



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



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BENTLEY

Press Information

END OF AN ERA AS FINAL BENTLEY W12 ENGINE HAND-BUILT IN CREWE

- **Two decades of iconic W12 engine celebrated at Crewe**
- **Over 100,000 W12 engines hand-built at Dream Factory**
- **Most successful 12-cylinder engine of the modern era**
- **Landmark decision to end production in line with Bentley's move to be leaders in sustainable luxury mobility**
- **Brand's industry-leading Beyond100 strategy showcases future led by new Ultra High Performance Hybrid powertrain**
- **Bentley colleagues celebrate final W12 at commemorative event**

(Crewe, 23 July 2024) Bentley Motors is celebrating production of the last hand-built, high performance 12-cylinder engine at the company's UK headquarters in Crewe. It concludes a pivotal chapter in Bentley's history, as the last W12-powered Bentayga, Continental GT and Flying Spur cars roll off the production line at the company's Dream Factory.

More than 100,000 W12s have been produced since the engine was introduced in the original Continental GT in 2003. The milestone decision to cease production is in line with Bentley's ground-breaking Beyond100 strategy, which will see the company become a global leader in sustainable luxury mobility.

To mark this special occasion, a commemorative lunch for the W12 assembly and R&D teams was held at Bentley's Heritage Garage in Crewe. Guests then gathered to form part of a W12 portrait photograph in the Pym's Lane Plaza. Assembly colleagues were also presented with the gift of a commemorative W12 engine piston to cherish the moment.

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Andreas Lehe, Member of the Board for Manufacturing at Bentley Motors, said:

“The W12 has played such an important role in the history of Bentley that it was only right for us to celebrate the engine’s retirement with those linked to this powerplant. The engine’s introduction helped change the face of the company almost overnight and so will go down in history as a true game changer and we should feel very proud to have designed, developed and manufactured such an icon in Britain for such a long period of time.”

The 6.0-litre twin-turbo W12 – the most successful 12-cylinder engine of the modern era - will be replaced with an all-new, performance-focused powertrain to mark the start of a new era for the company. That Ultra High Performance Hybrid will combine a powerful V8 combustion engine with advanced battery technology. ‘Electrocharging’ uses a potent hybrid system and builds further on Bentley’s existing petrol-electric powertrains.

Producing the highest ever output offered in any Bentley, the engine will drive a new generation of the most dynamic, responsive and efficient supercars the company has ever built. Every model in the Bentley range will become available with the new electrified powertrain. The unit develops even more power than the retiring W12, combined with a lowly WLTP drive cycle CO2 figure of just 50 g/km.

Dr. Matthias Rabe, Member of the Board for R&D at Bentley Motors, added:

“The W12 has propelled our cars and business forward at an exceptional speed and will go down as one of the most important innovations in our illustrious

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history. Today marks the end of a development journey that our R&D and manufacturing colleagues over the years should be extremely proud of. Not least in the conceptualisation, but also the continued progress with regards to power and performance optimisation, while at the same time improving both emissions and refinement.”

20 years of excellence in engineering

Seeking the refinement and power of a twelve-cylinder engine without excessive size, the W12 was created. In essence, two narrow-angle V6 engines sharing a common crankshaft, the compact W12 is 24 per cent shorter than a conventional V12, making it ideal for the taut and muscular lines of the Continental GT, launched in 2003.

With new intake, exhaust, turbocharging and intercooling systems developed in-house by Bentley’s engineers the 2003 Continental GT developed 552bhp. Peak torque of 479 lb.ft plateaued from 1,600 to 6,100 rpm, endowing the new model with the tidal wave of torque at any engine speed that has always been a Bentley hallmark.

The combination of 12-cylinder power, all-wheel drive and near-200mph top speed, allied with the Continental GT’s sensuous and fluid form, proved a global sensation. The Continental GT both created and dominated a new market sector, success which has continued through four generations of the model and over 20 years.

Each W12 engine is hand-built in Crewe, a process that takes around seven hours and requires the meticulous assembly of 2,600 separate components.

