





Bentley

Bentley Motors Limited



Type	Subsidiary of Volkswagen Group
Successor	Rolls-Royce
Founded	18 January 1919
Founder(s)	Walter Owen Bentley
Headquarters	Crewe, England, United Kingdom
Area served	Worldwide
Key people	Dr. Franz-Josef Paefgen, CEO
Industry	Manufacturing
Products	Cars
Revenue	£2.1b (2007)
Employees	4000 (2006)
Parent	Volkswagen Group
Website	BentleyMotors.com

Bentley Motors Limited is a British manufacturer of automobiles founded on 18 January 1919 by Walter Owen Bentley (known as W.O. Bentley or just "W.O."). Mr. Bentley had been previously known for his range of rotary aero-engines in World War I, the most famous being the Bentley BR1 as used in later versions of the Sopwith Camel. Since 1998, the company has been owned by the Volkswagen Group of Germany.

Bentley as a separate company (1919–31)

Before World War I, W.O. TYLER had been in partnership with his brother H.M. Bentley selling French DFP cars, but he had always wanted to design and build his own range of cars bearing his name. In August 1919, Bentley Motors Ltd. was registered, and a chassis with dummy engine was exhibited at the London Motor Show in October of that year. An engine was built and running by December, and orders were taken for deliveries starting in June 1920; however, development took longer than estimated, and the first cars were not ready until September 1921.

It was on a visit to the DFP factory in 1913 that W.O. noticed an aluminium paperweight and had the inspired idea of using the lightweight metal instead of cast iron to make engine pistons. The first Bentley aluminium pistons went into service in aero engines for the Sopwith Camel, in service during the Great War.

The company was always underfunded, and Bentley turned to millionaire Woolf Barnato for help in 1925. As part of a refinancing deal, which resulted in his effectively owning the company, Barnato became chairman. A great deal of Barnato's fortune was devoted to keeping Bentley afloat, but the Great Depression destroyed demand for the company's expensive products, and it was finally sold to Rolls-Royce in 1931.

The Bentley Boys

A group of wealthy British motorists known as the "Bentley Boys" (Woolf Barnato, Sir Henry Birkin, steeplechaser George Duller, aviator Glen Kidston, automotive journalist S.C.H. "Sammy" Davis, and Dr. Dudley Benjafield among them) kept the marque's reputation for high performance alive. Thanks to the dedication to serious racing of this group, the company, located at Cricklewood, north London was noted for its four consecutive victories at the 24 hours of Le Mans from 1927 to 1930. Their greatest competitor at the time, Bugatti—who's lightweight, elegant, but fragile creations contrasted with the Bentley's rugged reliability and durability—referred to them as "the world's fastest lorries." In March 1930, during the Blue Train Races, Woolf Barnato raised the stakes on Rover and its Rover Light Six, having raced and beat *Le Train Bleu* for the first time, to better that record with his 6½-litre Bentley Speed Six on a bet of £100. He drove against the train from Cannes to Calais, then by ferry to Dover and finally London, travelling on public highways, and won; the H.J. Mulliner-bodied formal saloon he drove during the race as well as a streamlined fastback "Sportsman Coupe" by Gurney Nutting he took delivery of on 21 May 1930 became known as the "Blue Train Bentleys"; the latter is regularly mistaken for (or erroneously referred to) as being the car that raced the Blue Train, while in fact Barnato named it in memory of his race.

Car models



The original model was the 3-litre, but as customers put heavier bodies on the chassis, a larger 4½-litre model followed. Perhaps the most iconic model of the period is the 4½-litre "Blower Bentley," with its distinctive supercharger projecting forward from the bottom of the grille. Uncharacteristically fragile for a Bentley, it was not the racing workhorse the 6½-

litre was. It became famous in popular media as the vehicle of James Bond in the original novels, but not in film; however, John Steed, in the television series *The Avengers*, did drive a Bentley.

- 1921–29 3-litre
- 1926–30 4½-litre & "Blower Bentley"
- 1926–30 6½-litre
- 1928–30 6½-litre Speed Six
- 1930–31 8-litre
- 1931 4-litre

Bentleys of the Rolls-Royce era (1931–98)

Rolls-Royce had bought Bentley secretly using a company named the British Central Equitable Trust; not even Bentley himself knew the true identity of the purchaser until the deal was completed.^[1] A new company, wholly owned by Rolls-Royce, was formed as Bentley Motors (1931) Ltd. As W.O. Bentley was little more than an employee, he left to join Lagonda in 1935 when his contract was up for renewal. The Cricklewood factory was closed and sold, and production moved to the Rolls-Royce works in Derby.

