8's soundtrack transforms from a low rumble into a primordial howl.

The Bentley's shape is as moving as the way it drives. While the coachwork of the Continental GT V8 S Convertible has evidently been

inspired by iconic Bentleys of years gone by, the design of today's car takes a more theatrical direction. Its high-class presence is apparent before the wheels start rotating.

The dropped suspension provides a hunkered-down stance, set off by lower-body styling. This includes a front splitter, subtle side sills and a rear diffuser. The colossal 20-inch wheels are individual to the 'S' model with an open-spoke arrangement that shows off red-painted brake callipers. Tasteful 'V8 S' emblems are also fixed to each front wing. You have to be careful when parking the Bentley, though because our kerbs aren't kind to big, beautiful alloys if you get too close.

Unsurprisingly, I can't write about this specific Bentley without commenting on the deluxe cabin that encases you when you are soaring over the tarmac. The cabin of the Continental GT is renowned for its supreme luxury with soft-touch leathers, wood veneers, polished metals and deep-pile carpeting, hand-crafted in Bentley's workshops at the factory at Crewe in Cheshire.

Available with a range of striking duo-tone interiors, the GT V8 S Convertible also features advanced infotainment technology. This includes a touchscreen which displays the Bentley's navigation, audio and telephone systems as well as the ride and comfort settings for the air suspension, all complemented by an on-board hard drive.

Perhaps now you can appreciate why the Continental GT V8 S Convertible has left an unforgettable mark on my memory?

