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NEW BENTLEY CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORTS CONVERTIBLE

FlexFuel technology now standard across Continental model range

- The Continental Supersports Convertible is the fastest, most potent drop-top Bentley ever built – 0-60mph in just 3.9 seconds (0-100km/h in 4.2 seconds) and a top speed of 202mph (325km/h). It is also the fastest four-seat convertible in the world.
- The Supersports is the extreme Bentley convertible, offering a highly focussed, pure Bentley driving experience.
- Muscular styling reflects the Supersports Convertible's supercar personality with the practicality and elegance of four-seat accommodation.
- The standardisation of pioneering FlexFuel technology across the 2011 Continental model range reaffirms Bentley's on-going environmental commitment to make all its cars biofuel-compatible by 2012.

(Crewe, England. 17 February 2010) The Continental Supersports Convertible further strengthens Bentley's supercar range, following the introduction of the Continental Supersports Coupé in 2009. The new Supersports Convertible, with the same 630PS (621bhp/463kW) twin-turbocharged W12 engine, is the fastest, most potent drop-top Bentley has ever built, offering the ultimate Bentley driving experience in the world's most dramatic convertible.

The inspiration for the 'Supersports' name is the 1925 Bentley Supersports, a race-bred version of the iconic Bentley 3-litre, that delivered 85bhp when more ordinary cars were equipped with a modest 15bhp. It was also the first production car to reach 100mph – extreme performance in its day.

The new, muscular four-seat Supersports Convertible is unmistakably Bentley in its design and craftsmanship but its interior signifies a dramatic re-interpretation of Bentley luxury. Satin-finished carbon fibre, Alcantara™ and 'Soft Grip' leather create a unique ambience with a distinctly sporting and contemporary style.

All models in the Continental model range, including the new Supersports Convertible are now capable of running on both petrol (gasoline) and E85 bioethanol or any combination of the two, reaffirming Bentley's ongoing commitment to make all its cars bio-fuel compatible by 2012. Pioneered by the Supersports Coupe, this FlexFuel technology offers a reduction of up to 70 per cent in CO₂ emissions on a 'well-to-wheel' basis, a measure of a fuel's net contribution to the atmosphere, not just tailpipe emissions.

To ensure seamless power delivery, the on-board fuel supply system detects the blending ratio of the fuel in the tank and ensures that power and torque remain constant regardless of the ratio of petrol to biofuel.

Bentley Chairman and Chief Executive Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen welcomes the new addition to the Bentley range, as well as the standardisation of the FlexFuel W12 engine on all 2011 Continental models:

"The new Supersports Convertible blends thrilling performance and dramatic styling with luxury and practicality in the Bentley open-top tradition. Extreme power combines with pioneering FlexFuel technology, now shared with all Continental models, reflecting Bentley's ongoing commitment to more environmental motoring."

THE NEW CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORTS - AT A GLANCE

The fastest, most potent drop-top Bentley ever

- 6-litre W12 engine twin-turbocharged engine produces 630PS (621bhp/463kW) at 6000 rev/min and 800Nm (590lb ft) of torque at 2000-4500 rev/min
- 0 - 60mph in 3.9 seconds (0-100km/h in 4.2 seconds)
- 0 -100mph in 9.6 seconds (0-160km/h in 9.5 seconds)
- Top speed of 202mph (325km/h)
- Overall weight saving of 90kg (198lb) versus GTC Speed

A highly focussed, extreme Bentley convertible driving experience

- Revised ZF 6HP26 transmission with 'Quickshift' system that cuts shift times by 50% and enables double downshifts
- New 40/60 rear-biased torque split for the all-wheel drive system reduces understeer when powering out of bends and provides for better modulation of line and attitude by 'throttle steering'
- Retuned Continuous Damping Control (CDC) system, stiffer suspension bushes and updated rear anti-roll bar benefit body control, steering response, turn-in and balance
- Increased 50mm rear track improves grip and stability
- Lightweight, 20-inch, 10-spoke alloy wheels offer 10kg (22lb) weight saving per car, reducing unsprung and rotating mass and improving brake cooling
- 275/35 ZR20 Pirelli Ultra High Performance tyres
- Advanced ESP system fully exploits potential of the most powerful W12 engine and improved chassis
- Standard-fit carbon-ceramic brakes provide fade-free braking and contribute a 20kg (44lb) reduction in rotating and unsprung mass from the front axle.