When a new Bentley car appeared in 1933, the 3½-litre, it was a sporting variant of the Rolls-Royce 20/25—and although disappointing some traditional customers, it was well-received by many others. Even Bentley himself was reported as saying, "Taking all things into consideration, I would rather own this Bentley than any other car produced under that name."

After World War II, production of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars was moved to an ex-wartime engine factory in Crewe, Cheshire. Bentleys increasingly became Rolls-Royces without the distinctive grilles and with a lower price tag, and by the 1970s and early 1980s, sales had fallen badly, with at one time less than 5% of production carrying the Bentley badge.

The parent company failed in 1970 following problems with aero engine development, and the car division was floated off to become Rolls-Royce Motors Ltd. and remained independent until bought by Vickers in August 1980.

In the 1980s, Bentley became a separate, high-performance car line once again, typified by the 1980 Mulsanne. The new sporting image created a new interest in the name and sales as a proportion of output started to rise. In 1986, the Rolls-Royce:Bentley ratio was 60:40, and in 1991, it was 50:50.

The Bentley factory in Crewe, Cheshire, is still known in the town by the name "Royce's." For more on Bentley Motors from 1931 to 1998, see Rolls-Royce and Rolls-Royce Motors.

Car models

- 1933–37 3½-litre
 - 1936–39 4¼-litre
- 1939–41 Mark V
 - 1939 Mark V
- 1946–52 Mark VI
- 1952–55 R Type and Continental
- 1955–59 S1 and Continental
- 1959–62 S2 and Continental
- 1962–65 S3 and Continental
- 1965–80 T-series
 - 1965–77 T1
 - 1977–80 T2
- 1971–84 Corniche
 - 1984–95 Continental — convertible
 - 1992–95 Continental Turbo
- 1975–86 Camargue
- 1980–87 Mulsanne
 - 1984–88 Mulsanne L — limousine
 - 1982–85 Mulsanne Turbo

- 1987–92 Mulsanne S
- 1984–92 Eight — lower-priced model
- 1985–95 Turbo R — turbocharged performance version
- 1991–2002 Continental R — turbocharged 2-door model
 - § 1999–2003 Continental R Mulliner — performance model
 - § 1994–95 Continental S — intercooled
- 1992–98 Brooklands — improved Eight
 - § 1996–98 Brooklands R — performance Brooklands
- 1994–95 Turbo S — limited-edition sports model
- 1995–97 Turbo R — updated Turbo R
- 1995–97 Turbo RL — updated Turbo R LWB (Long Wheel Base)
 - § 1996 Turbo R Sport — limited-edition sports model
- 1995–2003 Azure — convertible Continental R
 - § 1999–2002 Azure Mulliner — performance model
- 1996–2002 Continental T — short-wheelbase performance model
 - § 1999 Continental T Mulliner — firmer suspension
- 1997–98 Bentley Turbo RT — replacement for the Turbo RL

Volkswagen Group ownership

In 1998, Rolls-Royce and Bentley Motors were purchased from Vickers (the owner since 1980) by Volkswagen Group for £430 million, following a bidding war with BMW. BMW had recently started supplying components for the new range of Rolls and Bentley cars, notably V8 engines for the Bentley Arnage and V12 engines for the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph. VW believed that the Rolls-Royce name was included in the purchase, when in fact it belonged to Rolls-Royce plc, the aero-engine company, and was used by the automobile division under licence. It also emerged that BMW's aeronautical division had a joint venture agreement with Rolls-Royce plc and that the German company was able to

terminate its supply deal with Rolls-Royce with 12 months' notice, which would not be enough time for VW to re-engineer the cars.

