

BENTLEY

No.38 SUMMER 2011



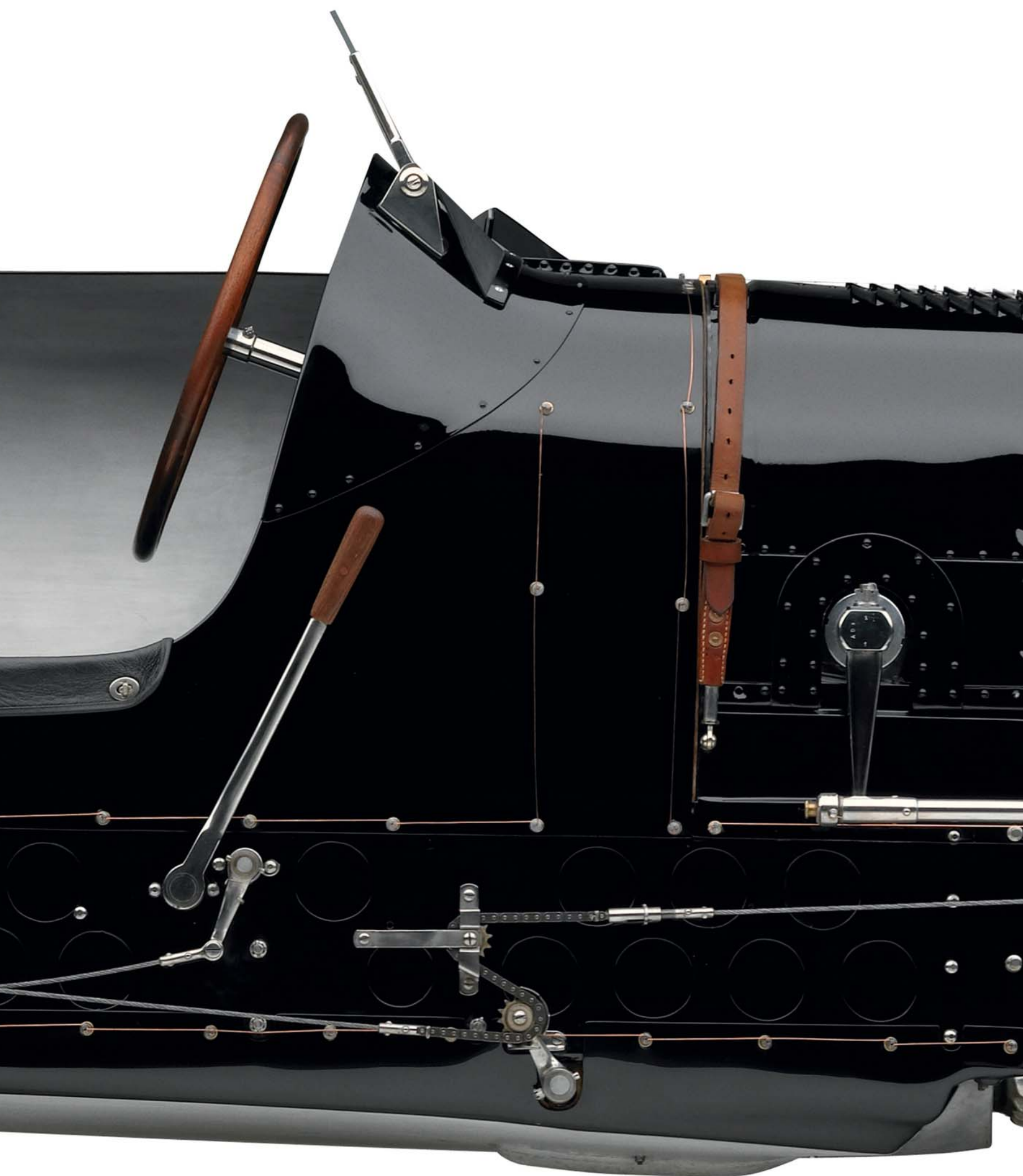
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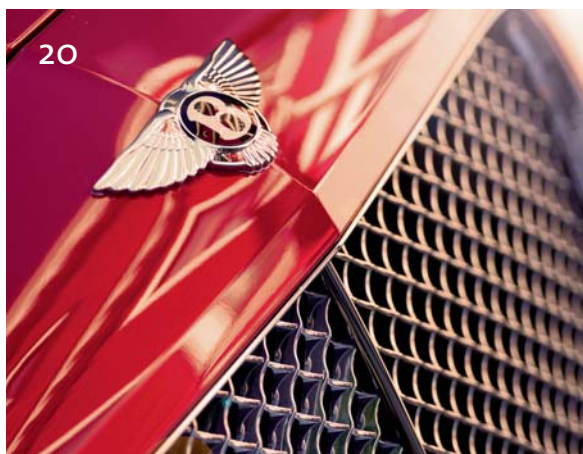
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Harry Winston

Summer 2011

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**FRONT COVER**

Bentley Mulsanne in Moonbeam over Tungsten. Anthracite, with Beluga seatbelts and Linen cross stitching interior. Shot on location in California by Lianne Milton for Global Assignment by Getty Images.



BENTLEY



Editor

JULIA MAROZZI

A former features editor, news editor and Weekend editor at the FT, Julia has worked in Toronto, Hong Kong, Montreal, Miami and London for a variety of national and international publications, including the South China Morning Post and the Sunday Times.



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Katie Boucher is a freelance writer who lives in Abu Dhabi with her husband and seven-month-old son, Sam. When not blitzing everything in sight into purée, she writes about art, lifestyle and health.



JULIAN ALLASON

Julian Allason falls off camels, river rafts and bar stools in his quest to destruction-test luxury hotels and adventure holidays for the Financial Times and leading magazines.



VICTORIA MACMILLAN BELL

From ballet to investment banking to journalism. Victoria wonders what and where next? 'A hammock and good company will do nicely, thank you'.

It's summer here in Crewe – and we've decided to welcome the warmer weather by celebrating the appeal of open-top motoring. Victoria Macmillan Bell offers her personal impressions of driving convertibles, while Nick Swallow traces Bentley's impeccable track record in stylish dropheads.

Moving to warmer climes, Katie Boucher describes Abu Dhabi's ambitious plans to make itself a world cultural destination, while Lisa Grainger reports from Delhi, host of the second Cartier Concours d'Elegance. Meanwhile Tim Burt's travels take him to America, where the precious walnut tree burr root is sourced for veneers that will one day grace the fascia of a Bentley Mulsanne.

Our summer drive story covers the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, perfect terrain for a tour in the new Continental GT. And Julian Allason reminds us that grand touring doesn't have to end when the road does, thanks to a wide choice of outstanding yachts for charter from the Mediterranean ports. We hope that this issue inspires you to plan your next summer journey. By Bentley, naturally...

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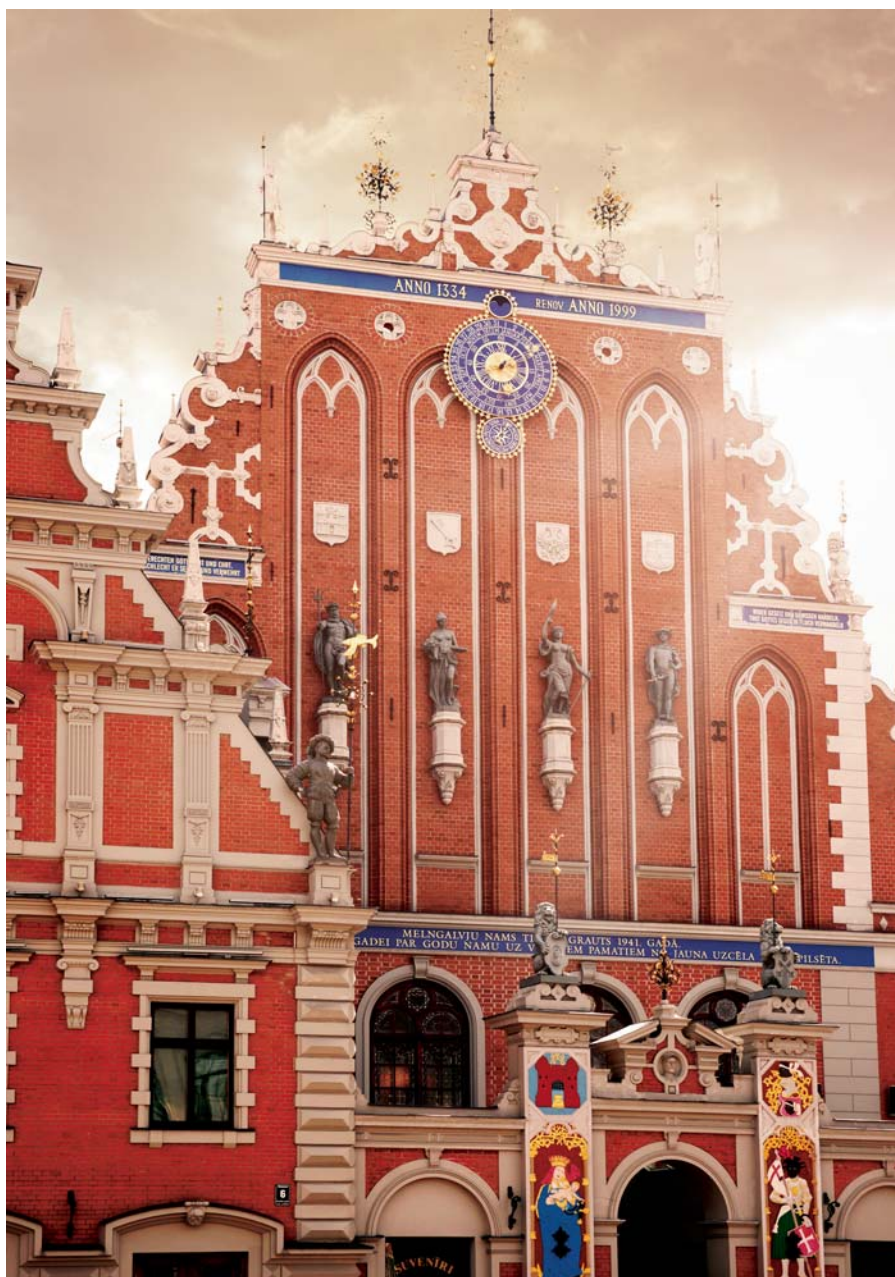






Baltic state of mind

VICTORIA MACMILLAN BELL EXPLORES LATVIA AND ESTONIA IN THE CONTINENTAL GT AND FINDS
A TREASURE-TROVE OF DELIGHTS – IN BOTH THE BENTLEY AND ITS EXOTIC SETTING >



Above left The 1344 House of Blackheads (Melngalvju nams) in Riga's Town Hall Square. Destroyed during the Soviet occupation, it has been lovingly recreated. Above right The sights, sounds, tastes and textures you'll encounter in Latvia and Estonia will soon have you planning a return visit.

Baltic state of mind *continued*

On the Czech airlines flight to Riga, capital of Latvia, we were lulled into the journey by a panpipe version of the soundtrack to the movie *Days of Thunder*, an ominous start to what would be a sublime journey around the Baltic coastline.

The Baltic States are made up of three countries, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Riga is not only the largest city in the Baltics but it is also the financial capital of the Baltic States, a bustling city of 800,000 inhabitants with a mix of emerging modernism and past cultures still heavy in the air and some of the nicest people you could wish to meet.

Recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, the city is home to some of the finest examples of Art Nouveau buildings in Europe, which stand alongside its magnificently restored medieval centre, where the spectacular House of the Blackheads stands on Town Hall Square. Looking across the river Daugava, construction is well under way on the new National Library, a strike of modernist architecture mirroring the more decorative.

If, like me, you are a foodie, a tour of these countries is a must, preceded perhaps by some gentle fasting and boot camp. Our first culinary port of call is Vincents, owned by chef Martins Ritins. Ritins, full of charm and warmth, is an exponent of the 'slow food' revolution; that is food that's locally grown and raised with a commitment to the environment and sustainability. And every

mouthful is a divine coalition for all the senses, course after course. The design and lighting within the restaurant simply ups the whole experience.

Before we head bed-wards we must try the national drink, Riga's Balzams 'Black Balsams'. Apologies Latvia, I can only liken the experience to swallowing coal-infused liquid mercury.

Early-morning sun flooded the courtyard and stepping out into the heat of the day (34°C) encouraged the pace somewhat to get into the air-conditioned comfort of the new Continental GT, which looks sharper and more arresting than ever following a little sculpting for 2012.

There's a cogent moment when you've slipped behind the wheel of this GT car, with the smallest of alterations to the driving position, you are at one with machine like a bespoke suit or as near as damn-it. We glide off across the cobbles and join Riga's rush hour, passing by Bentley's glass showroom on the banks of the river. Not a bad place to have your office.

Bentley Riga was opened in 2007 to serve as a sales and service point for luxury car owners in the Baltics. Despite the fact that Bentley was not represented in the area, there were more than 80 vehicles, mostly in Riga or near it. So it was logical to have brand representation in the city. The dealership is located on the busiest street in Riga in an exclusive single brand dealership.



A team of eight work there. Most of the customers are interested in the Continental range, with the GT being the favourite model. According to the dealership's owners, they appreciate the changes in the new Continental GT versus the previous one.

Valdis Spredzis, owner of the dealership, said: "We were more than pleased to have an event here in Latvia. It proved that we as Bentley dealers have done a great job to stimulate an interest in this region."

"Our team really enjoys helping to make a drive as smooth as possible. I think that visitors, when they come to Riga, are positively surprised about our city and our country. We hope people will find time in the near future to spend a longer vacation here."

Once out on the main road hugging the Gulf of Riga the GPS voice languidly wafted in with the words: "Keep going straight for a very long way."

And with that we sampled the colossal power of this super-sleek sports coupé. Whilst hundreds of acres of dense birch forest rushed by, the Bentley cabin remained an inner sanctum of peace and calm, reassuring its occupants of Crewe's devotion to luxury fit and finish.

Every now and then as we slow to pass through a village, the exhaust note resonates between the buildings, popping and gurgling in equal measure. Villagers point and smile; it's not every day you see a Bentley in the Baltics.

Focusing on the interior as we leave another village in our mirrors, the GT's touchscreen technology, designed exclusively by Bentley in Crewe, offers the very latest in navigation and infotainment.

British audio specialists Naim have developed an industry-first especially for the Continental GT via digital processing that 'virtually' alters the position of loudspeakers for the benefit of our aural pleasure. Think the finest acoustics in an unsurpassed setting and you've got it. A dab of the accelerator and we're

surging forth once more, the delivery of the engine's power seems unceasing and before long we arrive at the sailing town of Pärnu to lunch at the yacht club. We are now in Estonia.

Dinghy's are being rigged for battle on the water later but we will have to pass up the opportunity to spectate. We have our own boat to catch, one that takes cars across the Gulf of Riga.

Virtsu is the departure point from the mainland to Kuivastu on the island of Muhu. The ferry leaves exactly on time and the 30-minute passage across the bluest of blue Baltic water is millpond-smooth. In winter an ice road connects the island to the mainland.

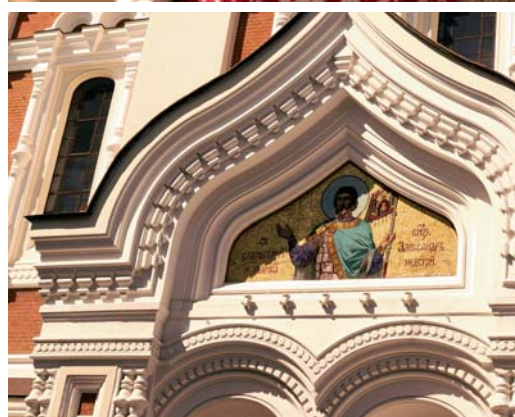
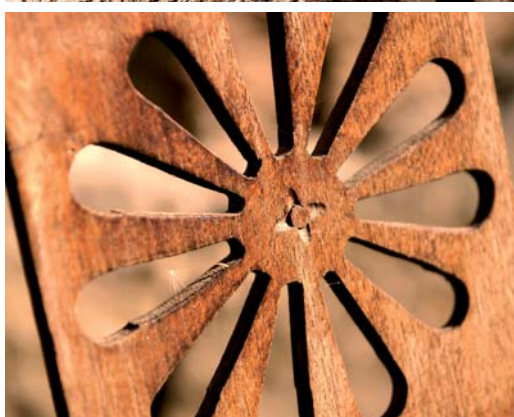
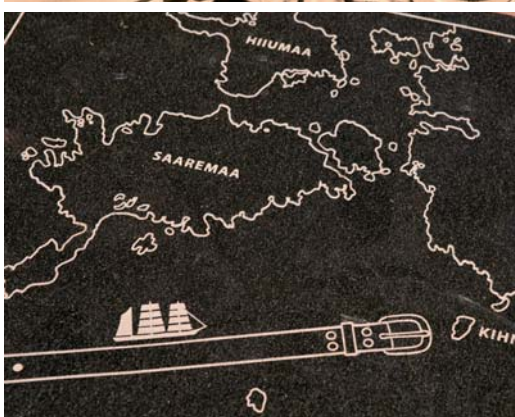
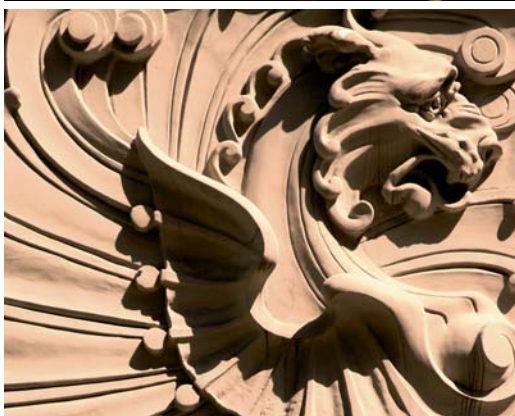
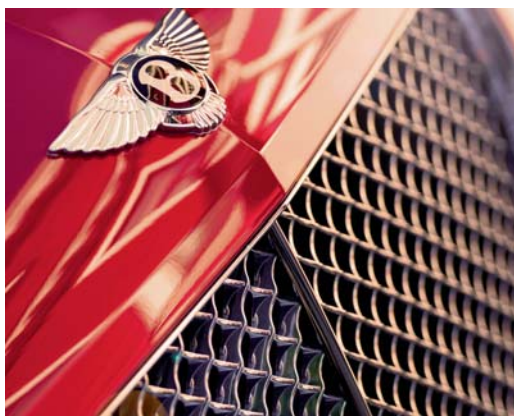
Lying off the Estonian coast, Muhu is known as 'the island where time rests'. So peaceful a place, it has the largest selection of orchids growing wild in the whole of Europe, some 23 species; they love it here and so do I – it is truly breathtaking.