Muscular yet elegant styling with four-seat practicality

- Form follows function: distinctive centre air intake and vertical grilles feed larger volume of air (+ 10%) to turbocharger intercoolers while bonnet vents extract hot air from engine bay
- Subtly curved rear wheel arches with newly tooled side panels accommodate increased rear track of the updated chassis and provide muscular stance
- Distinctive 'smoked steel finish' to all exterior 'brightware', including the first automotive application of 'Physical Vapour Deposition' to stainless steel
- Larger, twin elliptical exhaust tailpipes and rear valance with discreet vertical divider
- Fixed rear bootlid spoiler for improved aerodynamics
- Unique driver-focused, four-seat cabin
- Lightweight, carbon fibre, front sports seats, saving 45kg (99lb) per car
- Alcantara™, carbon fibre and 'Soft Grip' leather provide a new interpretation of Bentley craftsmanship

The standardisation of FlexFuel capability across the 2011 Continental model range reaffirms Bentley's on-going environmental commitment

- FlexFuel available on all 2011 Continental models, including the new Supersports Convertible, from June 2010 (all markets)
- All Continental models, are now capable of running on petrol and E85 biofuel or any combination of the two

- Power and torque remain constant whatever the ratio of petrol to E85 biofuel
- A Fuel Quality Sensor detects the blending ratio of the fuel in real time sending a signal to the engine control unit (ECU), initiating the correct engine mapping. This ensures all performance parameters remain balanced and consistent
- Offers a reduction in CO₂ emissions of up to 70% (well-to-wheel), a measure of a fuel's net contribution to the atmosphere, not just tailpipe emissions

Enhanced choice for all Continental model range customers

- The full 2011 Continental range gets a host of new exterior and interior specification changes
- Six new colours are added to the Bentley palette (Citric, White Satin, Kingfisher, Magenta, Orange Flame and St James Red Pearl)
- Dark Grey Metallic Hood that is available on all Continental convertible including the new Supersports Convertible
- Automatic opening and closing Powerboot is included as standard on the new Continental Flying Spur and GTC models (not Supersports versions)
- A new cost option Premium Pack for the Flying Spur includes veneered picnic tables with vanity mirrors, a Mulliner alloy fuel filler cap and chrome inlay strips to the door waistrails
- Convenience Packs are available for all Continental models and include features such as Adaptive Cruise Control with 'Follow to Stop' feature, an iPod™ interface, front seat massage function, telephone handsets, rear-view camera and Valet key

THE CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORTS CONVERTIBLE - IN DETAIL

The new Continental Supersports Convertible is a car that must be driven to be fully understood. Behind the wheel it is immediately clear that a Supersports Bentley is a 'fusion of extremes' – the ultimate in extreme performance, every day practicality and unrivalled hand-crafted luxury.

Bentley's Supersports programme began as an 'under the radar' project exploring the possibilities of weight reduction on the Continental GT Coupé but with more power and torque. The largely experimental project soon crystallised into an official new car programme, driven by the passion and enthusiasm of a small group of Bentley engineers and designers. Now the Supersports Convertible has received the same focus and the results are equally dramatic. Dr Ulrich Eichhorn, Member of the Board, Engineering explains the thinking behind the project:

"The 'extreme' Bentley stable now has a new occupant in the form of the Supersports Convertible – a car every bit as purposeful and potent as the Coupé but with the panache of roof-down motoring."

A highly focussed, pure Bentley driving experience

With 630PS (621bhp) and 800Nm (590lb ft) of torque from its pioneering FlexFuel engine and new 'Quickshift' transmission, the Supersports Convertible is the fastest drop-top Bentley has ever built. It accelerates from 0-60mph in 3.9 seconds (0-100km/h in 4.2 seconds) and, conditions permitting, can continue onto a top speed of 202mph (325km/h).

The increased power and torque are transmitted to the all-wheel drive system via an updated and rapid six-speed Quickshift transmission, which more than halves shift times (to just 93 milliseconds) and maximises the new Convertible's enormous potential. The revised gearbox also has the ability to deliver double downshifts (sixth to fourth gear, for example) and improves acceleration across the entire gear range. To cope with the additional power and torque, the planetary gear set of the ZF transmission is also strengthened.

Positive torque during downshifts is achieved through engine and gearbox electronic controller interaction for extra throttle and fuel injection during the overrun. During transmission upshifts, fuel and ignition are cut momentarily to give faster mechanical shift times through torque reduction, also improving shift quality and durability.

