



Bentley Continental GT

JUST THINK of the things you could do with £136,000. You could buy a house; you could even start a new life and never look back. But would you buy a car with it?

Well, £135,760 is what the new Bentley Continental GT will set you back if automotive opulence is what cranks your engine. The 4-seat coupe builds on the success of its iconic predecessor, capturing that GT spirit but with even higher standards of design, engineering, luxury, craftsmanship, dynamic performance, everyday practicality and refinement.

It seems improper to describe this Bentley as a car because it feels so much more than that. It is a statement; it tells the world you are a success and it is a fantasy come true if you are a petrol-head whose accountant tells you that you can afford it.

On the outside, the beautifully sculptured new body gives the GT coupe an even crisper, more defined appearance. Inside, the contemporary cabin offers fresh levels of comfort and eye-candy. The seats, for example, provide even greater support and rear leg-room for up to four people; a sweeping dashboard offers double-helpings of style and modernity. The up-to-the-minute touch screen infotainment system features state-of-the-art navigation, Google Maps and entertainment while the latest speaker technology and digital sound processing deliver superior audio quality.

Under the bonnet, the car's 6-litre, 12-cylinder, twin-

turbocharged powertrain delivers 567 bhp and 516 lb ft of torque; this is mated to an innovative Quickshift transmission which enables double downshifts (sixth to fourth gear, for example) and improves acceleration across the entire gear range. This all means that, behind the wheel, the beast literally throws you back into its sumptuous, hand-crafted driver's seat when your right foot stamps on the gas.

The car propels you from 0-62 mph in 4.6 seconds and, where legal, up to nearly 200 mph. It really is quite staggering and no words can describe the adrenaline rush. The Bentley Continental GT coupe is worth every penny for this almost spiritual sensation alone. What's more, the engine is coupled to an all-wheel drive system with a sporty 40:60 rear-torque bias (compared with the 50:50 bias of the original Continental GT), minimising understeer during hard cornering and allowing you, if you feel confident enough, to control the car's line and balance via precise throttle control.

In my opinion, the new Continental GT offers superb everyday usability with remarkable levels of finesse and pace; even at warp-speed the Bentley is hushed and tranquil. It owes this to advanced noise-suppression technology that includes acoustic glazing, under-floor shields and hidden anti-vibration panels.

The cabin is trimmed with soft-touch leathers, a full range of wood veneers, cool-touch metals and deep-pile carpets – all

hand-made in Bentley's workshops at Crewe in Cheshire. The attention to detail even extends to applying a UV stabilizer to the wood veneers to protect from bleaching, ensuring they can be enjoyed as new for decades to come.

Other simple yet practical functions include a powered boot as standard, Electronic Park Brake with Move Off Assist and newly designed, leather-lined door stowage bins with an integrated bottle holder. Also, Continuous Damping Control (CDC) constantly monitors the car's attitude and poise. By adjusting the suspension settings hundreds of times a second it can provide a remarkably supple ride at low speeds and increased control as the needle climbs. It can also lower the car for enhanced stability at the highest speeds.

I don't need to tell you that Bentley is a legend, so why not continue to make history with the brand? Money is probably the only obstacle for most people, but if you are one of the lucky few who are doing well and whose business has perhaps just won a new contract, why not indulge yourself? Of course, if you can't afford new, save up and go second-hand – the Continental GT will still look the business many years from now.



Pros 'N' Cons

- Luxury
- Power
- Image
- Expense

Fast Facts

- Max speed: 198 mph
- 0-62 mph: 4.6 secs
- Combined mpg: 17.1
- Engine: 6-litre twin-turbo W12 petrol
- Max. power (bhp): 567 at 6000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 516 at 1700 rpm
- CO2: 384 g/km

Priced from: £135,760 on the road