A winding road takes us to the southern tip and Pädaste, where right on the shore sits Pädaste Manor, a beautiful small hotel where televisions rise out of cupboards, iPads abound in every room and the beds... well, I'll come to that in a minute.

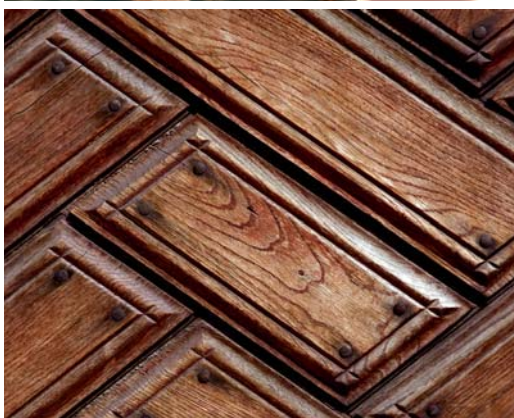
There are so many extraordinary features about the manor but one in particular will stay with me forever. His name is Peeter Pihel and he is head chef here at Alexander Restaurant. Voted Estonia's Chef of the Year for 2010, the 7-course tasting menu he and his team prepared was nothing short of astonishing.

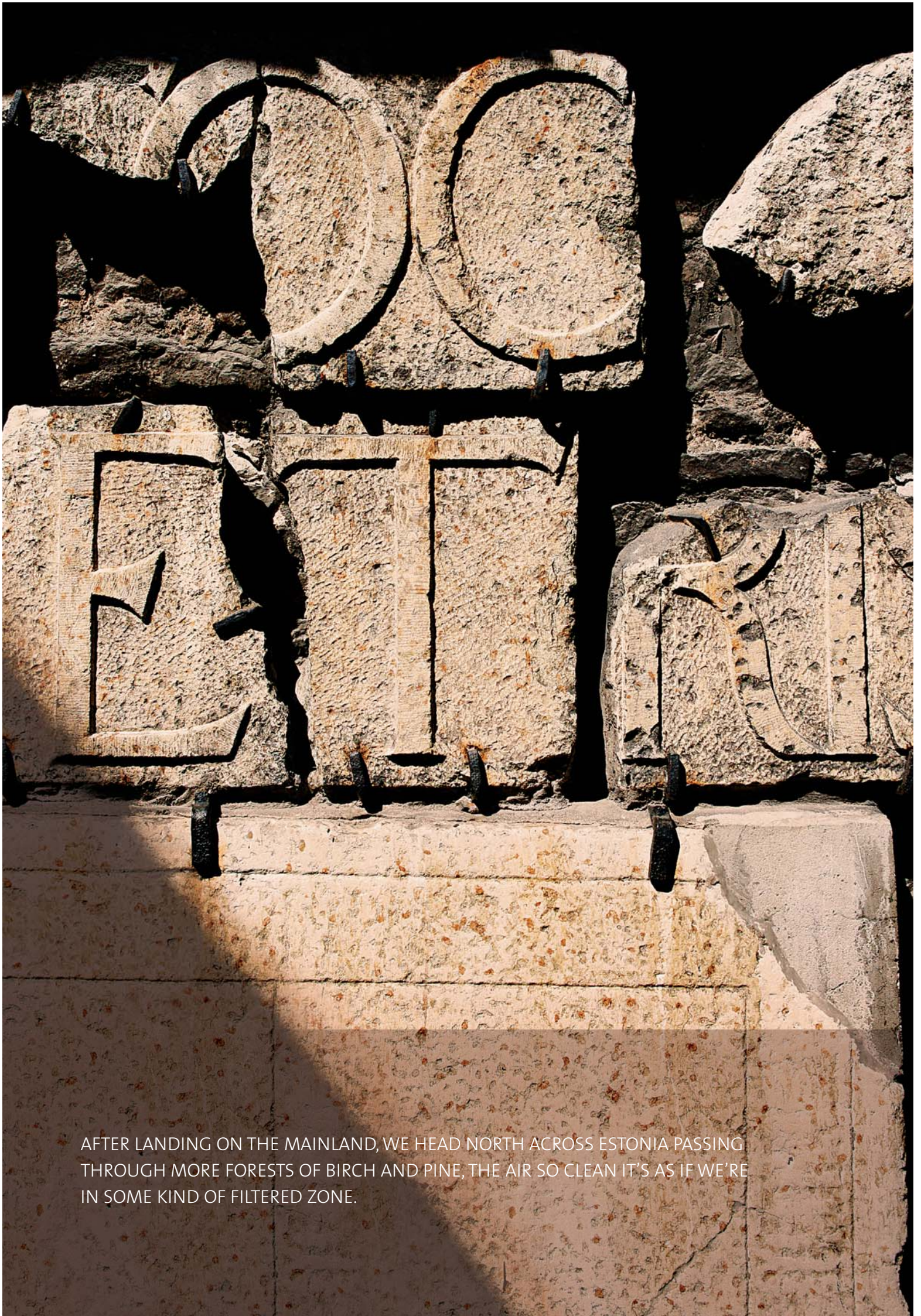
You think you've had the most exceptional meal you could possibly have and then on an island in the Baltic Sea, a foreign outpost like no other, culinary defibrillators set upon your taste buds. You could have your last meal here and you would depart this world a very contented person. The sweetest, most tender lamb, a clear tomato broth... I could go on.

Baltic state of mind *continued*



A THOUSAND SURPRISES The Baltic States are a melting pot of people and cultures, evidence of the shifting influences of Finland, Sweden, Germany and Russia over the centuries. Yet they proudly maintain their own cultural identities and traditions, welcoming each visitor with warmth and hospitality.





AFTER LANDING ON THE MAINLAND, WE HEAD NORTH ACROSS ESTONIA PASSING THROUGH MORE FORESTS OF BIRCH AND PINE, THE AIR SO CLEAN IT'S AS IF WE'RE IN SOME KIND OF FILTERED ZONE.



Left Tallin, Estonia's capital, offers a window on the past with its unspoiled streets and remnants of older cultures. **Above** Empty roads and pine forests make a grand tour worthy of a Bentley.

Baltic state of mind *continued*

I walk down towards the water from the hotel and sitting on the end of the jetty is a hot tub. I decide that I'm going to rise like Aphrodite the following morning and slip into the warm seawater whilst taking in the nature and tranquility that abounds here. Before this I must lay my head down in this magical setting and dream that I never have to leave.

The morning arrives alongside the realisation that I have failed to morph into Aphrodite and this is due entirely to three things, the gastronomic feast and accompanying wines we had the night before and the bed that is as good as your own, maybe better.

So, hard to leave but leave we must, this time in the Continental Flying Spur, which wafts us across the island to cross the sparkling waters of the Baltic Sea once more.

"The really great thing about these cars, apart from everything," I quote a friend now sitting in the passenger seat, such is the overwhelming feeling of sumptuousness.

The four-door Flying Spur is a different beast, without the out-and-out sporty persona of the Grand Tourer and yet that's exactly what it is. So easy to be in, with levels of interior space and refinement that are unmatched, and now with FlexFuel technology which allows the car to run on both petrol and biofuel without impeding performance.

After landing on the mainland, we head north across Estonia passing through more forests of birch and pine, the air so clean it's as if we're in some kind of filtered zone.

This requires another soundtrack. Spy music: it seems so apt as pine needles and sun-baked leaves are dispatched in the whirl of our afterburners.

In no time we have hit the outskirts of the city of Tallin, capital of Estonia and it's market day. Cobble streets weave around the city's buildings and walls of old stone and wood. Voted the European City of Culture this year, it is a melting pot of northern and central European cultures lying on the banks of the Gulf of Finland, just 50 miles south of Helsinki.

Amongst the terraces and sweet cafés sits the Telegraf Hotel, a contemporary residence right bang in the centre. But we dine at yet another shrine to this European corner of considerable gastronomic talent, restaurant Õ – one last feast for the senses here.

Walking back across the city, passing the market stalls in the midday heat and occasionally finding shade in a passage, I reflect on the past few days and wonder when I might be able to return and explore further this beautiful area of Northern Europe. Deciding exactly which spot to return to is the million-dollar decision but I think I have an idea **B**

Victoria Macmillan Bell is a freelance writer contributing to publications including Condé Nast Traveller, about all things motoring, travel and style.

Bentley Power on Ice

[2012]

THERE IS NOTHING QUITE LIKE DRIVING A BENTLEY. AND THERE IS EVEN LESS THAT
MATCHES THE THRILL OF DRIVING A BENTLEY ON ICE.

To celebrate the world record set earlier this year by Bentley when Juha Kankkunen, four times world rally champion, took a Bentley Supersports Convertible to over 205mph on the frozen Baltic Sea, Bentley invites you and your guests to join us for Bentley Power on Ice 2012.

Power on Ice, first introduced by Bentley in 2005, offers a truly remarkable vacation experience where you can enjoy the exhilaration of Bentley power and all-wheel drive capability on mirror-smooth ice and really get to grips with its extraordinary winter performance.

Power on Ice is set to run in three locations in 2012: Northern Europe, North America and China, taking in some of the most spectacular winter landscapes in the world. At each venue the Bentley team has created a unique ice driving experience, using tracks designed in collaboration with Juha Kankkunen.

Over three action-packed days you can hone your driving skills in the Arctic Circle, driving the latest Bentleys with our team of expert Bentley ice driving instructors.

As you would expect from Bentley, there will be luxurious and stylish accommodation, gourmet food and, above all, great company. After all, everyone will be a Bentley driver! ❸

This exclusive experience will have limited availability. Final dates and venues will be confirmed shortly. For further information go to www.bentleydriving.com

Pricing to be confirmed and subject to chosen venues and individual requirements, however it will be in line with previous Bentley Power on Ice activities.





Belgravia benchmark

THE HALKIN WAS ONE OF EUROPE'S FIRST BOUTIQUE HOTELS, OFFERING GUESTS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ANONYMOUS GLOBAL CHAIN SERVICE AND DÉCOR. AS IT CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY; **JULIA MAROZZI** SALUTES A LUXURY PIONEER >

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Belgravia benchmark *continued*



Left The Belgravia suite lounge is typical of the Halkin's relaxed yet contemporary ambience.

Below The award-winning nahm Thai restaurant is presided over by Australian chef David Thompson.



A 20th birthday can be an in-between sort of celebration. It is neither 21, the traditional age of maturity, nor 18, the year at which today's teens become fully adult. Or think they do. While Twenty Questions is still a popular party game, the Twenty Year Curse refers to the pattern of US presidents who were elected in 1840, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1940 and 1960, who all died in office. The pattern ended with Ronald Reagan in 1980. But 20 is also represented by the metal platinum, the gemstones emerald or yellow diamond and the day lily, so the year has a certain enduring quality, suggesting a milestone and a commitment.

All those descriptions would be true of The Halkin, which opened in September 1991 as Europe's first boutique design hotel. It is considered one of the founders of a trend that has redefined the luxury hotel industry. While the words 'boutique hotel' can strike terror into the hearts of travellers, conjuring up images of interiors so impossible to interpret and so difficult to navigate that the guest wishes only to exit, The Halkin puts the guest centre-stage and renders the hotel what it should be – a model of a small, luxury property that's individually designed and privately owned, with an obsessive approach to service that sets the standard for its class.

Walking into the lobby, the pale colours and calm interior are the perfect backdrop for the afternoon's Eurocrat and US guests, all taking tea and reclining in comfortable velvet chairs. Blond wood, cream walls, pale violet and mauve hues, glass-topped wooden tables in the bar area all suggest the 'Luxe, calme et volupté' of Matisse's famous painting.

The decor is classically contemporary, which sounds almost like a contradiction in terms, but in fact it offers the sort of refined ambience that puts people at ease, making them the focus, not the wallpaper or the lighting. The Halkin changed the face of hotel design and set a benchmark for many hotels that came afterwards, so its 20th birthday is a celebration of what makes it special.

Owned by the Singaporean businesswoman Christina Ong, the hotel spent about £1 million on each of the 41 guest rooms and suites designed by Laboratorio Associati Italy, with the aesthetic combining modern and classic with creamy, comfortable details and chic bathrooms in glistening white marble. It can boast that about 60 per cent of its clientele is made up of repeat customers. They comprise the hospitality industry's wish-list of guests, from artists to entrepreneurs to business leaders.

The Halkin is part of the Como group and represents Mrs Ong's unique vision of contemporary living. This encompasses the hospitality collection known as Como Hotels and Resorts, the international luxury fashion retailer Club 21, the award-winning wellness concept Como Shambhala and the philanthropic Como Foundation. As well as The Halkin in London, there are two Metropolitan hotels in London and Bangkok, Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos, Cocoa Island in the Maldives and two Uma experience resorts in Bali and Bhutan.

In a quiet side street in Belgravia, The Halkin's 20 years of timeless elegance carries the concept of discretion to the point where it can be difficult to identify it as a luxury destination from among the typical grand London terraced houses that surround it. Steps from the hustle of Piccadilly, the shopping paradises of Knightsbridge and Mayfair, it feels like a peaceful oasis in a land of bustling sybarites, with a residential feel and a comfortable appeal. As well as the relaxed bar on the left of the lobby there is also, ahead, the award-winning nahm Thai restaurant from Australian chef David Thompson.

Indeed, when the original design proposal was made in 1987 by Laboratorio Associati, the Milan-based studio of Lorenzo Carmellini and Rocco Manoli, it originally involved a renovation of the existing building, conserving the Halkin Street façade as the weathered brick and Portland stone of what was then a parking garage constructed as a typical 1930s Georgian Revival building. The design then evolved to become a completely new building, slightly larger than the then existing one, but still maintaining the essential scale and proportions of its precedent, as well as re-establishing the style and details of the external materials. The copper barrel-vaulted roof, a majestic feature echoing Palladio's Basilica in Venice, also recalls similar vaulted examples around Belgravia.

The building therefore remained faithful to its historical London context – at least on the outside. The interior is a completely different story, reflecting the owner's brief for an individual property that would be attractive to the international travellers who make London one of the world's leading cosmopolitan centres. Lying at the heart of The Halkin's design philosophy is the home away from home concept. The hotel offers not just a well-serviced luxury room but an effortlessly elegant and stylishly personal place to stay. The fact that each room cost more than



The Halkin aims to provide guests with a home away from home in the heart of London.
Above right Belgravia Suite bathroom.

Belgravia benchmark *continued*

£1 million in design and finish – 20 years ago! – gives an indication of the emphasis on the private experience rather than the public experience of the communal areas. On the fifth floor, the rooms all have vaulted ceilings and give you a sense of infinite space.

The Sky Scape mural was hand-painted by Italian contemporary artist Valentino Vago, with marble and terrazzo flooring in the lobby replicating the same pattern as Michelangelo's Campidoglio in Rome – the converging bands of the mosaic disappearing into abstractness but also marrying all of the public spaces to become one fluid area.

The striking corridor on the floors is created out of black corrugated wood so that the doors appear camouflaged, while the interiors – designed and styled by Renato de Marco – feature classic Italian designs with Art Deco and Biedermeier and modern classics such as Eames and Le Corbusier. Later additions include B&B Italia.

To celebrate its position as a pinnacle destination of luxe and style, The Halkin is launching a special series of 20th-birthday celebratory events to be held at the hotel through September.

Assouline will be creating an immersive pop-up 'Culture Lounge' – taking over the hotel bar to showcase some of the luxury Paris/New York-based publisher's most iconic coffee-table books. Guests and non-residents will be able to browse this bespoke library of new and limited editions and see recent titles brought to life through a series of literary events with selected authors.

"We are a publishing house obsessive about luxury," says Prosper Assouline, the company's founder. "This is our first London pop-up Culture Lounge and it is significant that we have chosen to work with a hotel that helped set a benchmark of luxury for the capital."

The Halkin will also be launching an exclusive afternoon tea menu featuring creations by Pierre Hermé Paris. Pronounced the 'Picasso of Pastry' by Vogue, he recently opened his first London Macarons & Chocolats

boutique on neighbouring Lowndes Street. The exclusive menu for the hotel features gourmand macaroons, cakes and preserves. It will be in place during September and October, and will be open to guests and non-residents.

September will also unveil the new 20th-anniversary suites at the hotel – two Como suites and one Belgravia suite on the second and third floors have been renovated and now include large spacious balconies overlooking the hotel gardens. Huge sitting rooms with glass conservatory-style windows make them some of the brightest, sun-drenched suites in London.

New 20th-birthday packages will also offer guests the chance as 'Families', 'Shoppers' and 'Gastronomes' to enjoy the best that London has to offer, combining those experiences with one-night stays.

The family package includes chocolate painting, dipping or chocolate bar making at Rococo Chocolates, or a four-course dessert bar meal at the new William Curley Bar on Ebury Street. The gastronomy package includes dinner at nahm, the Halkin's award-winning Thai restaurant, and a delectable experience at Pierre Hermé Paris Macarons & Chocolats boutique in Belgravia. For shoppers, there is a bespoke perfume consultation with Les Senteurs, a 'His & Hers' experience including private appointments at De Vroomen jewellers and Tomtom Cigars, and a 'Belgravia Sybarite' three-hour private shopping tour. This is a chance for guests to experience first hand why Belgravia is such an important neighbourhood, showcasing British heritage brands as well as contemporary and luxury London fashion of the coming season.