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Pistons and conrods are paired in balanced sets to fractions of a gram so that the finished engine will spin smoothly enough to pass the famed 'coin test' and deliver optimum power and reliability. The finished W12, after it is leak tested, cold tested and fired up in hot testing, is capable of powering a Continental GT Speed from 0-60 mph in 3.5 seconds (0-100 km/h in 3.6 seconds) and on to 208mph, while also delivering hushed refinement and reliability throughout its lifetime.

Second generation W12

The introduction of the Bentayga in 2015 saw a complete redesign of the Bentley W12, the result of three years of design, development and testing. Twin-scroll turbochargers delivered faster response and immediate torque; two different fuel systems ensured no compromise between performance and emissions; and - crucially for Bentayga's off-road performance - the engine was tested to perform at tilt angles of up to 35 degrees in any direction. Under part or trailing throttle, cylinder deactivation completely shut down one bank of six cylinders for greater fuel efficiency. The new W12 replaced its predecessor across the model range, including Bentayga, Continental GT, Continental GT Convertible and Flying Spur.

Records and benchmarks

Though never intended as a competition unit, the Bentley W12 has claimed some significant records during its twenty years of production. In 2007 four-time World Rally Champion Juha Kankkunen claimed the outright World Ice Speed Record in a Continental GT, hitting 199.98mph on a cleared stretch of frozen sea in the Bay of Bothnia. He returned in 2011 in a 621bhp Continental Supersports Convertible and raised the bar to 205.48mph. Four years later in

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2015 actor Idris Elba set a new 'flying mile' UK Land Speed Record at Pendine Sands, recording 180.361mph at the wheel of a Continental GT Speed.

In 2018 two-time winner Rhys Millen set a new Production SUV record at the Race to the Clouds in Pikes Peak, Colorado. Driving a W12 Bentayga he completed the 12.42 -mile course in just 10.49.9, averaging 66.5mph and taking almost two minutes off the previous benchmark. Millen returned in 2019 with a W12-powered Continental GT Speed and set a new Pikes Peak Production Car record, setting a time of 10 minutes and 18.488 seconds, averaging an astonishing 70 mph and beating the previous record by 8.4 seconds.

Swansong for the W12

The arrival of Bentley's new Ultra Performance Hybrid powertrain, with 782 PS and 1,000 Nm, heralds the end of W12 production at Crewe. To celebrate the remarkable W12, Bentley announced a limited run of 120 'Speed Edition 12' models for Bentayga, Continental GT, Continental GT Convertible and Flying Spur. Unique features include Edition 12 badging, treadplates, seat embroidery, fascia inlays, and numbered engine plaque. Owners also received a commemorative scale model of the W12 engine block.

The W12 engine has also played a key role in establishing 'coachbuilt by Mulliner' at the pinnacle of individual automotive luxury. The Bacalar barchetta, the rarest two-door Bentley with just 12 examples, is powered by a 650bhp W12. Its Mulliner stablemate, the Batur, will go down in history as the ultimate W12-powered Bentley; just 18 coupe and 16 convertible examples will be built by hand to their owners' specifications, and each will be powered by a 740 bhp, 738 lb.ft Bentley W12 engine.

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With over 100,000 examples still delivering exceptional service for owners worldwide, the Bentley W12 is the most successful 12-cylinder engine of the modern era. During its life, constant development saw a 34 per cent increase in power and 54 per cent increase in torque whilst simultaneously achieving a 25 per cent decrease in CO2 emissions. The W12 played a vital role in Bentley's evolution as the most sought-after luxury car brand in the world: whatever follows as Bentley embarks on its electric era, it will not be forgotten.

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

Bentley Motors is the most sought-after luxury car brand in the world. The company's headquarters in Crewe is home to all of its operations including design, R&D, engineering, Mulliner and production of the company's five model lines, Continental GT, Continental GT Convertible, Flying Spur, Bentayga and Bentayga EWB. The combination of fine craftsmanship, using skills that have been handed down through generations, alongside engineering expertise and cutting-edge technology is unique to UK luxury car brands such as Bentley. It is also an example of high-value British manufacturing at its best. Bentley employs around 4,000 people at Crewe.

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