The extreme performance of the Supersports Convertible is matched by precise, agile handling, while retaining class-leading levels of ride comfort and refinement. Developed from the GTC Speed, chassis enhancements include retuning of the electronic Continuous Damping Control (CDC) system, stiffer front suspension bushes and updated rear anti-roll bar. The Supersports Convertible also shares its ride height with the GTC Speed, sitting 10mm (0.4in) lower at the front and 15mm (0.6in) lower at the rear than the standard GTC.

The front suspension trailing lever features a new design of hydraulic bush, 33 per cent stiffer than those of GTC Speed, for improved steering response while the updated rear anti-roll bar provides improved body control and turn-in response.

The retuned CDC system provides enhanced control of body movement to strike the optimum balance between agile handling and ride comfort during all driving manoeuvres. Agility is further sharpened by a 40:60 rear-biased torque split for the all-wheel drive system which reduces understeer during hard cornering and allows the experienced driver to modulate the car's line and balance via precise throttle control.

The 9.5Jx20-inch forged alloy wheels, shared with the Supersports Coupé, offer a weight saving of 10kg (22lb) per car, reducing unsprung and rotating mass while the open 10-spoke design offers superior brake cooling. The rear wheels have a 25mm (1 inch) greater offset resulting in a 50mm (2 inches) increase in the rear track, further benefiting handling and stability.

The lightweight wheels are fitted with 275/35 ZR 20 Pirelli Ultra-High Performance tyres, providing excellent steering response. The standard-fit tyre monitoring system allows the driver to select tyre type and speed range parameters. As well as monitoring pressures, the system warns drivers if their speed is too high for the tyre pressures or if tyre speed ratings are exceeded on winter tyres.

The Supersports Convertible features an advanced electronic stability programme (ESP) that moderates intervention at low speeds, exploiting the potential of the more powerful engine and enhanced chassis, improving driver interaction and control. The new ESP also provides faster reinstatement of engine torque after intervention, giving the spirited driver greater control. The target slip is increased at greater than 90 per cent throttle to utilise all available longitudinal grip. Corner exit agility is thereby also enhanced for increased driver involvement. Together the chassis, tyre and track changes deliver improved grip, turn-in and agility.

Carbon ceramic brakes are standard fitment and provide a reduction in rotating and unsprung mass of 20kg (44lb) from the front axle, benefiting steering response, grip and ride comfort. The large diameter (420mm front, 356mm rear) lightweight discs and eight-piston calipers offer fade-resistant braking performance with minimal disc distortion under high thermal conditions. Pedal feel is also improved with shorter travel, high effectiveness and a precise pressure point.

Designing the 'extreme' Bentley convertible- where form follows function

The evolution of the Supersports Convertible's design is very much a case of form following function, with new purposeful sculptural forms signalling the engineering changes beneath the skin. Key engineering-led design changes to the Supersports include:

- Revised front air intakes and new bonnet vents to improve airflow and cooling
- Flared rear wings to accommodate wider rear track
- Discreet bootlid spoiler benefitting aerodynamic balance at high speeds

The increased power and torque of the W12 engine necessitated an additional 10 per cent airflow to the twin turbocharger intercoolers and cooling system. With extensive use of Computational Fluid Dynamics techniques, Bentley's designers responded with a purposeful and dramatic style, featuring large vertical intake apertures. Twin bonnet vents were added to ensure positive air extraction.

Similarly, all-new flared rear wings that accommodate the 50mm (2 inches) wider rear track are designed to emphasise the powerful stance of this ultra-high performance Convertible. The resultant

Supersports Convertible style combines the looks of the graceful Continental GTC with a wide, low and muscular appearance that reflects its more extreme character.

The Supersports Convertible, in common with its Coupé stablemate, occupies a position within the Bentley portfolio which is all its own, as Raul Pires, Head of Exterior Design, explains.

"The Supersports Convertible and Coupé are the ultimate driver's Bentleys and that is reflected in unique design cues that provide a bold, sporting look, from whatever angle the cars are admired. Even from 50 metres behind on a dark road, you can just tell it's a Supersports."

From the front, the radiator, lower grille and dual bonnet vents are finished in a striking Smoked Steel finish. Derived from an innovative technology normally used to apply a coating to luxury watches and specialised industrial tools, Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) is a complex and time-consuming process that involves vaporised metal being deposited onto the surface of, in this case, stainless steel.

Giving a darker, more solid appearance, it is the first use of a PVD finish on stainless steel in the car industry. In addition to the Smoked Steel finishes, a gloss black finish to the headlamp casings and rear lamp clusters gives the Supersports convertible's distinctive face and muscular rear additional visual impact.