Other anniversary highlights to be announced July through to October will include the chance to win a dinner for 20 with vintage wines in the Private Dining Room at nahm.

Maybe 20 no longer looks so in-between. To those who visit The Halkin, it marks a decision of which way you are going – a milestone and a memorable destination **B**



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A man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark navy blue suit, a white shirt, and a diagonally striped tie, stands with his arms crossed. He is positioned in a modern office hallway with dark wood paneling and large windows in the background. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

Steiner's way

CALM, MEASURED AND THOUGHTFUL, BERND STEINER CONFORMS TO ALL THE STEREOTYPES OF A GERMAN BUSINESSMAN. YET IN BOTH HIS CAREER AND HIS CHOICE OF CAR, HE GOES HIS OWN WAY. NICK FOULKES PROFILES AN ECO-CONSCIOUS ENTREPRENEUR >



Below German-born Steiner has a refreshingly straightforward attitude to life, having grown up in far-from-affluent circumstances. His Bentley Continental GT is driven all year round, replacing two cars that previously occupied his garage.

Steiner's way *continued*

There may be Bentley drivers with a lower carbon footprint than Bernd Steiner but if there are I have yet to meet him or her. Granted, Steiner's motoring is not excessive: his longest trip at the wheel so far is no more than a couple of hundred kilometres. But while there will be some Bentley drivers who cover less distance, there cannot be that many who are behind such an impressive renewable energy project and, strictly speaking, it is not even a renewable energy source, rather a non-depletable one.

Although he was born in Germany's Black Forest and lives across the border near Zurich in Switzerland, Steiner has spent the last few years setting up a wind farm, quite literally at the other end of the earth in South Africa where, one hour east of Cape Town, there will stand 100 wind turbines. "My company Genesys will build the very first commercial wind farm in South Africa which will be capable of producing enough energy for more than 200,000 households."

Steiner is an entrepreneur who has made his own luck, his own money and his own way in life. Success does not always bring out the best in people, but its transformational power has left him agreeably unaltered. "My mother was a worker at a fabric company, we were four children, she was alone at work but we survived; it was really simple, I didn't grow up in a wealthy environment."

So not only was there no Crewe-built metal in the Steiner garage; there wasn't even a garage. "My mother had no car, absolutely no car," he says and when asked how he got around as a youngster, the answer is simple: "With the bus or train, of course." There is a pleasingly uncomplicated quality about Steiner. His first business was a retail franchise then in the mid-1990s he set up a magazine called Boom, which was aimed at the young entrepreneur, which I suppose means that you could call him the entrepreneur's entrepreneur. Boom was sold within a couple of years and since then Steiner has invested in various projects – among them Genesys, his stake in the company growing until he owned it.

He is also clearly a man unafraid of a challenge and a few years ago he was approached by a 'very enthusiastic South African man', but beyond the general vision, detail of how to carry out the project was, to say the least, hazy. What his South African partners had in enthusiasm for wind power, they lacked in specialist know-how.

"Most places now have experience of these ideas," he says, "but South Africa did not and we were able to optimise this as a Swiss company. South Africa has turned out to be a focal point with its strong growth." Nevertheless, potential is one thing and successful execution is another. "It took many years and there is a lot to say for it, there were many financial risks. A country like South Africa is in many ways a young country and we were taking a big risk. However, right from the outset we were very impressed by both the environment and its people and we put together a great local team. Even when a problem occurred, we were quick to overcome the barriers and cast aside the different ways of thinking. The difference between South Africa and Europe is striking, it is obvious even on the telephone; there are always delays on the line when you are talking to South Africa."

He went into the project under no illusions, was prepared for all sorts of difficulties and it has no doubt helped that he was prepared to give something back to the community, even before his business was fully up and running. "We have already started to build a healthcare centre in the region, because of the high rate of HIV positives in the area. It's a matter of contributing and giving something back to the people of Africa." And while his approach is a combination of enlightened self-interest, careful planning and a genuine desire to help, he likes to downplay his personal role. Instead, he sees the formula for success in simple terms: "Chance, luck and hard work equals opportunity," he says and he is happy to admit that "we had a lot of good luck."

And it is this affability and modesty that is apparent in his motoring choices. "My wife drives a Mini Cooper. We like it very much and at the time we had two other cars, a Porsche and a Mercedes but I wanted just one. I wanted a winter and a summer car. So I sold my Porsche and my Mercedes and I looked for a new one.

"I never planned to buy or own a Bentley. It was more by accident that I came across it. I went to the dealer and they showed me the Aston Martin, but I was not impressed; it was not elegant, not what I was looking for. So I told them I was



“IT’S NOT A FEELING OF BEING WEALTHY, IT IS MORE SUBTLE, A COMBINATION OF A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND APPRECIATION. I NEVER FORGET MY TIME AS A CHILD, SO MY MINDSET HAS NEVER CHANGED.”



Below An unassuming couple, the Steiners initially had reservations about choosing Bentley, but soon discovered that the Continental GT generates a positive reaction on the streets: "People smile, and this is different".

Steiner's way *continued*

not happy with this car. Then they asked if they could show me the Bentley. But I told them the Bentley was not in my range, not even in my mind. To be honest my first thoughts were that I was not completely happy about the Bentley because of its high price, and I wondered whether it was really appropriate to drive in Switzerland; I considered the neighbourhood, and the other drivers.

"Then I had a look."

As well as being a rational businessman, Steiner is also enough of a born entrepreneur to trust gut feeling and as anyone who has ever owned and enjoyed a Bentley knows, the decision to buy a Crewe-built motor is made with the heart as much as the head. You can almost hear the low whistle of appreciation that Steiner must have let out on first sight of his Bentley. "It was a nice, nice car! It looked much better than I expected. I took a look and everything was so fine, that I said to my wife 'this could be the car,' and on the same day, I signed a contract."

That was in 2008 and he has not once regretted his impulsive decision. "If I had a choice to change my car today, I would not. I would order exactly the same car, interior and exterior." Like generations of drivers before him, he has been seduced by the uniquely assured way in which the Bentley delivers its seemingly endless tide of torque. "When I am driving I feel confident and calm. There is double glass to protect you from the outside noise and I like to listen to classical music to calm down, to reflect on the day and to think. It moves perfectly and is really comfortable for long and short distances," whether he is

driving up winding roads into the mountains to St Moritz or on the autobahns in Germany. "I like to cruise in the car. I do not drive in sport gear. I like to drive smoothly. I am not a speeder," which given the level of fines in Switzerland is just as well.

And then there is the reaction of others to the car. If he had been concerned about the neighbours, he need not have worried. "Even in Switzerland, there are not a lot of Bentleys around. A lot of people show me a positive reaction. A lot of people put their thumbs up. I never got this reaction before. They all recognise that it's not showy, it's different. It's accepted by people, it's interesting. People smile, and this is different. Very young people smile, and I appreciate this."

"It is such an elegant car. I notice some respect when I am driving this car, but it's not a matter of showing people what a fine car I drive." For him the pleasure he takes in his Bentley is a personal matter: "It's more a matter that I drive it and I own it. It's not a feeling of being wealthy, it is more subtle, a combination of a sense of accomplishment and appreciation. I never forget my time as a child, so my mindset has never changed," even if his regular mode of transport has **B**

Nick Foulkes is co-founder and editor-in-chief of Finch's Quarterly Review, luxury editor of GQ, a columnist in Country Life and editor of Vanity Fair's ON TIME. His new book 'Gentlemen & Blackguards – Gambling Mania and the Plot to Steal the Derby of 1844' is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.





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NICK FOULKES:

Casual brilliance

A new aesthetic swept the world in the mid-70s – looser, bolder, unashamedly extrovert – and the jewellery of the time followed suit. It's now enjoying a long-overdue revival.

A couple of years ago I was in Venice for the film festival and, although I never made it to the movies, I managed to undertake a visit to Nardi in St Mark's Square. Nardi is one of the great names of European jewellery, a house famous for its Moretto brooches: Moorish torsos in a variety of different outfits, set with various precious stones and subject to a complex taxonomy following the names of famous Nardi customers.

I was looking for cufflinks. I had bought a few pairs of Nardi links at auction and, operating according to the old logic that if a few is good, a pair more is better, I asked to see the cufflinks. A covered tray was brought out from underneath the counter and the suede cloth was pulled back to reveal cufflinks that were either vintage or had plainly remained unsold since their manufacture. In particular my eyes alit on one pair, large uncut cabochons of turquoise set within mini mountains of textured yellow gold. I was transfixed. I had stumbled across that rarest of rarities, new old stock at one of the world's cult jewellers. Having left the jeweller's bench, these links had slumbered, unnoticed, for 30 or 40 years under Nardi's counter. Quite how Richard Burton, who used to be a big Nardi customer, missed them I will never know, but I am glad he did and I am glad that I came across them when I did.

I have long been an enthusiast for this intriguing period of history, bracketed by the oil shock of '73 and the arrival of the yuppies at the beginning of the 1980s. The fulcrum of world power shifted to the Middle East. Terrorism, whether perpetrated by the Red Brigades, the IRA or Baader-Meinhof gang, threatened the social order of life in Europe. While in the US, Watergate destroyed public faith in government and New York City flirted with bankruptcy.

Against this turbulent backdrop, and out of this cultural maelstrom, a new aesthetic was born and now, just as the fashions, the art and the cars of a hitherto derided decade have been rediscovered, so the jewellery of that era is

beginning to be revived. It was a time when jewellery and the way it was worn underwent a profound change. The great names in jewellery, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels et al, found themselves designing for a new, more casual client.

Of course cultural change does not happen in a vacuum and, as Nicolas Bos, creative director of Van Cleef & Arpels points out: "The jewellers of that time were continuing something that had already started in the 1960s, but while the jewellery of the 1950s and 1960s had been very structured, in the designs of the '70s we start to see an influence that was already seen in fashion and film, of a rediscovery of Asian culture, of eastern philosophy and approach to lifestyle."

"When it came to jewellery that meant different ways to wear it, much more freedom and the rediscovery of a wide spectrum of stones: onyx, coral, amethyst, citrine, turquoise, tiger's eye, all set in the warm rich tones of yellow gold."

One jeweller whose work is enjoying a revival of interest is Aldo Cipullo, who was active in New York during the 1970s and is best known for the love bangle which he designed for Cartier. "I strongly believe in Aldo Cipullo in terms of the history of jewellery. If people recall one piece of jewellery it is the love bangle and that is pretty bloody rare in the jewellery world," says London dealer Harry Fane. Fane has also found that the nail bangles, another Cipullo design, have started to enjoy a revival among a few fashion-forward men and women.


Fane's showroom on Duke Street, St James's is just round the corner from Jermyn Street which was the epicentre of '60s and '70s London jewellery when Andrew Grima had his shop there. In many ways Grima drew the roadmap for the direction that jewellery would take: employing time-intensive artisanal techniques and using conventionally precious stones merely to accent huge semi-precious stones.

He also whipped up a cult of the personality that can be compared to that surrounding the jeweller JAR today. "The demand for second-hand

Grima is very strong at the moment," says London-based dealer Nick Silver, "especially the things from the '60s and the '70s."

Alas, Grima did not drive a Bentley but many of his clients did and his shop on Jermyn Street was as chic and as avant-garde as his designs, which found favour with the Queen and Prince Philip, the Snowdons and their court jester Peter Sellers, Ursula Andress and countless others.

Grima's designs were extremely sui generis and instantly recognisable, moreover he was, says Keith Penton, head of jewellery at Christie's, extremely good at his own marketing, which is why, he says, there has always been interest in his work. It is this enduring goodwill, not to mention the originality of the Grima look, that has encouraged his widow Jojo and their daughter Francesca to re-establish the name back in London, where, as well as introducing new designs, they have also recreated one of the Grima classics of the late 1960s, a necklace of textured strands of gold wire set with a small constellation of diamonds.

It is the boldness of this piece, and similar signature pieces from other great names, that is leading the renewal of interest in the high jewellery of the period. "If it is signed by a good house then it is never going to be completely overlooked," says Penton, describing the bold and often uncompromising jewellery designs of the period as 'catwalk jewellery', signalling its capability to command the attention that is making it so popular. "It shows up, whereas the belle époque jewels which we love don't show up enough; they are too delicate for today's taste, whereas these pieces just stand out. They are funky... not a word I use very often." 

Above Quintessential Bond girl Ursula Andress models Grima earrings and necklace; Jojo and Francesca Grima's jewellery provides a modern take on the classic Grima style; Andrew Grima at work.



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The sensations of open-top motoring continue to enchant successive generations of drivers. Whether it's the thrill of a wind-in-the-hair, cross-country blast or a gentle cruise along the boulevard, a convertible evokes emotions like no other car >

1. SHOOTING THE BREEZE

From the Mille Miglia to Mulholland Drive, a convertible says a lot about the person behind the wheel, suggests **Victoria Macmillan Bell**.

There is something unutterably liberating about driving late at night, roof down, under the stars, alone in your thoughts. It's as if you've been teleported to a parallel universe, everything the same and yet different. The air seems cleaner, the ambiance more serene but there is also an element of risk, fun risk, call it adventure. Habitually, a roof is taken back only in fine weather; the idea of driving in the pitch black of night is inconsistent with the stereotypical convertible driver.

The same could be said of driving in winter with the roof down. On a crisp day, even under overcast skies, there's nothing quite like blasting out across the countryside to clear the head and blow the cobwebs away. All this is made so much more pleasurable of course with the aid of modern luxuries such as heated seats and heated steering wheels and, in some cases, the option also to have that heat focused around your neck.

As drivers and passengers we're less exposed to the elements now too with occupant and pedestrian safety legislations demanding a redesign of the cabin, generally now higher sided for

increased protection. Wind deflectors come as standard on even the most basic convertible today – gone are the days of hanging on to the toupee and the chignon – all of which makes roof-down driving a breeze. Pardon the pun.

To say we've come a long way is an understatement. Twenty years ago, the convertible would have been brought out of the garage and then the 15-minute fiasco of roof dismantling would take place. First unclip the roof, then with all your might, pull it back as far as you can until the largest components holding the canvas up are almost flush with the surface of the car. Locate the stowed cover and clip the poppers together.

Drive two miles down the road en route to picnic with friends and you're lamenting the decision you made to faff about taking the roof down when the weather forecast was anything if not 100 per cent uncertain.

A storm cloud bursts. You're in queuing traffic and not going fast enough for the rain to bounce off the top of the windshield, missing the occupants, but neither are you going slowly enough to get out

and run alongside the car to yank the roof back up whilst the Steering Committee drives.

Far simpler, in 2011 you buy a car that can be both a convertible and a closed coupé with a touch of a button. But what of the romance and glamour of convertibles of old? My own abiding memory is the experience of driving my first ever Mille Miglia around Italy in a 1957-built Jaguar XKSS. From Brescia to Brescia via Rome, Florence and Siena, through heat and dust, snow and rain we charged around the hills day and night with spectators lining the route cheering and the Carabinieri egging us on.

I didn't mind the engine oil that had hit my face as I leant out to get a better view of a corner ahead, nor did I mind the flies that crashed into my forehead. Exposed as you are to the elements, raindrops turned into glass-like shards but this was the perfect embodiment of the event. It's an adventure and a huge privilege to be able to soak up the atmosphere with nothing between you and the carriage of proceedings. The experience I don't doubt would have been quite different had

TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE WHERE YOU ARE YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO SENSE, SMELL AND UNDERSTAND YOUR ENVIRONMENT. OF COURSE DOING THIS IN A CONVERTIBLE SHARPENS ALL THESE MOMENTS TENFOLD.



we been in a closed car, not in a negative way, just different. In a convertible you're a part of your surroundings; in a closed car you're inside, almost tucked away within the confines of your space.

And yet from the outside, when you see movies such as *To Catch a Thief* with Grace Kelly driving a Sunbeam Alpine convertible, it would appear she was encased in glass, almost untouchable such was the serenity of the picture. And from serene beauty to other iconic screen moments, such as Dustin Hoffman driving his Alfa Romeo Spider Duetto in *The Graduate*, Thelma and Louise scooping Brad Pitt into the back of their 1966 Ford Thunderbird and the devil-may-care attitude of Kelly McGillis racing away from Tom Cruise in a Porsche 356 Speedster in *Top Gun*.

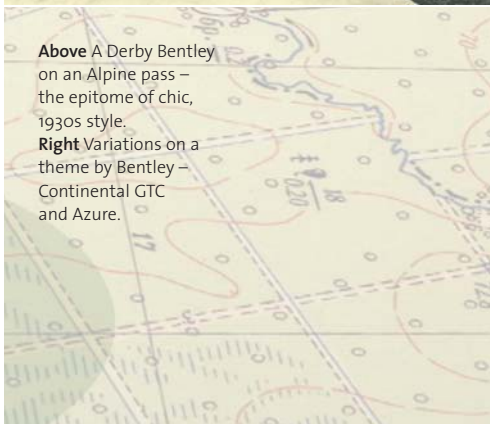
Watching these unforgettable moments in film makes you want to be the stars themselves; you desire to be as untouchable as Grace and as gutsy and strong-willed as Kelly in those cars and scenes. The way F. Scott Fitzgerald gave Gatsby his material possessions such as his convertible car was a symbolic nod. He had arrived and he had a certain status to uphold. The open-top car was the perfect talisman.

The whole philosophy behind these scenes is that it's cool to be in a convertible, your status becomes just that little bit different. Stars of stage, screen and film are constantly being photographed in them, musicians write about them, wrappers 'name-check' the manufacturer and the video footage that fronts the song will undoubtedly feature the artistes, roof-down, cruising along Mulholland Drive or Sunset, delighting in the scene they've created.

