



In appointment
to HM The Queen
motor car manufacturers
Bentley Motors Limited
Crewe Cheshire



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Vehicle Specifications

1953 R Type Continental – JAS 949



Only 208 examples were built, but the R Type Continental had an impact beyond its limited numbers. The brainchild of Chief Projects Engineer Ivan Evernden and Chief Stylist John Blatchley, it set a template that continues to inspire Bentley designers. Described in period by Autocar magazine as ‘a modern magic carpet which annihilates great distances’ the R Type Continental was the fastest four-seat luxury saloon in the world.

The R Type Continental

Two pre-war coachbuilt specials, the ‘Embiricos’ Bentley and Corniche, had shown the advantages of improved aerodynamics. In the early 1950s, Ivan Evernden took inspiration from these one-off creations to create a sleek coupé based on the R Type Bentley saloon. The power of the 4,566cc, six-cylinder in-line engine was raised from 140 to 153bhp, and the transmission featured a higher final drive ratio. The prototype – OLG 490, nicknamed Olga – averaged 118.75 mph over five laps (with a best lap of just under 120mph) at the banked Montlhéry track near Paris.

Engineering challenges

To keep down to the target weight, coachbuilders HJ Mulliner crafted the bodywork, window frames, windscreen surround, backlight, seat frames and bumpers in aluminium. Even at a pared-down weight, tyre choice was critical; no standard road tyre existed which could carry a two-ton car at speeds in excess of 115mph, and Dunlop Medium Distance Track tyres were specified.



Vehicle Specifications

The R-Type Continental in production

The first production model was delivered to its owner in June 1952 and by the time production ended in 1955, 208 R Type Continentals had been made. Of these, 193 were bodied by HJ Mulliner. Others included Park Ward (four dropheads and two coupés), Franay (five), Graber (three) and Farina (one).

JAS 949

R Type Continental chassis BC16C was built in 1953 and delivered to its first owner, Dr Rowland Guenin of Switzerland in December 1953. It was ordered in Ivory with Red interior and a manual gearbox, a specification it retains today along with the original 4.6-litre engine. Bentley Motors acquired JAS 949 in 2001 and has maintained it in excellent mechanical order while sympathetically preserving its patina.

Date Produced	1953
Number Built	208
Body	Two-door, four-seat grand tourer made by HJ Mulliner in aluminium over a steel frame.
Engine	4566cc 6-cylinder in-line with pushrod overhead inlet, side exhaust valve. Cast iron block, 7-bearing crankshaft, detachable aluminium cylinder head. Zenith downdraft carburettor.
Power	153bhp (114kW) @ 4000rpm.
Transmission	Rear wheel drive, 4-speed close-ratio gearbox
Chassis	Steel channel section x-braced riveted frame. Independent front suspension with coil springs, wishbones and anti-roll bar. Rear suspension live axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs. Double-acting lever arm dampers; ride control on rear.
Dimensions	Wheelbase 304.8cm (120in); length 524.51cm (206.5in); width 181.61cm (71.5in) Weight 1700kg (3739lb)
Performance	115mph. 0-62mph 13.6 sec.