BMW and Volkswagen entered into negotiations, and an agreement was reached whereby Volkswagen would manufacture both Bentley and Rolls-Royce cars until the end of 2002, licensing the name from Rolls-Royce plc; on 1 January 2003, the right to build Rolls-Royce cars would transfer to BMW. BMW licensed the brand from Rolls-Royce plc and paid £40 million to VW, but the deal did not include any manufacturing facilities, staff, or intellectual property on present or future models. BMW also agreed to continue its supply agreements, which gave VW the time it needed to reduce its reliance on BMW as a supplier. Bentley reintroduced the venerable Rolls-Royce V8 engine into the Arnage, initially as an additional model, and all BMW engine supply ended in 2003 with the end of Silver Seraph production.

Modern Bentleys

In 2002, Bentley presented Queen Elizabeth II with an official State Limousine to celebrate the Golden Jubilee. In 2003, Bentley's 2-door convertible, the Bentley Azure, ceased production, and the company introduced the Bentley Continental GT, a large luxury coupe. The car is powered by a W-12 engine built in Crewe.

Demand had been so great that the factory at Crewe was unable to meet orders despite an installed capacity of approximately 9500 vehicles per year; there was a waiting list of over a year for new cars to



be delivered. Consequently, part of the production of the new Flying Spur, a four-door version of the Continental GT, was assigned to the Transparent Factory, where the VW Phaeton luxury car is also assembled. This arrangement ceased at the end of 2006 after around 1000 cars, now highly sought after. All car production reverted to the Crewe plant.

In April 2005, Bentley confirmed plans to produce a 4-seat convertible model—the Azure, derived from the Arnage Drophead Coupe prototype—at Crewe beginning in 2006. By the autumn of 2005, the convertible version of the successful Continental GT, the Continental GTC, was also presented. These two models were successfully launched in late 2006.

A limited run of a Zagato modified GT was also announced in March 2008, dubbed "GTZ."

A new Bentley version of the Bentley Continental was introduced at the 2009 Geneva Auto Show: The Continental Supersports. This new Bentley is a supercar combining extreme power with pioneering FlexFuel technology (environmentally friendly). A muscular two-seater with distinctive exterior and interior styling that is unmistakably Bentley in its design, craftsmanship and performance. The engine derived from Bentley's current W12 power unit was re-engineered, re-tuned and re-mapped to achieve phenomenal supercar potency. 0-60mph in 3.7 seconds (0-100km/h 3.9 seconds). 621bhp (463kW/630PS). 800Nm (590 lb ft) @ 2000 to 4500rpm. The Continental Supersports is the fastest, most powerful production Bentley ever.

Bentley sales continued to increase, and in 2005, 8,627 were sold worldwide, 3,654 of which were sold in the United States. In 2007, with sales of 10,014, the 10,000 cars-per-year threshold was broken for the first time in the company's history. For 2007, a record profit of €155 million was also announced.

- 1998 – Arnage saloon
- 1999 – Hunaudieres Concept
- 2002 – State Limousine
- 2003 – Continental GT coupé
- 2005 – Continental Flying Spur saloon
- 2006 – Azure convertible
- 2006 – Continental GT convertible
- 2007 – Continental GT Speed coupé

- 2008 – Bentley Brooklands coupé
- 2008 – Bentley Continental Flying Spur Speed saloon
- 2009 – Continental GTC Speed
- 2009 – Azure T
- 2009 – Arnage saloon, Final Series
- 2009 – Continental Supersports



The current board of management consists of Dr. Franz-Josef Paefgen, Chairman and Chief Executive; Dr. Ulrich Eichhorn, Engineering; Stuart J. McCullough, Sales & Marketing; Douglas G. Dickson, Manufacturing; Christine A. Gaskell, Personnel; and Juergen Hoffmann, Finance.

Current Bentley racing

In 2001–03, the Bentley Speed 8 enjoyed a successful racing streak in the Le Mans series.

Future cars

Since Bentley's induction into the VW Group, rumours of an SUV-style vehicle have repeatedly surfaced. These have been shot down by Bentley employees on the basis that the idea would not fit into their future plans and also the fact that the manufacturing facilities are already running at full capacity.

Borrowing hybrid technology developed by Bentley owners, VW Group is another focal point as the trend towards hybrid cars is expanding year on year.

The all-new Grand Bentley The "all new grand Bentley" that will be replacing the Final Series Arnage. To date, only a teaser image is available from Bentley. The car is likely to be revealed next summer, most likely in August at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Élégance in the USA. The new car is expected for the 2010 model year and is said to take styling cues from the Bentley State Limousine.



