A convertible now, with all the comfort on board, offers a no-excuse go-anywhere ticket, day or night, winter or summer. Hugging the California coastline and following Highway 1 is an experience not to be missed. Also known as the Pacific Coast Highway, on one side you have the azure blue Pacific and the other side is filled with giant redwood trees and lush forest near the



Above A Derby Bentley on an Alpine pass – the epitome of chic, 1930s style.
Right Variations on a theme by Bentley – Continental GTC and Azure.



Marin County part of the route but also takes in San Francisco, Big Sur and Santa Barbara.

A drive through the Blue Mountains of Australia offers a stunning glimpse of the interior of this wild area of New South Wales. The smell of the gum trees, the mountains that really do take on a blue hue as the sun slips behind the trees and the vines that grow here in the Hunter Valley and provide many of Australia's best known wines are all around.

The area is dotted with small boutique hotels that were once Colonial homes, so the idea of enjoying a wine tasting or adding new routes to your trip is made that much easier. Conversely, driving around the peaks of Europe in winter is breathtaking. The hot air balloon festival at Château d'Oex is an incredible sight and just down the road is the pretty resort of Gstaad, so a few days skiing is something to consider.

Driving is in my view the best way to see the world. To be able to experience where you are you need to be able to sense, smell and understand your environment. Of course doing this in a convertible sharpens all these moments tenfold.

You buzz, you feel alive and connected to everywhere you go, free of cares and constraints; it is an unmatched experience. But the great thing is that even on days when you may not be feeling your most stylish, sexy or cool, it matters not a bit. Press the button and let the roof take care of the outside world.

My ideal convertible would offer the best of both worlds; the visceral delight of a powerful, responsive sports car, magnified a hundred-fold by the sensation of the open air, together with the privacy and comfort of a coupé for when the weather turns. And something tells me that in a place called Crewe, that's precisely what they make... **B**

Victoria Macmillan Bell is a freelance writer contributing to publications including Condé Nast Traveller, about all things motoring, travel and style.

2. FAST, BUT NOT FURIOUS

Nick Swallow celebrates the timeless style and glamour of the Bentley convertible.

It is possible to drive rapidly in a Bentley convertible. Extremely rapidly, if you're a former world rally champion four times over and you fancy setting a new ice speed record, as Juha Kankkunen did recently at the wheel of a Continental Supersports Convertible. For the record Mr Kankkunen managed a scarcely believable 205.48mph across the frozen Bay of Bothnia, which is a tad too fast for hood-down, wind-in-the-hair motoring, especially at minus 30°C.

But while you can drive a Bentley convertible quickly at any time the mood takes you, you can also take your time. Ease off the throttle and give the folks strolling along the pavements a chance to take in the sculptured lines of a Crewe-built open tourer. What a delightful change from their everyday visual diet of white vans, fume-belching delivery trucks and anonymous mass-produced

cars! You could think of it as a kind of public service. Patients in hospitals are said to recover faster when surrounded by works of art, so it's only a matter of time before someone on a sizeable research grant proves that seeing a rare and beautiful car like a Continental GTC lifts the spirits of onlookers as well as those of its driver. It certainly does mine.

There is a serious point to be made here. Drive a saloon or a coupé and you're immersed in a world of your own. A very pleasant world, if it's a Bentley, but the physical barrier of glass and steel between you and the outside world nonetheless creates a sense of distance. By contrast, settle into the welcoming leather upholstery of a Bentley convertible, press the button that sweetly and effortlessly removes the insulated fabric roof from your field of view, and instantly you're part of the scene. It's up to you to live up to the setting



IT'S A RECURRENT THEME: FROM FLAPPERS TO RAPPERS, A BENTLEY CONVERTIBLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE GRAND TOURER OF CHOICE FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO BOTH SEE AND BE SEEN.



with style; and that's something that Bentley owners have managed very well, down the years.

Take that loyal Bentley owner, James Bond. In *Thunderball*, Fleming describes how Bond took a crash-damaged Continental along to Mulliners, together with £3,000, half his total capital: 'They had sawn off the old cramped sports saloon body and had fitted a trim, rather square convertible two-seater affair, power-operated, with only two large-armed bucket seats in black leather. The car was painted in rough, not gloss, battleship grey and the upholstery was black morocco. She went like a bird and a bomb and Bond loved her more than all the women at present in his life rolled, if that were feasible, together.' A satin finish Bentley, some 50 years before the factory offered it as an option on the Continental Supersports? Well, Bond always was a trend-setter.

Sadly, Bond's predilection for Bentleys didn't make it from the books to the movie versions, but there's a splendid cameo for a stylish Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Park Ward Drophead in *From Russia with Love*. Bond is entertaining the lovely Sylvia Trench at an intimate country picnic when his beeper goes and he strolls to the car, wearing little more than a pair of boxer shorts, to take a call from Moneypenny (in 1963 car phones were even rarer than M15

agents, so we can forgive the cumbersome black handset and coil of phone lead). Call dealt with, Bond returns to the matter in hand, "Now, about that lunch..." Saving the world from the evil Rosa Klebb could wait, clearly; a Bentley owner like Bond only hurries when he wants to.

In the very early days of Bentley a convertible was the obvious sporting choice; saloon bodies added weight and aerodynamic drag, which is why of the six Le Mans victories recorded by Bentleys, only one – the 2003 win – was achieved by a closed-cockpit Bentley. But by the 1930s and what's sometimes called the golden age of coachbuilding, the coupé had become the choice of the performance-focused owner, leaving the drophead to take centre stage as the epitome of glamour and style. There are some beautiful publicity shots of the era showing Derby-built Bentley convertibles in the Alps, or overlooking the harbour at Monte Carlo, where the dress and hairstyles of the car's occupants are as chic and as stylish as those of any contemporary Hollywood starlet. From Mulliner to Park Ward, Thrupp and Maberley to Gurney Nutting, the independent coachbuilders produced some stunning Bentley convertibles throughout the era, to be seen and admired – along with their occupants – anywhere from London's West End to the Côte d'Azur.

It's a recurrent theme: from flappers to rappers, a Bentley convertible has always been the grand tourer of choice for those who wish to both see and be seen. Arguably post-war Bentley convertibles slowly became more boulevardier than sports car, although coachbuilt models like the slant-headlight S3 Continental drophead remain icons of 1960s style and are highly sought-after today. But it took the company's change of ownership in 1998 to return the duality of character to a Bentley convertible: effortlessly fast on the run down the autoroutes from northern France to Cannes, effortlessly stylish when wafting along the Croisette.

So if your name is Kankkunen and it's a bit nippy out, by all means give your Bentley convertible a full-throttle workout. It's built and tested to take such extremes of performance in its stride. But if not, and if the sun's shining, then relax, drop the hood and take in your surroundings, while allowing your surroundings to take a peek at you. You're in a Bentley, after all – so what's the hurry? **B**

Nick Swallow is a freelance writer, automotive aficionado and long-time admirer of Bentleys both past and present.

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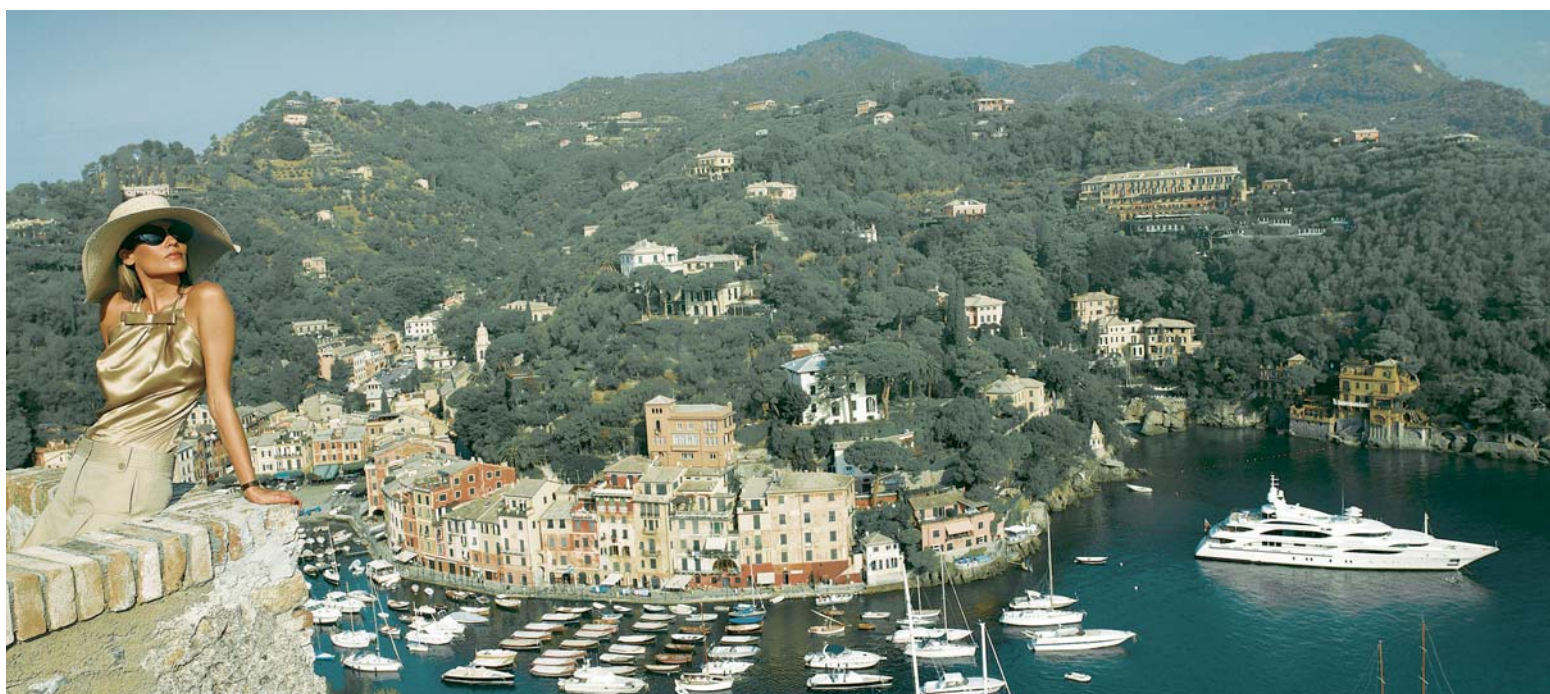
From tours to tides

GRAND TOURING DOESN'T HAVE TO END WHEN THE ROAD REACHES THE QUAYSIDE. JULIAN ALLASON EXAMINES YOUR OPTIONS FOR MEDITERRANEAN CRUISING FROM CHIC PORTS AND HARBOURS, WITH YOUR BENTLEY READY AND WAITING WHEN YOU RETURN TO SHORE >



Below The delectable setting of Portofino on the Italian Riviera.
Right On-deck Jacuzzi is a feature of the Benetti Mediterranean motor yacht Andreas L.

From tours to tides *continued*



It is no coincidence that the most romantic small harbours and chicest ports are to be found at the end of Europe's grand touring routes: the winding Col du Turini, final leg of so many Monte Carlo rallies, reaches its natural conclusion with lunch at Le Grill on the eighth floor of the Hotel de Paris overlooking Monaco's Port Hercules. Equally enchanting is Portofino, terminus of the Stradali Aurelia cornice along Italy's Ligurian coast south of Genoa. As for Saint-Tropez, the Provençal switchback down through Cézanne country via Ramatuelle remains a driver's delight that bypasses supercar gridlock on the better known Route du Golfe. Likewise, the legendary Nastro Azzurro south from Capri concludes – after a pitstop for Bellinis in Positano – on the dock of the medieval port of Amalfi.

Awaiting in each marina could be a handsome yacht, gleaming white in complement to the British Racing Green or Le Mans Blue of a Bentley convertible. Three-masted schooner or 40m superyacht? Both offer the continuation of the grand tour by other means – and a sublime experience of freedom exercised in a style which would be difficult to better. The precedents are good. In the 1930s dashing figures like Ian Fleming and Lord Strathcarron raced through France in 4½-litre Bentleys bearing the coveted Black Label badge, bound for the French and Italian Rivas – and onward by sea to Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily. When, half a century later, the ineffably glamorous Sir Gavin and Lady (Suzy) Lyle hurtled through the Alpes Maritimes in a 1960 Alpine Grey S2 Continental Carbriole peasants threw their berets in the air in salutation of 'le milord fou' (crazy nobleman) – or possibly from sheer terror. The destination was the old port of Villefranche where, then as now, yachts ride at anchor in sheltered Baie L'Espalmador and cold lobster is served with aioli and even colder rosé in the evening sunshine.

What has restored the dream of classic elegance is an increase in the number and range of yachts available to charter this year – and the institution of seamless car-door-to-gangplank service by specialist managers like Burgess Yachts. Just leave the Mulsanne on the dock to be cared for and delivered to your next port o' call. No one should disembark from a beautiful yacht into a rental car when one's own Bentley could be waiting in Amalfi ready to make a triumphal entrée to Ravello above. Wagner was so taken by the town and its hillside setting overlooking the Tyrrhenian coast that

he was inspired to use it for the stage design of *Parsifal*, and literary and musical Italians continue to celebrate at parties thrown in Roman and medieval sites. From Villa Cimbrone's breathtaking Terrace of Infinity, lined with the busts of the Ceasars, I watched an owner direct a photoshoot by walkie-talkie to his yacht 1,200 feet below: "Avanti! 15 gradi a starboard. Perfetto!". Snap, snap, snap.

There is a further advantage in driving a car that draws the respect of Italians, especially those from the Mezzogiorno, where monarchist sympathies and admiration for la bella figura (putting on a good show) are engrained. Try parking a rental Fiat outside Ravello's glorious Hotel Caruso Belvedere, created by the family of the immortal tenor, and the car will swiftly disappear into private parking. Not the Bentley though. "Lei è troppo bella per nascondere," smiles general manager Franco Girasoli. "Too beautiful to be hidden." Where better to take in the panorama of the coast than from the hotel's open-air Belvedere restaurant surrounded by ancient roses and a Roman column or two?

"The best of land and sea – that is the point of cruising," observes Alev Karagulle, Marketing Director of Burgess Yachts. For while some foreign owners disappear onto their boats, rarely to emerge on deck, Europeans embrace the whole experience: the clamour that accompanies docking in a charming small harbour like Portofino; the impossibly stylish boutiques, relaxed waterside bars and the stroll up to the grand hotel – in this case the venerable Splendido – to dine and dance under the stars. Cruising last year aboard the 43m Palmer Johnson displacement yacht Pure Bliss, Captain Sandy Yawn anchored up in the bay off the town, where we could gaze down upon her from the outdoor massage tables of the Splendido. For owners and charterers such port calls serve a further purpose, providing the opportunity to rotate the complement of guests on a voyage topped and tailed by a stay at a destination glamorous in its own right. Of which Italy and France are multiply blessed. La dolce vita at Porto Ercole anyone?

With such temptations to linger, cruising needs to run on a flexible timetable, another argument in favour of having arrangements superintended by one of the handful of experienced international yacht managers and charter brokers like Burgess Yachts, Edmiston & Company,

THERE IS ALSO THE SMALL MATTER OF ADVICE, TO WHICH END A FIRST-TIME CHARTERER IS SUBJECTED TO AN ENJOYABLE INTERROGATION ABOUT THEIR PLEASURES, CULINARY TASTES – AND ECCENTRICITIES OF GUESTS TO BE ACCOMMODATED.





Above Burgess' Twizzle is a high performance, high tech 57.49m sailing yacht with all the comfort and luxury of a motor yacht.

From tours to tides *continued*

or Camper & Nicholsons. There is also the small matter of advice, to which end first-time charterer is subjected to an enjoyable interrogation about their pleasures, culinary tastes – and eccentricities of guests to be accommodated. Foremost are questions of size and budget. These days superyachts are considered to be those of 40m and above. With ingenious naval architecture and sassy interior design 10 passengers (plus crew) can be accommodated in comfort within this length, 12 aboard a slightly larger boat. In practice a dozen is the maximum complement for other than inshore cruising for reasons of certification and insurance. Many owners consider eight to be the magic number socially and to achieve seclusion, two the most romantic.

Naturally there are bigger boats available to charter, including the magnificent 78m vintage steam yacht SS Delphine, built in 1920 and now magnificently restored. From its base in Monte Carlo it can cruise with parties of up to 28 passengers or accommodate no fewer than 160 on inshore day expeditions – fun for wedding receptions and the like but not perhaps the ideal complement to a Bentley grand tour. Largest of all is Roman Abramovich's 'megayachtsky', the 163.5m Eclipse which comes complete with twin everything: two helicopters, two pools and reportedly two anti-paparazzi laser cloaking devices. Such vessels can easily accommodate cars, as indeed the lamented Royal Yacht Britannia carried a Phantom V. More recently Prince Jefri Bolkiah of Brunei equipped his yacht with a rotating garage of cars including a brace of Bentleys.

A more useful size, since they can tie up at interesting small ports, is 60m, the length of Andreas L, a Benetti Mediterranean motor yacht sporting one of the largest armories of marine toys, and the CMN yacht Cloud 9, a relaxed boat that took the Australian owner's beach house as the design model. Interior styling has diverged sharply in the past few years with European commissions reflecting a pared-down, more laid-back look in comparison with shinier Middle Eastern tastes and the more ornate style preferred in the United States. As there is no star system it is essential to heed the advice of an experienced broker adept at matching client to yacht – and optimising the itinerary. For those uncertain of their sea legs, Burgess' Alev Karagulle recommends starting with the Cote d'Azur, which involves no deepwater cruising. Memorable restaurants like the Colombe d'Or with Matisse, Picasso and Miro adorning the walls, romantic hill villages, the glamour of Cap Ferrat and Cap d'Antibes with its incomparably stylish Hotel du Cap Eden Roc – every door can be opened by an experienced captain and crew backed up by a formidable organisation ashore. Truly the grand tour by sea **B**

Julian Allason writes about luxury and adventure travel for the Financial Times 'How To Spend It' magazine.

