



The Pavilion Gardens (110)

Wed, 21st Jul 2010, The Pavilion Gardens

Lot 65

Estimate: £65000 - £75000 + Fees

2002 Bentley Continental R Mulliner

Registration No: MR02HJC

Chassis No: SCBZB25E22CH01776

Mot Expiry: June 2011

Though launched at the Geneva motor show of 1991, many elements of the John Heffernan/Ken Greenley-penned Continental R had been seen at the same salon as far back as 1984, when Bentley unveiled their 'Project 90' concept car; a suitably enthusiastic reception leading the company to develop the car for production. Clearly the Sultan of Brunei approved of the end result, as he bought the 1991 show car at the exhibition.

The Continental tag was intended to recall memories of the elegant Bentley Continentals of the '50s and '60s, while the 'R' was a hark back to R Type Bentleys of the '50s and the Turbo R of the '80s.

The new car was based on the Turbo R floorpan and powered by that model's 6.75-litre turbocharged V8 engine, that was believed (the Rolls-Royce/Bentley company of the day never quoted horsepower figures) to produce in the region of 325bhp. Whatever, it was sufficient to give a top speed of some 145mph and a 0-60mph acceleration time of around 6.6 seconds - no mean performance for a car weighing in at some 2.5 tons. The engine drove through the then new 4-speed GM 4L80-E transmission.

The striking two-door body featured more curvature than the Rolls-Royce and Bentley saloons of the time and while its drag coefficient of 0.465 was unimpressive in general terms, it was nevertheless a huge improvement over that of previous Bentleys. Unlike all other Bentleys since the S3 of 1965, its body was unique to the marque and not shared with any model of Rolls-Royce. It was a big car by any standards, being some 17.5 feet long and over 6.5 feet wide. The 24 gallon fuel tank was a clue to the fuel consumption when the full performance was employed.

In 1999, Bentley decided to recreate an element of the Continentals of the post war period, when customers could specify their car via direct contact with the engineers and designers at the Crewe factory - enter the Bentley Continental R Mulliner. This model was equipped with the most powerful of Bentley's ubiquitous OHV turbocharged 6.75-litre V8 engine, hitherto only found in the Continental T. With an output of 420bhp and 875 Nm of torque (reputedly more than that offered by any other manufacturer in the world), the Mulliner could see speeds of up to 170mph - territory normally reserved for supercars.

The right-hand drive Continental R Mulliner offered, was constructed in 2002 and sports black-green coachwork complemented by a parchment coloured leather upholstered

interior. Though still only eight years old, it has already amassed an interesting history. It was originally retained by Rolls-Royce and used as a motor show display vehicle, during which time it carried the famous number plate '2000 TU'. The vendor purchased it direct from the company with just 1,700 miles on the clock. The car was used on the 'Jewel That Is Jordan' event organised by Jonathan Lyons and was shown to Crown Prince Abdullah at his motor museum in Amman during 2004. Reserved for use in touring events alone, the vendor describes the Bentley as being "in pristine overall condition" and as "a joy to drive". Indeed, he rates the hand-built Mulliner's engine, automatic transmission, coachwork and electrical equipment as "excellent", while he considers its paintwork and interior trim to be "very good".

As far as we can gather, only 131 Bentley Continental R Mulliners were made, making this a very rare car. This, coupled to its evident condition and interesting history, makes it an exciting proposition for collectors of the Bentley marque.