Restyled – and more aerodynamic – door mirrors match the exterior paint choice and the window and door surrounds replace polished stainless steel with a Smoked Steel finish to match the front grille. Eye-catching, black gloss Bentley-branded brake calipers act on the carbon ceramic brakes. Surrounding the brakes are the unique 20-inch, forged alloy wheels with Smoked Steel-finish which are exclusive to Supersports models. Large diameter tailpipe trims round out the car's purposeful stance when viewed from the rear. Beneath the bonnet Supersports badges grace the cover of the 630PS (621bhp) W12 engine.

The Supersports Convertible has an electrically operated, three-layer fabric hood with advanced acoustic insulation to provide superb levels of refinement and comfort when raised. A choice of eight hood colours are available, including a new Dark Grey Metallic option, which is achieved by weaving a 'grey' acrylic fibre with a semi-transparent 'metallic effect' fibre in a twill weave construction to create a directional colour effect.

A re-interpretation of Bentley craftsmanship

Inside the Supersports Convertible, the cockpit is a dramatic execution of iconic Bentley design displayed in its full glory every time the roof is lowered. Dirk van Braeckel, Director of Design and Styling, describes the approach taken by his interior design team:

"The design team has fully embraced the spirit of Supersports to create a dramatic interpretation of Bentley luxury for the new Convertible where traditional craftsmanship and fine detailing are given a very different interpretation. Leather hides combine with new materials for Bentley such as satin-finished carbon fibre and Alcantara™ to create a unique ambience with a distinctly sporting and contemporary style."

Lightweight carbon fibre is featured throughout the cabin, from the unique carbon-weave treadplates with Supersports script in both doorwells to the sculpted lightweight sports front seats, which feature a carbon fibre clamshell back and Diamond-quilted Alcantara™. Each seat weighs just 21kg and, in a typical example of attention to detail, the visible weave in the carbon fibre has a 'Bentley-specific' density to ensure the perfect visual finish.

The Continental Supersports is the first Bentley to offer a combination of soft-grip leather and performance-enhancing Alcantara™ alongside the leather hide. Alcantara™ is favoured by racing teams for its ability to provide additional grip under extreme conditions, such as cornering. But it is also sensational to look at, as well as being immensely supportive on the road or track.

The Alcantara™ applied to the rear compartment, door panels and seat facings is quilted and in the Supersports marks the return of the much smaller 'diamond' upholstery pattern from Bentleys of old. To further highlight the car's sporting nature, the steering wheel and gear lever are trimmed in new 'Soft Grip' leather with extra grip for a supercar feel, and drilled alloy sports pedals stand out in the driver's footwell.

FlexFuel technology introduced on all 2011 Continental models

FlexFuel technology, pioneered on the Continental Supersports Coupé in 2009, is now extended to the complete 2011 Continental range, including the new Supersports Convertible. The W12 6-litre power unit now has the technology to run on petrol, E85 bioethanol or any mix of these two fuels – all from a single tank.

Bioethanol is blended with petrol in a variety of percentages ranging from E10 (10 per cent bioethanol) to the most widely known, E85, a ratio of 85% bioethanol to 15 per cent petrol to ensure cold-start capability.

Bioethanol presents other unique engineering challenges compared with petrol, due to its chemical composition and characteristics. E85 biofuel has a very high octane rating of 105 but a lower energy content that requires a 30 per cent increase in the engine fuel flow rate. This necessitated a complete review of the fuel system to identify and, if required, replace components deemed to be insufficiently resistant to the properties of ethanol.

Increased fuel flow is achieved through a returnless fuel system, twin variable flow fuel pumps and a new closed loop fuel rail design with pressure sensor. For the fuel system all O-rings, seals, gaskets and pipes are new while new valve coatings and hardened valve seat material provide additional lubrication. New spark plugs with a wider heat range allow for slower combustion.

A sensor in the fuel supply system detects the blending ratio in real time and varies the engine mapping to ensure power, torque and emissions remain at the same levels whatever fuel is used.

FlexFuel offers the possibility of up to a 70 per cent reduction in CO₂ net emissions on a 'well to wheel' basis, calculated by adding the CO₂ emitted during the extraction and refining process (the 'well') with the CO₂ released when the fuel is burnt during motoring (the 'wheel').

Biofuels can be sourced from sugar cane or soyabean, or from "2nd generation" sources such as agricultural waste and forestry residues. As biofuels are not derived from fossil fuels, the CO₂ released during combustion is reabsorbed by plants during the photosynthesis process, thus creating an unbroken energy cycle.