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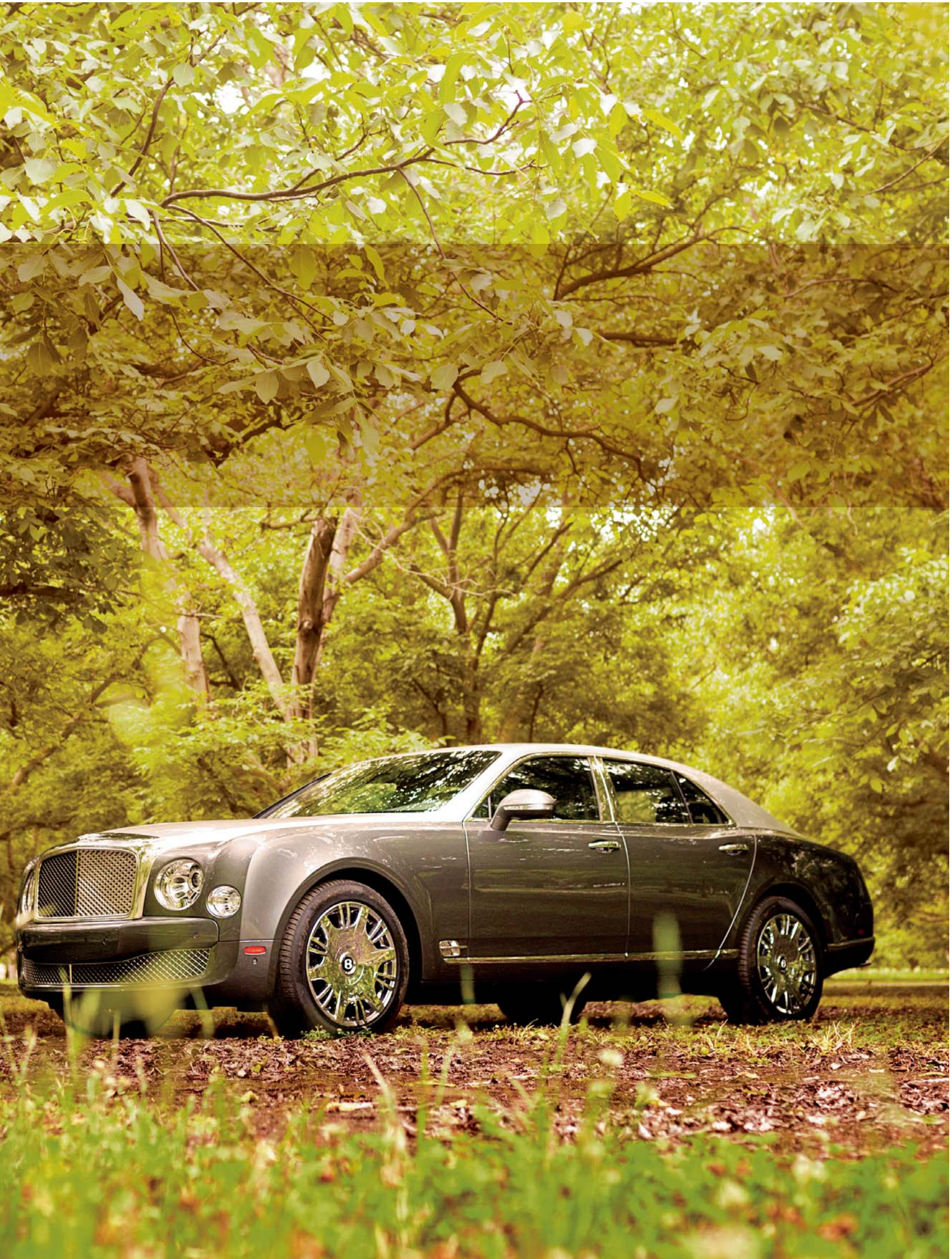
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Ingrained expertise

EVEN WHEN IT'S FRESH OFF THE LINE, THERE'S ONE PART OF A BENTLEY THAT'S ALREADY OVER 80 YEARS OLD. **TIM BURT** DESCRIBES THE LONG AND CAREFUL JOURNEY OF BENTLEY'S FINE WOOD VENEERS, FROM WALNUT ORCHARD TO CREWE >





Left Cyrus Jones, whose orchard yields a crop even more precious than the walnuts he harvests. **Right** Woodsman Frank Wilson examines his prize – the sought-after burr growth at the foot of the walnut tree.

Ingrained expertise *continued*



Cyrus Jones shoves his gnarled hands deep into his jeans and contemplates the Mulsanne. More than two tonnes of British engineering has rolled into Cyrus' orchard, mid-way between the Rockies and the Pacific. The 81-year-old farmer, who inherited the smallholding from his father, considers the car from a number of angles. He examines the engine, runs his hand over the fascia and tries the driving seat for size.

"Ain't that a car," he says, rasping. "Got myself a truck up at the house, buried behind all the junk; not that I drive anymore."

When Cyrus first started farming this orchard, Dwight Eisenhower was President. "Used to be fruit and cottonwood round here," he adds. "Now we shake nuts from the trees, at least from the 28 acres still producing."

Cyrus is worried about oak-root fungus. The disease curtailed last year's walnut harvest, yielding a crop of less than 700lb. This year, some of the older trees may not survive. Yet Cyrus has something extremely valuable, hidden from view towards the back of the orchard.

And Bentley wants it.

The Mulsanne parks beside Cyrus' prized possession, a large tree of the same vintage as its owner. The Bentley, its 6.75-litre engine cooling down, is flanked by two obese pick-up trucks that escorted the car off the road – the end of a 5,500-mile journey from the assembly line in Crewe.

There are no signposts, and barely a track to where the elderly orchard-owner is waiting. A burly woodsman – almost half Cyrus' age and twice his size – is raking dead grass away from the tree. Frank Wilson leans on the rake and explains: "The more muscle in the tree, where the root tangles with the grain, the tighter the pattern inside. It looks as if a cow wandered up and took a shit on the trunk. But this is like gold."

A couple of Frank's workmates, sizing up the walnut, laugh at the analogy. But they know he is right. Each member of the crew, who travel from Oregon to Idaho in search of trees, recognise the 'special one' when they see it.

For these are the log-hunters: the timber industry's equivalent of the legendary "rabassiers", the Provençal truffle detectives. Like the truffle experts, the log-hunters work in secret, guarding their woodland knowledge. Each day, they cover up to 500 miles searching for the right quality walnut, maple or oak, from which to source fine veneers for the world's luxury carmakers.

In this part of America, the log hunters are also called stumpers – reflecting their passion for the base of the tree. The upper trunk, where the grain runs straight, is of little interest; it might be used for furniture, or just firewood. The real value lies close to the orchard floor, where dense burls can make a tree worth up to \$50,000.

As with any rare commodity, the combination of rising demand and dwindling supply attracts rogue traders and a black market. Walnut trees are no exception. In recent years, log thieves have targeted older stocks. So the stumpers demand absolute secrecy about the exact location of Cyrus' smallholding. They demand anonymity for the nearest town, the region and even the state.

"It's a pretty old orchard and it's about ready to pull out," says Cyrus, who's lost most of his teeth but none of his faculties. "I just don't know what it will take to part with it."

A short while later, sipping a beer over a steak sandwich, Frank claims that good-quality walnut is becoming rarer – even without the log thieves. Setting his bottle on a table mat advertising 'Buckaroo Tattoos', he says that modern farming techniques are reducing the burl-growth that make Bentley veneers so distinctive.

These days, walnut farmers rely on hybrid strains that require less irrigation. The newer orchards are also grown closer together, increasing the nut yields. Their trunks are white and true, with few of the deformities – the burls – that occur in orchards where Persian walnut roots were grafted to black walnut saplings.

"There's fewer and fewer burls left, so prices are rising," says Frank. "So we have to be real careful about pulling them out. We don't want to damage other trees and end up paying for them too."

Once a tree is identified, a price agreed and certification of ownership signed, the stumpers will bring an excavator into the orchard. First they 'top' the tree, removing the upper branches and much of the trunk. Carefully, Frank and his team then cut around the roots. "And we just push the tree over, cut the neck with a chain saw and send that little piggy off to market."

The market, in this case, is thousands of miles away in southern Spain. After a 40-day ocean journey, the decapitated American tree trunks are delivered to a dusty industrial estate on the outskirts of Valencia.

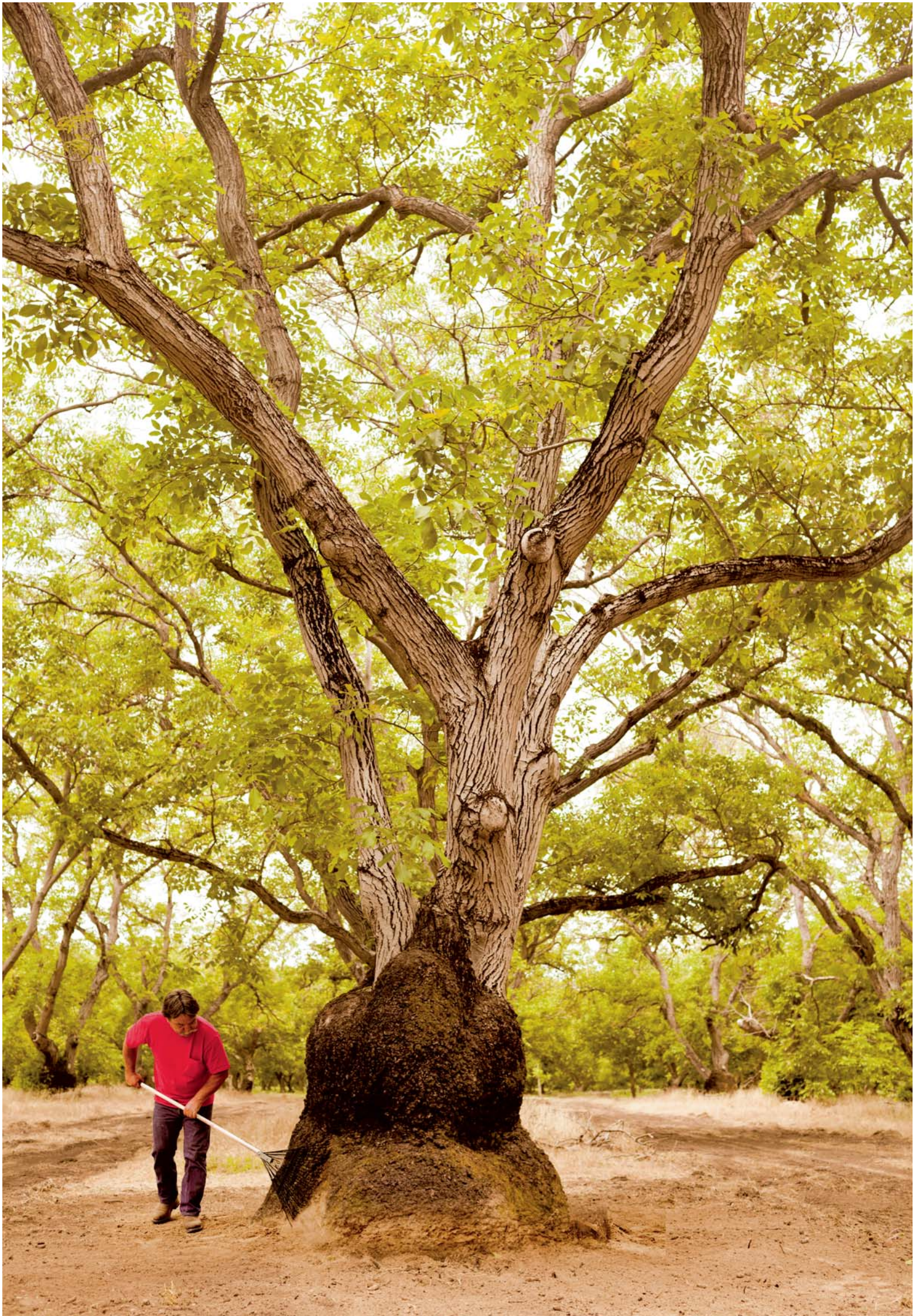
Once again, the location is kept deliberately confidential. There are no signs on the warehouse doors to indicate that this is home to Europe's largest processor of fine veneers: Eurogroup Belcaire.

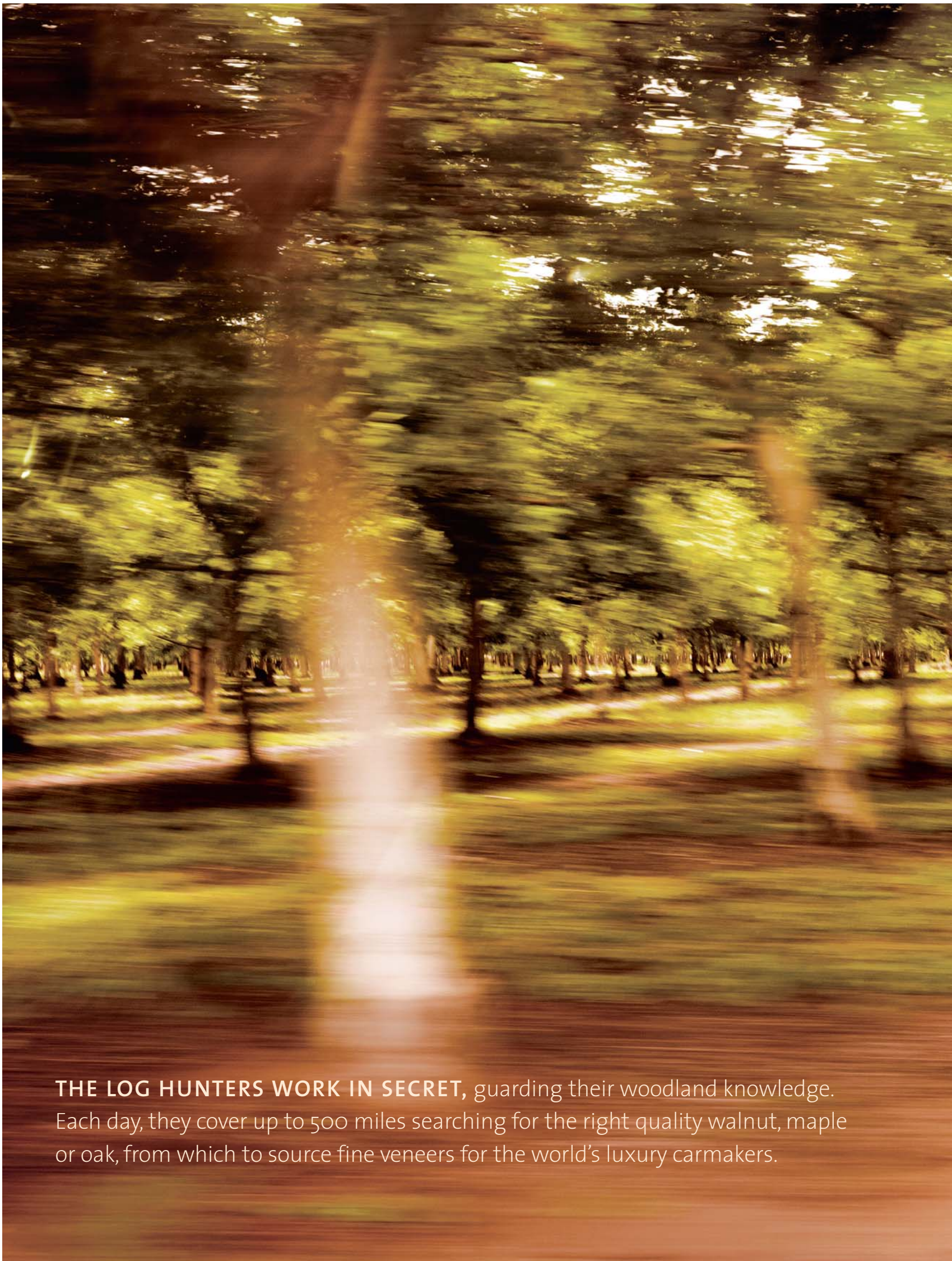
Eurogroup, which has contracts with American stumpers and other log-hunters around the world, has expanded its 17,000m² facility to capitalise on Valencia's heritage as a capital of the woodworking industry. For generations, factories on the Costa Blanca have supplied veneers for ocean liners, for private aircraft and now mainly for premium carmakers.

Manufacturers including Porsche, Jaguar and Rolls-Royce source their veneers from the Eurogroup plant, where stockpiles of walnut, maple, ash and oak lie in the yard. Eric Pirtle, one of the company's three directors, admits that Bentley is among the most demanding. "They are not easy negotiators when it comes to wood quality," according to Eric. "Bentley needs 5-carat diamonds; a 1-carat diamond is not good enough."

