

Bentley Continental and Bentley Azure final series announced

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Detroit, 5th January 2003... Bentley Motors has announced that it will be producing Final Series editions of the Bentley Continental R coupé and Bentley Azure convertible. Only a limited number of Final Series models will be commissioned between now and mid-2003 as a fitting tribute to Bentley's continued presence and domination of this exclusive sector. Although they will be the last of the current model type to be built at Crewe, plans for a new two-door range of luxury, performance Bentleys to replace the much admired Continental R and Azure range, are set to reassert Bentley's position in the upper luxury performance car sector.

Based on the current range, both the Continental R and Azure Final Series models will feature a series of performance-orientated additions designed to complement the already extensive Bentley Mulliner specification, further enhancing the car's 420bhp appeal. Both models, considered to be the most complete expression of two designs that were originally launched in 1991 (Continental R) followed four years later by the Azure, are set to become highly sought after collectors' items.

Since their respective debuts, 1533 Continentals R and 1235 Azure models have been built at the Crewe factory, confirming their enduring appeal as the ultimate expression of dynamic, yet luxurious high-speed tourers.

The Continental R will feature sporting five-spoke wheels and high-performance Bentley branded brake calipers finished in bright red. Wide wheel arches accommodate the 18 x 9.5J wheels and tyres. The lower front bumper has been restyled and incorporates three meshed air intakes to match the front quarter panel wing vents.

As befits the elegant Azure, five-spoke 18-inch wheels have been specified. A 'Mulliner' badge on each front wing pays discreet tribute to the coach built heritage of the two-door range. Inside, special attention has been paid to developing a unique Bentley Mulliner crafted interior that echoes the marque's sporting traditions.

The most distinctive feature is a stacked central instrument cluster that includes a turbo boost gauge, with chromed bezels and a red starter button. The sporting theme continues with a chromed and leather finished gear lever and drilled alloy pedals.

Diamond quilted sports seats and door inserts are complemented by a choice of either dark stained walnut veneer or black lacquered finish. In the former instance, the winged Bentley motif features on the waist rails to complete the highly detailed interior.

An upgraded Alpine audio system with MP3 playback and CD multi-changer also forms part of the interior specification.

"Both the Continental R and Azure form an integral part of Bentley's development as an independent marque. These Final Series models are the purest expression of two cars that combine the uniquely Bentley blend of hand-crafted luxury with supreme performance," said Adrian Hallmark, Bentley Motor's member of the board for sales & marketing.

In the best and unrivalled traditions of the marque customers are able to specify over and above the features offered, to develop their own unique finish in conjunction with Bentley Mulliner, the specialist coachbuilding and bespoke craftsmanship, styling and engineering team at Bentley Motors.

Photography