Enhanced choice for all Continental customers

In addition to the transition to all-FlexFuel engines, the Continental range receives a host of new exterior and interior specification enhancements for the 2011 models, which emphasise the unparalleled craftsmanship and materials that are used to create the exquisite interiors for which Bentley is renowned.

Six new colours are added to the Bentley colour palette (Citric, White Satin, Kingfisher, Magenta, Orange Flame and St James Red Pearl) and the Dark Grey Metallic Hood that is available on the new Supersports Convertible is also available on the Continental GTC models.

Traditional Bentley features such as seat piping and stitching options can be applied to the rich leather hides that are used to trim the cabins of every Continental. These include highly intricate fine line, cross and Z-stitching to decorate the seats, door panels and front console.

A new Premium Pack for the four-door Flying Spur is available as a cost option and includes beautiful

veneered picnic tables with vanity mirrors, a Mulliner 'jewelled' alloy fuel filler cap and chrome inlay strips to the door waistrails. Customers can also choose from lambswool rugs or deep pile carpet mats with leather hide binding to the edges.

Convenience Packs are available for both the Continental GT, Continental GTC, Flying Spur and Flying Spur Speed models. On the GT and GTC models this includes Adaptive Cruise Control with 'Follow to Stop' feature, an iPod™ interface linked to the Infotainment system, massage function to the front seats, a front privacy telephone handset, rear-view camera and Valet key. For Flying Spur models, the Convenience Pack also includes an additional rear privacy handset. The massage function for the front seats is already standard on this model.

Finally a new automatically opening and closing Powerboot is now standard on the new Continental Flying Spur and GTC models (not on Supersports versions).

ENDS

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Continental Supersports Convertible

Technical Specification

ENGINE

Capacity (cc)	5998
Cylinders	W12
Aspiration	Twin-turbocharged
Installation	Front, longitudinal
Construction	Alloy heads and block
Bore/Stroke	84.0/90.2 mm
Compression Ratio	9.0 : 1
Fuel	E85 & 98 (95) RON
Valve gear	Chain-driven DOHC per bank, 4 valves per cylinder, cam phased inlet and outlet
Maximum Power	630PS/621 bhp/463 kW @ 6000 rev/min
Maximum Torque	800 Nm/590 lb ft @ 2000 to 4500 rev/min

TRANSMISSION

Type	Continuous all-wheel drive with 40/60 rear bias torque split & Torsen centre differential
Gearbox	ZF 6-speed 'Quickshift' automatic
Ratios	1st: 4.172
	2nd: 2.340
	3rd: 1.521
	4th: 1.143

5th: 0.867
 6th: 0.691
 Final Drive: 3.52:1 front / 3.52:1 rear

PERFORMANCE

Maximum Speed 202mph (325km/h)
 0-60 mph 3.9 seconds
 0-100 mph 9.6 seconds
 0-100 km/h 4.2 seconds
 0-160 km/h 9.5 seconds

SUSPENSION

Front Four-link double wishbones, anti-roll bar, air springs
 Rear Trapezoidal multi-link, anti-roll bar, air springs
 Dampers Continuous Damping Control with four adjustable settings

STEERING

Type Rack & pinion, power-assisted, speed-sensitive
 Turns lock to lock 2.6
 Turning circle 11.4 metres kerb-to-kerb

BRAKES

Front 420 mm diameter carbon/ceramic, vented & cross- drilled
 Rear 356 mm diameter carbon/ceramic, vented & cross- drilled
 Anti lock Standard with Electronic Stability Programme (ESP)
 8.1 and Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBD)

BODY & CHASSIS

Construction Steel monocoque, 2-door convertible
 Length 4804 mm (189.1inches)
 Width across mirrors 2194mm (86.4 inches)
 Width mirrors folded 1945mm (76.6 inches)
 Kerb weight 2395kg (5279lbs)
 Height 1388mm (54.6 inches)
 Wheelbase 2745mm (108.1 inches)
 Front track 1623mm (63.9 inches)
 Rear track 1657mm (65.2 inches)
 Wheels 20inch x 9.5J 10-spoke Smoked Chrome Alloy
 Tyres 275/35x20 Pirelli Ultra High Performance
 Fuel tank capacity 90 litres (19.8 gallons/23.8 US gallons)

FUEL CONSUMPTION / EMISSIONS

Urban 11.1 mpg (25.5 litres / 100 km)
 Extra Urban 24.3 mpg (11.6 litres / 100 km)
 Combined 17.0 mpg (16.7 litres / 100km)
 EPA Drive Cycle City Driving TBC
 Highway Driving TBC

Carbon dioxide emissions
Emission controls

388g/km
EU V and US Lev 11



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