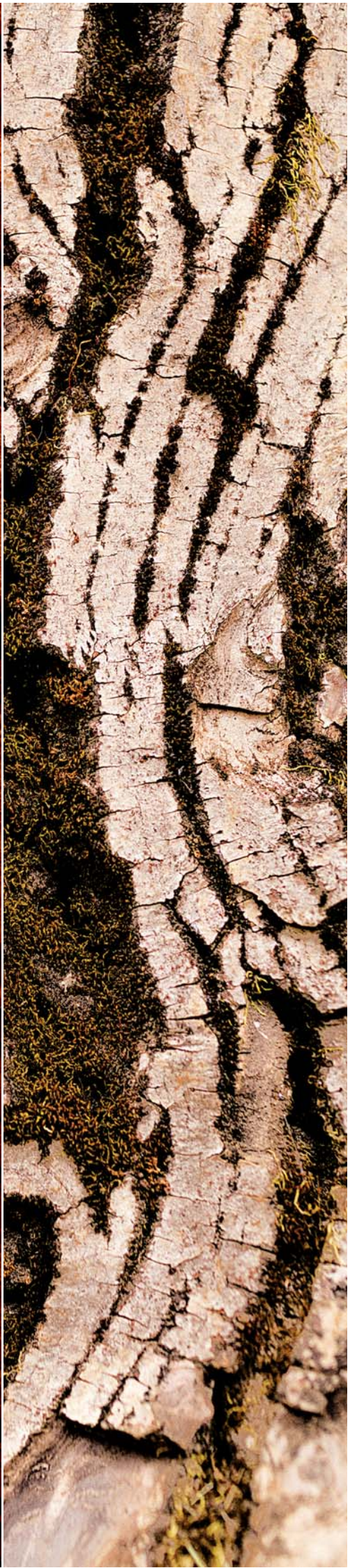
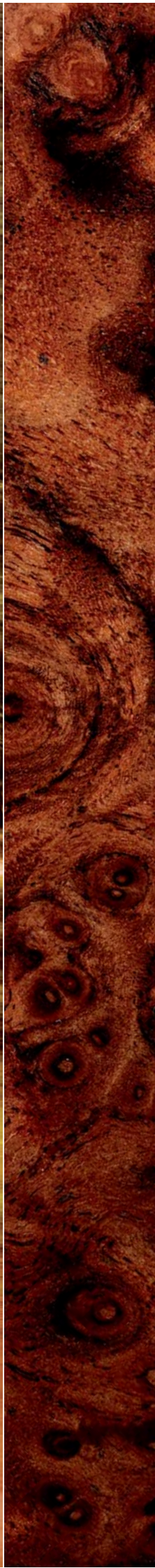
The company's 120 workers, of whom a third are craftsmen, spend about three weeks processing each tree trunk from raw lumber to wafer-thin veneers. Much of the Eurogroup system is a closely guarded secret and photography is prohibited in parts of the factory. But Eric is happy to demonstrate how the trunks are first stripped of their bark, shaved clean by aproned woodcutters using rotating saws. Impurities and loose debris are removed in a secret process. From there, the naked logs are turned on giant lathes, where sheaves of wood are split apart. At the end of the clipping line – after further confidential treatments – woods that arrived as container tonnage emerge flat, pliable and sold by the metre.

The Spanish climate, with 300 days of annual sunshine and relatively high humidity, is perfectly suited to storing the neatly stacked veneers, ready for





THE LOG HUNTERS WORK IN SECRET, guarding their woodland knowledge. Each day, they cover up to 500 miles searching for the right quality walnut, maple or oak, from which to source fine veneers for the world's luxury carmakers.





Ingrained expertise *continued*

inspection by Bentley. This is where Adrian Minshull, Bentley's veneer selector for the past 17 years, comes each month to take his pick of the walnut, oak and vavona used in the Mulsanne models.

Adrian chooses only about 1 per cent of the veneers on offer. Even so, he is concerned about the growing scarcity of the best wood. "We used to see logs that would produce 20 car sets, which might come from 200-year-old trees. Now it's about 5 to 10 sets per log," he warns.

For a Mulsanne, a 'car set' comprises a veneer bundle of 24 leaves, all drawn from one burl. If a buyer wants additional veneer for picnic tables, iPod holders and steering wheels, Adrian will allocate another bundle from the same part of the tree.

Back in Crewe, Adrian picks up a bundle in the Bentley veneer storeroom, where the stock is valued at £250,000. He flicks through the leaves like a picture book, describing how each piece of veneer in the car has to match the one beside it, ensuring a consistent pattern across the fascia, the consoles, waistrails and every other covered surface.

From the storeroom to the assembly line, it takes four weeks to cut, mould, lacquer, sand and polish the woodwork for each vehicle. In total, the wood shop uses about 10-15m² of veneer for each Mulsanne, with walnut the preferred choice of most customers.

"We cut the veneer according to the widest part of the interior, so the wastage rate is 50 per cent," says Adrian. "It's not like leather. We cannot use the whole hide."

Given the veneer's value, there is zero tolerance for chips or defects. Bentley workers wear cotton bands over their rings and watches. Jeans, zippers and studded trousers – anything capable of a scratch – are strictly prohibited. Nothing is left to chance. Before apprentices are allowed near the line, they make trial parts and key boxes to test their skills.

Customers touring the plant, choosing bespoke designs for their cars, often stop to admire the apprentices' showcase. But few realise that their veneers have also been on a journey, stretching thousands of miles and up to 15 years from first being identified by the stumpers in America to the factory in Valencia and finally to the showroom.

Back in Spain, Eric Pirtle says customer tastes may change and woods sometimes go out of fashion. But he adds: "Like fine jewellery, the prettiest designs are always sought after. And for us, walnut remains the king of diamonds." **B**

Tim Burt is former motor industry editor of the Financial Times.



Above left The precious burr roots and trunks are prepared and then shaved into fine leaves at Eurogroup's Valencia workshops in a jealously guarded process.

Above Journey's end for the burr walnut: around 10-15m² are needed for every Mulsanne.



FOR A MULSANNE, A 'CAR SET' COMPRISES A VENEER BUNDLE OF 24 LEAVES, ALL DRAWN FROM ONE BURL. IF A CUSTOMER WANTS ADDITIONAL VENEER FOR PICNIC TABLES, IPOD HOLDERS AND STEERING WHEELS, ADRIAN WILL ALLOCATE ANOTHER BUNDLE FROM THE SAME PART OF THE TREE.





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A pearl of culture

ABU DHABI HAS BIG PLANS TO REINVENT ITSELF AS A MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATION – AND ICONIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ARE HIGH ON THE AGENDA, REPORTS KATIE BOUCHER >

A pearl of culture *continued*



Crossing the Sheikh Khalifa Bridge from Abu Dhabi to Saadiyat Island will, in about four years' time, be a perilous business. Cast your eyes left from the steeply arched 10-lane highway and currently all that is visible is sea, sand, several cranes and the odd Portakabin; nothing to distract you from the business of driving. Fast forward to 2016, though, and try and do the same. Chances are, the road will be the last thing on your mind, occupied as you are by the cluster of buildings, each more fantastical than the last, that preside over the island's south-western corner.

Those with an eye on the art world probably will have seen the pictures; of the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and its chaotic cascade of shapes; of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, whose 180m 'floating' domed and perforated roof, the vision of the French architect Jean Nouvel, will bathe the museum's works in thousands of shards of light; and of the Norman Foster-designed Zayed National Museum, its soaring steel 'feathers' inspired by those of a falcon.

Add to these Zaha Hadid's sleek, cellular Performing Arts Centre and the semi-subterranean Maritime Museum designed by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, and you have a concentration of iconic cultural institutions matched by nothing else around the world. They are still some way from completion; the Louvre Abu Dhabi will be completed late 2013, the Zayed National Museum is due to open in 2014, with the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, following shortly after. Together they form part of Saadiyat Island's Cultural District, one of the world's most talked-about construction projects, not to mention the most significant attempt by Abu Dhabi to reinvent itself from a remote oil hub to a teaming, dynamic metropolis.

Part of that plan involves establishing itself as a tourist destination and Abu Dhabi, the capital and largest of the United Arab Emirates, has expounded considerable energy over the past six years in strengthening its infrastructure and leisure offering to cater for the increased number of visitors (these are up 10 per cent on last year to about 700,000, according to the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA)), as well as its growing resident population (now more than 1.6m). An aggressive marketing campaign has also helped increase international awareness.

"Those were the two main challenges," says Mubarak Al Muhairi, director General of ADTA, the government body that has been leading the charge. "Internally, you need to work on the existing culture to create a new service-orientated culture," he says. "With the awareness, we still have a lot to do. Once the name is known, a lot of work needs to be done to package that name."

The growth of Etihad Airways, he adds, has played a crucial role in "bringing the capital to the world". Launched in 2003, the airline has grown rapidly and now operates in 44 countries. Forays into sport – Abu Dhabi hosted its first Grand Prix in November 2009 at the newly built Yas Marina Circuit, Manchester City Football Club was bought in 2008 by a member of Abu Dhabi's ruling family and the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship is now a significant fixture in the PGA European Tour's calendar – have all increased the emirate's international profile.

"We want to target high-end, cultural visitors," says Al Muhairi, "people who want to come for sun and beach but also see heritage." It is Abu Dhabi's 'cultural offering' that differentiates it from neighbouring Dubai, only an hour away by car and whose better-established tourism sector – its hotels received 8.7 million visitors in 2010, according to Dubai Tourism's website – is more closely associated with the glitzy global set of shopaholics and pure leisure seekers.

Valuable lessons, both good and bad, have been learned from them, says Al Muhairi. "When we started [developing ourselves as a tourist destination] we got a lot of support from Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, in terms of training our staff and establishing regulations," he says. "We started from scratch. They started offering themselves as a tourist destination before anyone else."

Visions of the future:
Below Guggenheim
is due to open in 2016.
Above left Abu Dhabi
Louvre will open in 2013.
Below left Norman
Foster-designed
Zayed National Museum
is planned for 2015.
Previous page
3D visualisation of the
Cultural District.



“WE HAD TWO CHOICES: EITHER WE COULD TRY TO DEVELOP EXPERTISE LOCALLY OR WE COULD PARTNER UP WITH ESTABLISHED MUSEUMS. WE REALISED THAT THE KNOW-HOW WILL BE DELIVERED MUCH FASTER THIS WAY. THEY BRING UNPARALLELED KNOWLEDGE IN THE ART MARKET.”

A pearl of culture *continued*

There is little doubt that when Abu Dhabi's museums open their doors, it will be top of most visitors' itineraries. It was a canny move, and one that has been criticised by some in the art world, to go with big names. They paid a reported \$400 million for the use of the Louvre's name and the loan of hundreds of its works in a 30-year deal. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will be the American modern and contemporary art museum's fourth foreign outpost after Venice, Berlin and Bilbao. And the British Museum has been chosen to assist with the set-up of the Zayed National Museum, which will also have access to some of its collections.

Al Muhairi is keen to stress that the museums will not merely be 'branches' of their forebears. "Architecturally they are different; content-wise they are different; and in terms of the programmes inside, they are really different," he says. As much as having big names will help draw attention, it was the museums' expertise that Abu Dhabi really wanted, he explains. "We had two choices: either we could try to develop expertise locally or we could partner up with established museums. We realised that the know-how will be delivered much faster this way. They bring unparalleled knowledge in the art market. They have the best curators in their field, and that's not something you can develop easily alone."

It may be a few years before visitors can swap the scale model experience of the Cultural District, currently on view at a temporary exhibition space on Saadiyat Island, for the real thing, but already signs of life are starting to appear. The Gary Player-designed Saadiyat Beach Golf Club opened in 2009; and the first hotels are due to open later this year. The St Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, located on a wide strip of white, sandy beach, will be one of the most exclusive.

"St Regis pride themselves on their address," says John Pelling, the hotel's General Manager. "It's either an established address like our hotel in New York City, on 55 and 5th, or the Lanesborough in London, on the corner of Hyde Park. Or it's what St Regis consider to be an evolving address of great importance, such as Saadiyat." With 259 St Regis-branded apartments and 33 branded villas, several restaurants, a spa and a health club, even without the Cultural District, guests will not be short of activities.

"The beach is one of the wonderful things about Saadiyat," says Pelling. "I'm amazed it hasn't been developed sooner. I was on site a few weeks ago looking out across the beach from the golf course and I saw dolphins."

So promising do Starwood Hotels, St Regis' parent company, consider the destination that a further hotel, St Regis Abu Dhabi, will open in the downtown area of the city in January 2012. A bold move considering that these, along with the St Regis Doha, which is due to open in November, are the brand's first in the region.

"People are hungry for new destinations," says Pelling. "And when they see how beautiful Saadiyat is and what's going to be there – quality hotels, Ferrari World (the world's first Ferrari-themed indoor theme park) close by and only 25 minutes from the airport – there's a lot of interest."

Tourism, says Al Muhairi, is merely a by-product of the emirate's transformation and concentration on projects such as Saadiyat Island. "The government was always looking at this [the Cultural District] as a bridge to the world," he says, "bringing more understanding of other civilisations to the people who live here. More creative people living and working here will always position the UAE and Abu Dhabi better." **B**

Katie Boucher is a freelance writer based in Abu Dhabi. She writes about art, lifestyle and health for the Abu Dhabi-based newspaper, The National.



Above The St Regis Saadiyat Island Resort opens later this year, featuring 259 apartments and 33 villas. The beach is outstanding.
Below Zaha Hadid's sleek, cellular Performing Arts Centre.



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Colour craftsmen

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF CREWE WHO CRAFT BENTLEY'S WOOD AND LEATHER INTERIORS ARE JUSTLY CELEBRATED AND THEIR WORK HAS BEEN ENJOYED BY GENERATIONS OF OWNERS. BUT THE MIRROR-FINISH PAINT THAT COATS EACH BENTLEY ALSO REQUIRES A UNIQUE AND PAINSTAKING FORM OF CRAFTSMANSHIP. **RICHARD DURBIN** JOINS THE CREWE ARTISTS WHO BRING HUNDREDS OF COMPLEX AND VIVID COLOURS TO LIFE >

One of the pleasures of working at Bentley is that just when you think you've witnessed every intricate skill or met everyone achieving something remarkable – up pops another team of craftsmen prepared to go the extra mile to create something beautiful and unique.

Rob Thompson and his colleagues in the paint shop are definitely a case in point. On a stormy June afternoon with the rain battering the factory, Bentley's Paint Operations Senior Engineer invites me to take a closer look at a largely hidden corner of Crewe which brings hundreds of colours to life.

This division of Bentley can offer nearly 120 colours as 'standard' for the new Mulsanne but will also happily create a bespoke colour for any customer seeking something flamboyant, rare or personal. They create paints that will change character and shade depending on the light, that feel good to touch or are so highly polished you can literally see your own reflection on one of their bonnets.

Henry Ford, the godfather of the mass-produced Everyman's automobile, who is alleged to have said that his customers could have any colour as long as it was black, would have undoubtedly found Bentley's paint shop a perplexing place. The paint shop mixes ultra-modern, environmentally focused technology with the sort of individual, time-consuming attention to detail that delivers a stamp of individuality and character to every car that leaves the factory. And before I am even allowed my sneak preview I need to change into a laboratory jacket so that I don't scratch a car or bring fibres or dust into the building.

Once the bare metal of a pre-production Mulsanne bodyshell arrives at the paint shop via an automated overhead gantry from the new body-in-white engineering team, it will pass through a series of full-immersion tanks, designed first to de-grease, then in turn to clean, condition, rinse, phosphate and passivate the steel and aluminium structure.

At each tank the shell is immersed before being tipped fore and aft to ensure that every single crevice is reached. Once drained, the bodyshell is lowered into an electro-coating tank, where power is increased to 320 volts, attracting particles-in-solution which deposit on the charged, metal bodywork to form, in conjunction with the phosphate, a hard protective shell of corrosion-proof primer.

From this point, the judgement and skill of Bentley's craftsmen come to the fore. A two-coat primer is applied by hand, ready for the colour-of-choice to be applied. Each primed body is minutely inspected, sanded – or flatted – using a combination of hand, as well as sophisticated power tools.

Rob shows me a sanding pad that feels like a fine, very expensive sheet of Bond Street writing paper rather than an abrasive. Each pad, produced just for Bentley, costs a small fortune and dozens of them are used in a typical sanding process.

Colour craftsmen *continued*

It is difficult to believe this ultra-soft material has any sort of abrasive quality but Rob invites me to run my finger along the surface. I am not blessed with a concert pianist's sensitive hands but eventually I detect just the faintest hint of roughness.

Only when the primer coat is flawless will the colour basecoat be applied, again by hand, to achieve the optimum finish. Clear lacquer coats are then applied robotically, followed by final polishing for a perfectionist mirror finish. But if the lacquer can be applied by modern robotics, then why not the final colour? Rob explains:

"Different colours have markedly different characteristics and your perception of a colour's shade changes according to how deep the coat is. Then there's the fact that no two expert sprayers would apply that colour basecoat in the same way. This is exactly the right time to trust each one of our craftsman's eyes, hands and experience. A good, technical process or computer technology still cannot compete with the human eye."

To give you an understanding of how much skill is required to join this elite team it is worth pointing out that it takes four years (longer than some undergraduate university degrees) to become a 'skilled man' in the Bentley paint shop and even then there's no guarantee that you will get to hand-spray a Mulsanne. Rob adds:

"During the training programme everyone acquires the techniques required to paint a Bentley. But we're good at spotting where someone's particular skills lie and then they'll start the process of becoming a true specialist."

"Some people naturally see colour better than others but we have colleagues who know how to prepare a surface sympathetically and that lightness of touch is just as important for us."

It also takes many months of in-depth training for a Bentley quality inspector to learn how to identify the tiny defects that an owner is unlikely to ever notice. Rob, who helps the inspectors find these absolutely miniscule blemishes, takes me into one of the brilliantly lit 'checkpoint' inspection bays which looks uncannily like a surgeon's operating theatre.

The pearlescent, sky blue Mulsanne sitting beneath the inspection bay's bright, hot lights looks like the epitome of perfection. This grand Bentley flagship is literally shimmering and alive with colour but Rob has still spotted two tiny flaws.

There's a barely perceptible hologram hidden in one of the rear passenger doors (caused by one of the mirror polishing machines operating in one direction for a fraction of a second too long) and his fingers have also detected a minute section of uneven surface.

Despite looking so exquisite and flawless, this Mulsanne will be returned to the specialist rectification teams who will use a bewildering number of intricate skills to eradicate these barely perceptible glitches.

"This car won't leave our paint shop until we're completely happy and prepared to put our name to it," Rob adds with a note of finality.

As a final treat I am allowed to visit the paint shop's inner sanctum. Behind Rob's office there's a huge, extremely wide shoulder-high filing cabinet with multiple drawers. Once the locks are released I am confronted by an encyclopaedia of colours and each one of them has graced a Bentley somewhere in the world. Then more drawers are unlocked and just for a moment I get a glimpse of some future colours as well.

"As long as it is technically possible there's no limit to what we can do," Rob explains. Then the drawer is closed and firmly locked **B**

Richard Durbin lives in Cheshire. He has worked with Harley-Davidson and eBay and spends most of his leisure time in or around sailing dinghies.



Above There's no pre-set time for painting, lacquering and finishing a bespoke Bentley like the Mulsanne – each centimetre of bodywork is minutely examined by Bentley's quality inspection team and only released when it is quite literally flawless.



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Flight slickness

BREITLING'S PASSION FOR PRECISION AND DARING IS EMBODIED BY ITS WORLD-FAMOUS AERIAL DISPLAY TEAM – AND BY ITS BREITLING FOR BENTLEY WATCH COLLECTION. JULIA MAROZZI DONS HER FLYING GOGGLES... >

Below The Breitling aerobatic team's L-39C Albatros aircraft form a dazzling display of metre-perfect synchronicity.
 Above right 1955 Lockheed Super Constellation is now fully restored.
 Below right Five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell duels an MX2 at the wheel of Continental Supersports Convertible ISR.



Flight slickness *continued*

As the helicopter hovered in its gentle bubble high above the Alps I was starting to feel relaxed – farmers' huts below, the glint of sun on a backyard swimming pool, hay bales in neat lines along the edge of a field. All appeared within easy touching distance.

Then the cotton-wool clouds grew thicker to our right and our pilot Daniel decided we would not risk a ride over the top of the mountain but return to our base at Buochs military airfield in the heart of Switzerland.

The long spiny ridge ahead approached fast and sharp, stretching across the horizon. Blue sky in every direction. In a moment we had crested the ridge and were over the top – then, nothing but a universe of wind and sky. A gulp, a sharp intake of breath. Far below lay a long valley with a thin, sage-green river like a twinkling strip of ribbon. We were suspended 10,000ft above land. I was rigid as a rock. When the whirring blades of the American-made MD900 Explorer finally ceased their whine on landing and I clambered out of the front seat onto the tarmac, I was still slightly trembling, despite this being one of the 'gentler' experiences at this year's annual Breitling aviation event.

Breitling's passion for aviation has been translated into an occasion in which the skies become the theatre for a celebration of flight. The venue, on the shores of Lake Quatre-Cantons near Lucerne, also plays host to its automotive partner Bentley, where five-times Le Mans winner Derek Bell showed off the Supersports Convertible Ice Speed Record car in a race with an MX2 aircraft.

As the aircraft swooped down, the car raced ahead at 175mph to the end of the runway, then the MX2 nosed straight up. Dead heat! The ISR accomplished by the Supersports Convertible is the latest manifestation of the Bentley-Breitling partnership, with the 205.48mph record being timed by Breitling. Ian Piguett, Managing Director of Breitling South Africa, had brought along retailers from Cape Town and Johannesburg, and has been at the event for the past nine years. "Breitling has a real tie to aviation," he said. "Other companies talk about aviation, but Breitling does it."

"It's a phenomenal experience here at Buochs. They manufacture moments to remember with commitment and seriousness. For people to come here and see the passion, it is truly like waving a magic wand."



“The commitment to quality is absolute. Two to three years ago, before the bubble burst, you could produce anything and sell it. But now the watch market has changed and you need a long-term approach and you need to make the right moves for the long term. Our Branch Manager also liaises closely with Bentley – the two work very well together. We can take Bentley customers to Breitling and bring Bentleys into Breitling.”

Retailers and distributors of Breitling, together with UK Bentley dealers, were all at the air show – from Latin America to New Zealand, from the Caribbean to Japan. About 350 people gather in two-day stints over the course of a week, starting from the Palace Hotel in Lucerne and finishing with a tour of the Breitling factory at La Chaux-de-Fonds and the headquarters in Grenchen.

At the Buochs airfield it was a blinding hot day with what looked like an Arabian Nights tent city spread out before an array of stunning aircraft. Seven Breitling jets were lined up, ready for their kick-off aerobatic display. The L-39C Albatros aircraft are Czech-made twin-seater military training jets that can also be used for passenger flights.

On the far right, a Super Constellation 1955 Lockheed L1049 was restored and ready to go, famous as the Queen of the Skies over the North Atlantic, designed by the legendary Howard Hughes. Two wing walkers were kitted out to be strapped atop Boeing Stearman biplanes – the only team in the world on two 1940s aircraft, taking part in 90 air shows in 10 countries a year.

For my next thrill, I donned a pair of khaki flying overalls and tried to emulate the pioneer Amelia Earhart – though not, I hoped, to the extent of her tragic disappearance over the Pacific in 1937. I walked over to the stationary blue 1935 Bucker, under the majestic control of Olivier Masurel, a member of the French aerobatic team preparing for the world championships.

Seated behind the passenger, the pilot offers to execute ‘on demand’ a series of aerobatic figures. Mid-flight, wind whipping my face into a rictus grin, Olivier tapped my shoulder so that I could give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down to a proposed loop. At that moment the idea was terrifying. I clutched the hand-rail tightly. I forgot my Amelia Earhart notions and decided that being open-air in itself was enough excitement, without being face down to the ground. My thumb pointed firmly down. I was definitely a wimp, but at least I wasn’t sick mid-air.

My fantasy as an aviation pioneer was just that – a fantasy. There was to be no jet fighter flight for me. At the beginning of the day the Breitling jet pilots had held the crowd spellbound with a series of manoeuvres that made the aircraft look literally as if they were doing ballet in the air. Dots of light appeared before us as the jets, smoke trailing from their tails, did a perpendicular ascent over the tents, curved back down and swept around the airfield, barrel rolling as they went.

For 20 minutes all faces tilted only skyward as the jets flew in formations – Chronomat, Avenger, Blackbird – with Apache rolls, Ocean Master breaks and a final Champagne burst of fireworks thrown in for good measure. Led by Jacques Bothelin, at times the jets were separated by less than two metres, with G forces of up to eight when engaged in solo work, as they soared to 5,000ft and dived back almost to touch the ground.

Surrounded by mountains, the noise of the jets and the trailing plumes of smoke were a blast of engineering precision and power amid a landscape of fir tree-lined slopes dotted with small apartment buildings and red-roofed, white-walled houses.

An idyllic setting for a brilliant display. On the runway in front of the tents, Peter Barnes, a Bentley senior driving instructor, was lined up in a Continental Flying Spur at the start of a high-speed driving exercise.

“We do these stop and swerve exercises to show people that the car is comfortable and smooth but also incredibly dynamic and capable. People may see a Flying Spur and not understand its full range and potential.”

With that he took off to a speed of more than 100mph. As a line of cones approached across the runway he jumped hard on the brakes to avoid a crash. The car banked sharply to the left, avoiding the obstacle, and then he deftly and gently corrected it until the cones were receding into the distance and I was marvelling at the fact that at such high speeds the car’s technology had worked to remain stable and pointing forward.

“This capability is a really important aspect of the car,” said Nigel. “There is no finer car to be in to look after your passengers and your family. It is difficult to show in normal driving circumstances how the car can perform dynamically and to demonstrate the capabilities it has to be both powerful and safe.”

The partnership between Bentley and Breitling has flourished over the past nine years. Lindsay Weaver, Director of Licensing and Branded Goods for Bentley, says the recently renewed relationship translates into a new collection of Breitling for Bentley chronographs – from the Bentley Barnato Racing model and the Supersport Light Body watch to the Breitling dashboard clock featured on all the models in the Bentley Continental range.

“The natural affinity between the two brands cultivates performance and prestige,” he says. “Numerous values continue to bond the two brands, such as a love for fine engineering, a passion of achievement and the quest for technical and aesthetic excellence built on historical precedents symbolised by our winged B signatures.”

This expertise and technological prowess are on display in the hushed and concentrated environment of the Breitling factory at La Chaux-de-Fonds, the centre of Switzerland’s watch-making industry. A tour on the next day took in all aspects of the factory – under the watchful eye of plant manager Claude Brunner, who explained that the reason we were all wearing blue plastic shoe-covers was because dust is the enemy of watch-making.

Inside the gold stone-clad factory, the air, which is exchanged six times an hour, is filtered and kept at a constant 40 per cent humidity, because the tiny components are highly susceptible to pollution. Built about 11 years ago, the factory houses manufacturing processes and assembly functions and has expanded from 8,000 to 12,000 sq ft in the past three years.





Left At times separated by less than two metres, the Czech-built L-39C jets are capable of pulling up to 8g – as are their pilots.
Below Julia Marozzi takes to the skies with Olivier Masurel; looping the loop proved a manoeuvre too far.

Flight slickness *continued*

In 2004 Breitling decided to embark on a project of manufacturing the chronograph in-house and so set about creating a team of watchmakers and engineers. There is R and D in-house, plus movement production and watch assembly. Workers exhibit intense concentration as they sit at benches, looking through magnifying glasses at components and movements that are hard to see with the naked eye, and picking up metal components with long tweezers. Fingerprints are another enemy of the watchmaker. The atmosphere is calm and dedicated, as an array of machine tools and computers is used to craft the finest of Swiss timepieces.

Every finished movement is sent before assembly to the Swiss Official Chronometer Testing Institute (COSC), the official testing agency for Swiss manufacturers seeking this important designation, with each certified COSC chronometer being unique, and identified by a serial number engraved on its movement and a certification number given by the COSC.

Breitling originally supplied the Royal Air Force in the 1930s with onboard clocks, and today's President, Theodore Schneider, whose father Ernest bought the company in 1979, was a private helicopter pilot. The factory does not say how many hundred watches it makes a day, but the output is sent to the headquarters in Grenchen for final quality controls and the attachment of the strap or bracelet. Sales and administration as well as shipping and after sales are all housed in an art-filled headquarters which was restored in 1999–2000 with an air conditioning system similar to the one at the factory. Here, the watches are made to endure a huge array of tests, all done on prototypes and not on ready-to-sell models. All the components that will be involved in production – dial, case, hands, bracelet – have to be perfect before they are sent to the factory. For instance, they endure one year of sunlight (speeded up through technology) to see if the dial changes colour, a shock as if dropped from altitude and a resistance test on the click screen inside the case.

Beth Downey, Vice-President of Merchandise at Jewels & Little Switzerland, which has 30 stores in the Caribbean and Key West, and who is based in St Thomas, commented: "The tours of the Grenchen and La Chaux-de-Fonds production facilities are very impressive. I have been involved with buying Breitling product for more than 15 years and have been privileged to witness the brand's constant evolution.


"Improving quality standards, developing movements, sponsoring aeronautical achievements and partnering with Bentley are all a part of Breitling's continued success in the world of

luxury timepieces. Breitling's attention to detail and commitment to quality and style permeate every aspect of their brand's identity."

There's also a strong sense of aesthetics – Schneider's passion for Pop Art is apparent in canvases by the American Pop artist Kevin Kelly, but there is the catchy Jorg Doring *Zoom* canvas at Grenchen as well as the replica Spitfire on the roof and the lobby video of the Manhattan store opening last year with guest appearance by pilot and actor John Travolta.

Says Mauricio Diaz, Vice-President of Breitling Caribbean: "Breitling has a reputation for quality in everything they do. They were not a well-known brand worldwide and they had to fight against big brands in the early years. But they have become very successful; they have a sense of class and are very, very unique."

As Lindsay Weaver explains: "Once upon a time there were two brands that shared much common ground – Bentley and Breitling. The same passion for fine mechanisms. The same combination of prestige and performance. The same heritage of excellence. The same thrust towards the future.

"One day their paths met, and this encounter gave rise to a collection of exceptional chronographs. Dedicated to the automobile world, the Breitling for Bentley line unites the best of two worlds. Elegance and exploits. Class and expertise. British chic and Swiss tradition. Embodying the perfect combination of technique and aesthetics, it is designed to appeal to connoisseurs and to all those with a love of rare and exclusive watches. Beautiful motors encased in beautiful bodywork." 





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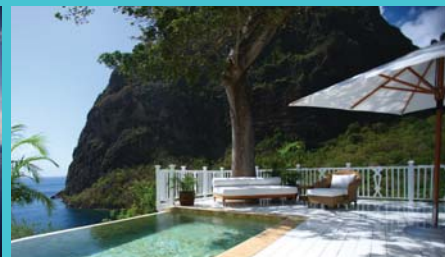
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Sacred cars

LISA GRAINGER VISITS DELHI'S SECOND CARTIER CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE AND FINDS EXCEPTIONAL HAND CRAFTSMANSHIP STILL THRIVING AMID THE BUSTLE OF INDIA'S BOOMING ECONOMY >

To see an elephant in India isn't entirely unexpected; for centuries these graceful creatures have been used to transport soldiers, cargo and kings across jungles and deserts, during ceremonies and wars. But one trundling along on a motorway in the heart of Delhi, surrounded by buses belching diesel, high-pitched yellow rickshaws and thousands of hooting cars? Followed closely by a camel?

"Welcome to new India!" says Tania Dalton, whose family business Greaves Travel has been bringing the British to the subcontinent in some style for decades. "The last time I was here I saw an elephant at a petrol station, which I thought was such a symbol of how diverse India now is."

In this country, transport is pretty varied; almost anything with wheels or legs is harnessed to get people and cargo about. Skinny men in loincloths and shoes made of old car tyres haul rickety rickshaws laden with cargo: pipes, scrap metal, furniture. Bullocks pull wooden carts piled with grain.

Scooters carrying entire families (sans helmets) veer heroically into the oncoming paths of ancient hooting trucks with cargo perilously roped on. And, just inside the capital's Jaipur Polo Ground, one of India's most magnificent cars, a 1923 Bentley 3 Litre 'Speed' Sports Tourer, is driven on to the lawns to take its place at the country's second ever Cartier Concours d'Elegance.

The Bentley is one of 57 vehicles at the classic car event designed to lure local owners to bring out some of the treasures hidden away in palaces and garages around the country. In a country of 1 billion people, whose roads stream with industrial traffic, India is not the ideal country to take multi-million-pound cars for a spin. (Indeed, so rough are some roads that the Maharaja of Darbhanga had 9 miles of cement concrete roads built around his palace especially to drive his beloved collection of 90 classic cars.)

However, it is a country that has long had a love affair with luxury vehicles. Since George V was crowned Emperor of India exactly 100 years ago in Delhi,



Among the impressively diverse field of concours entrants were a 1923 Bentley 3 Litre Speed Sports Tourer (left and bottom right, being admired by HRH Prince Michael of Kent) and an extraordinary 1911 Silver Ghost Dome Roof Limousine.



cars – and in particular British cars – have been part of aristocratic life. As Sharad Sanghi, the owner of the 1923 Bentley says, as dozens of covetous car-lovers come to admire the car: “Whatever one thinks politically of the British empire, it left us some wonderful legacies – one of which was its cars. And for serious car-lovers such as me, this was a real blessing.”

Sanghi's Bentley is just one of a collection of 120 classic vehicles kept at his home in Indore that includes a Daimler belonging to George V and a rusted, very rare 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III four-door convertible sports tourer, on display at this show, which he says purrs so beautifully “it reminds me of making love; just fantastic. And it's only done 12,000 miles. Darbhanga [Maharajah Sir Kameshwar Singh] had six Phantom IIIs and I bought four of them off him.”

His cars are mostly British, he says. “But for me Bentley is the best name in the world – it's distinguished, it says something. And if you are a real car-lover, then, let's face it, you are going to go for a Bentley rather than a Rolls-Royce. I love mine so much I find it difficult to describe. Its status is glorious. It has gorgeous lines. Technically it is very advanced. It can't be beaten.”

Ideally, he admits, he should build a museum to hold his collection, which includes a Cord, one of the most expensive cars in the world. “But I just don't have the time. It is my passion, it's what I enjoy spending my money on, but these days I spend more time on planes than I do on cars, trying to make the money to buy more! Besides, I live in a town of 3 million people; it's not easy, with the cows and the business on the road, to give cars a good run.”

His 1923 Bentley, he says, was imported by the British to Assam in the '20s, and before he bought it in 1978, it had had 26 owners. “I was desperate to own it because it won Le Mans,” he said, “and that doesn't happen every day.

It's a one-off, utterly unique. I also wanted to buy another model, an 8 Litre, but that went to someone else who won't sell it. So, I have to be happy with this.”

When he bought it, he says, it was terribly rusty and its body needed to be almost totally rebuilt. “But I fell in love, so have spent a long time making it beautiful again; this car has history, it has a story to tell. And besides, in India, we have very good craftsmen – particularly Manvendra Singh Barwani [India's most experienced classic car expert, who organised the Cartier event]. He restores everyone's cars.”

His Bentley, he says, had someone with a particular eye for detail helping to ensure it was restored to pristine condition: the chairman of the country's biggest car manufacturer, Ratan Tata, “who got the leather specially for me and had it treated so it looked exactly like the original.”

Although most owners are biased about the merits of their favourite cars, says car designer and Concours judge Peter Stevens, the Bentleys on show here are especially good. One model in particular, a 4¼ Litre 1939 convertible, he believes to be one of the most beautiful cars of its era. Why? Not only because its hood fits neatly into the boot (“which was unheard of then – normally, at that time, hoods flapped about at the back in a rather messy way”), and the poles to hold up the roof fitted snugly beneath wooden side panelling, but because of its lines. “It is so sleek and clean. Just look at it: the lovely concave panelling that runs to the back, the crispness of its lines, the almost modern detailing.”

The rest of the judges – who range from HRH Prince Michael of Kent, JCB CEO Sir Anthony Bamford, Chairman of Hong Kong & Shanghai Hotel Group The Hon Sir Michael Kadoorie and Formula One designer Professor

“WHAT’S BEEN AMAZING HERE IS SEEING WHAT THESE WORKMEN CAN DO BY HAND. THE CRAFTSMEN HERE ARE SO WILLING TO GET THE PIECES PERFECT, AND THEY DO IT WITH SUCH LOVE.”



Above left Bernard Fornas, President and C.E.O of Cartier International, takes time to appreciate the occasion.

Above right Hippophile bonnet mascot usurps the place of the Bentley winged 'B'.

Sacred cars *continued*

Gordon Murray to rock star Bryan Ferry and actor Olivier Martinez – clearly agreed. At the prize giving, this 1939 4 1/4 Litre overdrive MX series convertible Bentley, owned by Roshni Jaiswal, won best in its class. One thing that stood out about this car, said Gordon Murray, was the love that had been lavished on it by so many people. “This event is very different to the UK or US ones, and not only because it is time warp stuff – that these cars are parts of history – but because these guys are passionate about their cars. They don’t have the same access to parts and expertise we do, so hearing their stories about how they have restored the cars is half of the fun.”

“The Rolls Royce throne car [1911 Silver Ghost Rolls-Royce that won car of the show] was done for £22,000, which is incredible. The guy who owns the gorgeous little Fiat – which is my car of the show – has his original manual in a little brown envelope and has used it to put the car back together. And this Bentley is just beautiful – it’s had love poured on it by people who really care, by proper car enthusiasts.”

The self-confessed ‘petrol-head’ and fellow judge Jasmin Le Bon agrees that the standard of the bodywork at the show – and in particular on the Bentley – was world class. “My grandfather was a panel beater, so I learnt from a young age what a wonderful skill it is. What’s been amazing here is seeing what these workmen can do by hand. The craftsmen here are so

willing to get the pieces perfect, and they do it with such love. It would take years to get that done in England to such a standard.”

The fact that the Bentley owner, Roshni Jaiswal, arrived at the event with both his mechanic and his panel beater was an enormous part of the charm of this car, said Peter Stevens. “He has a relationship with these men. They talk engines and parts. It’s fantastic. His sheet-metal man beat the panels for the entire back side by hand: the fender, this chrome trim, the door. His hands were so hard from beating metal over decades that he didn’t want to shake hands, so he shook my arm. To me, that kind of owner, who has 120 cars, and still brings his panel beater and his mechanic, is a charming fellow.”

Says Bentley fan Sharad Sanghi: “You know, we in India don’t like to show our wealth too much. I go out at night in my cars, if I want to drive them. But I know there are owners with cars hidden away in all sorts of places. Hopefully next time we will get a chance to see some more.” **B**

For information on attending the next Indian Concours d’Elegance, planned for 2013, contact Greaves Travel (+44 207 487 9111, www.greavesindia.com).

Lisa Grainger is a writer and editor for The Times, The Daily Telegraph, Conde Nast Traveller and Marie Claire, specialising in luxury travel and Africa.

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THE WORLD OF BENTLEY

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HOME RUN

BDC CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY WITH 'BRITAIN BY BENTLEY' TOUR

Bentley Drivers Club members like doing what their club's name suggests: driving their rare and valuable Bentleys on grand tours around interesting and challenging routes. They regularly tour in far-flung places such as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. So, to celebrate their 75th Anniversary, they decided the 2011 tour should be where the Bentley legend was forged, 'at home' in the United Kingdom.

Planning for this major expedition started two years before the event, when past Chairman Jenny Ford volunteered to pull together a month-long tour of Great Britain, which would allow British members of the club to repay the hospitality they had received on many overseas tours. Together with a small band of industrious supporters, Jenny planned a route that would show off the beautiful country roads, historic cities and fine hosteleries that Britain is known for.

The 'Britain by Bentley' Tour started in style on 4th June with a gala dinner in the newly refurbished Savoy Hotel in London. The 50 cars and 100 occupants (which included no less than 22 cars from Australia and New Zealand, and recently retired former Chairman Dr Franz-Josef Paefgen) then headed north, taking in the

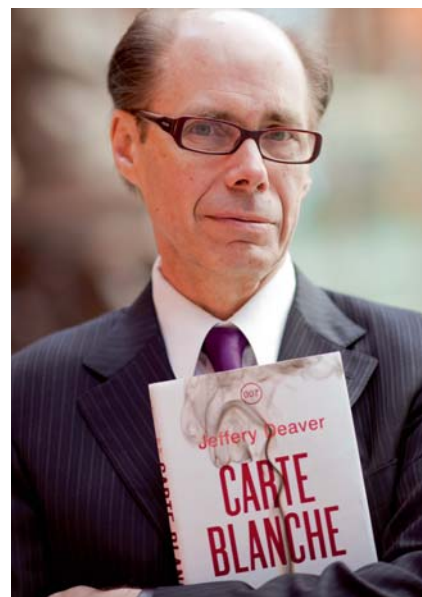
east side of the country, passing through Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Northumberland to Scotland.

After two days each in Edinburgh and at Loch Lomond, the group made their way south to The Lake District and on to Llandudno in North Wales, before heading to Crewe, to the home of Bentley Motors for a tour of the factory. Many of the first-time visitors commented on the warmth of the welcome they received from everyone at Crewe.

The Tour then headed via Buxton down to Stratford-upon-Avon, taking in the annual Bentley Drivers Club Concours d'Elegance at the Wroxton clubhouse near Banbury, before driving through glorious Cotswold countryside to the Roman spa town of Bath.

Now into the third week of the tour, the convoy tackled the narrow lanes of Devon, taking in Torquay and the historic naval port of Dartmouth, before following the south coast to the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu.

The final leg of the month-long tour culminated in the county of Kent, the 'Garden of England', with a final gala dinner at Leeds Castle, forever part of Bentley folklore as the former home of Bentley team sponsor Dorothy Paget and venue for many wild 'Bentley Boy' parties en route to and from Le Mans in the 1920s.



CARTE BLANCHE FOR ADVENTURE

CONTINENTAL GT STARS IN JAMES BOND BOOK LAUNCH

The first copies of the eagerly awaited new Bond book, *Carte Blanche*, arrived in style at St Pancras International in London on May 25th. The book, by the best-selling American thriller writer Jeffery Deaver, published in the UK by Hodder & Stoughton, was launched in a scene straight from a James Bond novel, at Europe's longest bar – The Champagne Bar at St Pancras International – in a special *Carte Blanche* red Bentley Continental GT, flanked by a Bond girl clad in black leathers.

In a dramatic twist to the launch, four members of the Royal Marines Display Team abseiled from the iconic roof of St Pancras International onto the concourse below, bearing copies of the novel. The train station, at the heart of London, is a fitting venue for a fictional British spy who became an international phenomenon, while the Bentley Continental GT is the car of choice for Deaver's Bond. The day's Bond girl, who drove a BSA 1966 Spitfire motorbike to the launch, is inspired by one of Bond's love interests in *Carte Blanche*, whose passion for speed and fast engines rivals Bond's own.





THE GREEN ON THE BLUE

BENTLEY MILANO AND BOLOGNA CO-SPONSOR CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Never underestimate the ingenuity of a Bentley dealer. The Italian Riviera may be best known for chic quayside restaurants and Riva speedboats, but a unique golf tournament co-sponsored by Bentley Milano and Bentley Bologna featured a water hazard with a difference – the harbour at Portofino.

The two dealers co-sponsored the Portofino Golf Challenge & Pro-Am Christian Steiner, one of this year's most innovative golf tournaments, held on April 20th and April 21st in Rapallo and Portofino, two of the Italian Riviera's most exclusive resorts.

On the green of the Golf Club Rapallo, 27 teams led by 27 pros, among them professional golfers Diana Luna and Matteo Manassero (Italy's rising golf star and winner of the recent Malaysian Open) challenged 81 passionate golfers. The next day, the competition included a putting green on Portofino's dockside and on a special green floating on the water of the Portofino bay.

Naturally, when Bentley Milano and Bentley Bologna brought along the new Continental GT to this prestigious golf tournament, it quickly drew an appreciative audience among the guests and competitors. All were offered the opportunity to drive the new Bentley as a prelude to the Pure Bentley Days that took place in Milan three weeks later.

CONTINENTAL JAZZ

BENTLEY ATHENS CREATES ALBUM TO MARK BENTLEY LAUNCH

Celebrating the arrival of the new Continental GT, Bentley Athens has produced a "Jazz for Bentley" CD with music by renowned Greek sax player and composer Dimitri Vassilakis. Producer (and Bentley Athens Manager) Vassilis Haritos explains: "I first heard Dimitri at a private function, where his extraordinary sax sound promptly got everybody's attention. The seeds were sown and the concept for a jazz album, commissioned by and specially compiled for Bentley Athens, began to formulate in my mind." The 'Jazz for Bentley' CD is being presented to Bentley owners and friends of the brand on the occasion of the new Continental GT's Athens premiere.



SPECTACULAR LAUNCH VENUE FOR CONTINENTAL GT

Bentleys can be found in many far-flung locations, and the company continually seeks venues that are out of the ordinary for its launch events. At a distance of almost 12,000 miles from Crewe, Queenstown on New Zealand's South Island fitted the bill on both counts, when the new Continental GT was launched to media and customers from 9th–12th May.

In the wonderful colours of the early New Zealand autumn, journalists from Australia and New Zealand were able to experience the new Continental GT on the open roads of South Island, with some of the world's most dramatic scenery as a backdrop.

The internationally renowned winery of Armisfield was the chosen venue, and the autumn chill was countered by a roaring fire to warm the journalists after a chilly open-top ride in a 1929 Cricklewood Bentley.

THE WORLD OF BENTLEY



WARM WELCOME FOR ICE RECORD CAR

CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORTS ISR AT BREITLING BOUTIQUE DURING NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

Bentley's association with Swiss watchmakers Breitling dates back to the company's successful assault on the Le Mans 24-Hour race in 2003, when two dark green Speed 8 Bentleys crossed the line in an historic one-two. Since then a number of limited edition chronographs have been created by Breitling to honour specific Bentley models or achievements. The partnership, founded on a mutual passion for engineering precision and sporting achievement, was further cemented by the recent ice record attempt by four-times World Rally champion Juha Kankkunen, who drove his Breitling-sponsored Continental Supersports Convertible to an amazing 205.48mph on ice.

That's why on Monday, April 19th the record-breaking Bentley Supersports Convertible ISR (Ice Speed Record) made its first state-side stop at the Breitling boutique on 57th Street for the debut of the Breitling for Bentley Supersports Light Body that was inspired by this monumental feat. The limited edition watch with an ultra-light titanium case is one of the new Breitling for Bentley chronographs combining exceptional performance with an unconventional look.



BENTLEY TORONTO CELEBRATES NEW CONTINENTAL GT

The launch of a new Bentley is always worth celebrating, especially when it's the heir to the most successful Bentley of all time, the Continental GT. So Bentley owners, guests and media representatives eagerly accepted the invitation of Bentley Toronto to come and see the new Continental GT for themselves on April 7th, in a relaxed and suitably celebratory atmosphere. With hors d'oeuvres prepared by culinary star Mark McEwan's North 44 restaurant and a selection of fine wines and liquors to enjoy, all attendees agreed that this was an evening to remember. Breitling, Astor and Black Custom Clothiers, and Naim Audio, three brands that share Bentley's passion for style, luxury and performance, also joined in the celebration.



BENTLEY PARSIPPANY LAUNCH FOR NEW CONTINENTAL GT

New Jersey's Bentley Parsippany, chose a private jet hanger at Teterboro Airport for their launch of the new Continental GT on April 13th, 2011. While guests admired the crisp lines of the Superformed aluminium bodywork of the latest Bentley coupé, another Bentley grand tourer was also on show. A Derby Bentley 3 1/2 Litre, now jointly owned by Mr and Mrs Rowan received a ground-up restoration in 1987–1988 and since then has been rallied all over the world, including North and South America, Scandinavia, Europe, Australia and Southeast Asia. Both old and new Bentleys received plenty of admiring glances – although separated by over 75 years of technological development, each embodies the ultimate in grand touring for its respective era.



GLITTERING DEBUT FOR BENTLEY WARSAW

BENTLEY DESIGNER GUEST OF HONOUR AT SHOWROOM OPENING

Bentley Senior Exterior Designer Crispin Marshfield was the guest of honour on 31st March when Bentley Warsaw celebrated the opening of its new showroom. He, together with General Manager of Bentley Warszawa Piotr Jedrach, had the honour of unveiling the new Continental GT as the highlight of the showroom opening ceremony. The new showroom is located in a prestigious district of Warsaw at Wybrzeże Kościuszkowskie 45 Street. Now based at their magnificent new showcase for the Bentley brand in Poland's capital, Piotr and his team anticipate introducing many more Polish owners to the pleasures of Bentley ownership in 2011.



A VINTAGE YEAR

BENTLEY BOSTON SUPPORTS NANTUCKET WINE FESTIVAL

Over the past 14 years the Nantucket Wine Festival has blossomed into one of the nation's most celebrated wine and food events, based around the landmark hotel The White Elephant in downtown Nantucket. With the participation of some 165 wineries at this year's event, which ran from 18th to 22nd May, the temptation to drink and drive was definitely one to be avoided! Fortunately, Bentley Boston stepped in as one of the event's sponsors, providing examples of the marque's finest models, including the flagship Mulsanne, for the transportation of key guests and VIP speakers.



SHOWTIME IN MOSCOW

BURLESQUE THEME FOR RUSSIAN LAUNCH OF NEW CONTINENTAL GT

At times, it could have been a Broadway musical or a cabaret show from fin de siècle Paris. The Russian premiere of the new Continental GT proved that when it comes to putting on a great show, the Muscovites can show Hollywood a thing or two. On March 18th at the Barvikha Luxury Village, Bentley's Russian dealers presented one of the most gorgeous, over-the-top automotive events of the year to mark the arrival of Bentley's new 200mph coupé. From men in stockings to gorgeous women in corsets, the spectacle simply defied the imagination... with pearls, crystals, Broadway-style decor and every guest entering into the festive atmosphere. A further feature of the launch was a real casino where guests could win a precious prize from Bentley during the evening. It's hard to imagine how they can top this next time... but rest assured, they'll give it their very best shot.

THE WORLD OF BENTLEY



KAZAKHSTAN SHOW STOPPER

SURPRISE REVEAL OF CONTINENTAL GT AT GRAND OPENING OF BENTLEY ALMATY

Kazakh businessmen, bankers and politicians – most of them owners of luxury cars and connoisseurs of the British luxury brand – were invited to celebrate the opening of Bentley Almaty on May 12. Guests enjoyed live music from the Harmonic Bliss and Skills, champagne, Bentley cocktails and the sight of the various Bentley models displayed in the brand new showroom. From now on, Kazakh Bentley enthusiasts will enjoy full freedom of choice among the full model line-up. The evening held a further surprise for all guests: the presentation of the new Bentley Continental GT, personally unveiled by senior Bentley designer Vitalis Enns. At the end of the party, a prize draw was held. First prize was a trip to the very heart of Bentley, the factory in Crewe, which a young connoisseur of the Bentley brand won. We wish her good luck!

SHOWROOM OPENS ON NEW CONTINENTAL GT

After five successful years of operation in Ukraine, Bentley Kiev celebrated the opening of a brand new showroom in the best possible way – with the unveiling of a brand-new Bentley, the Continental GT, on April 28th. After a morning press conference, which included presentations from Bentley Kiev's Head of Marketing & PR Svitlana Bilous, General Manager of Vipcar Gennadiy Ovcharuk and Thomas Kiesele, Operations Director Europe at Bentley Motors, the scene was set for a memorable evening launch party for Bentley Kiev's guests. Live music, lavish hospitality and a presentation from Bentley exterior designer Vitalis Enns were among the attractions, but little could compare with the star of the show – the new Continental GT.



BENTLEY CRAFTSMANSHIP GOES UNDER THE HAMMER

GRADUATES FROM BENTLEY MOTORS ARE STAGING AN AUCTION OF UNIQUE COLLECTORS ITEMS HANDCRAFTED IN CREWE TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PRINCE'S TRUST



Craftsmen and women from the tooling, woodshop and styling teams at Bentley Motors have turned their creative energy into crafting a range of one-off collectors' items that will be put to auction to raise funds for The Prince's Trust.

The items range from display pieces such as a chess-set with pieces tooled from aluminium set on a beautifully veneered board, to a table created from a polished V8 engine from the Bentley Mulsanne and a cutlery-set commissioned by Robert Welch and engraved with the Bentley emblem.

A total of seventeen different pieces have been commissioned. All of them have been designed and created on-site at the Bentley factory in Crewe, showcasing the outstanding craftsmanship and attention to detail that typifies Bentley Motors.

The auction will be hosted online at www.bentleybespokeauction.com with bidding opening at the start of September.

The items will also be exhibited at Bentley dealerships later in the year, as well as at the Goodwood Revival Festival in September. Guests at these launch events will be able to view the items, learn about their creation, talk to the Bentley graduates behind this project and, of course, place bids.

It's your chance to contribute to a very worthy cause; the Prince's Trust runs programmes that encourage young people to take responsibility for themselves, helping them build the life they choose rather than the one they've ended up with. And of course a priceless opportunity to own a one-off piece of Bentley craftsmanship. What are we bid?

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Competition prize winner

Congratulations to Count Philip Van Droogenbroeck from Sint-Lievens-Esse, Belgium, who is the winner of our Bentley 36 prize draw Ultimate Vietnam, winning a 5-night stay at Six Senses Ninh Van Bay, Vietnam. In this issue readers will find details on how to win a unique Bentley artwork. Good luck!

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ON THE ROAD:

John Papaevangelou

In repurchasing his first Arnage, John Papaevangelou takes on a project to restore a car and traverse a bridge between tradition and modernity >

I purchased my Arnage T in 2002, in Greece, when I was 38 years old. It's a car with two particular characteristics. It is the first, shall we say, 'new era' Bentley that bridges the commercial gap between the old dealership in Athens, Greece – the one that sold the royal cars – with the current era that we call Bentley Athens.

It is also a car that was specified to be at the launch ceremony at the Bentley Berlin dealership, photographed alongside AX201, the original Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost at a time when both marques lived in Crewe.

Although my initial order was for a green on green Arnage, I heard about this silver pearl with spruce green interior model and had to have it. I couldn't wait because I was getting impatient!

It was, in many ways, love at first sight and I happily drove that car in Greece, racking up 23,000 kilometres. It was sold four years later to a very well-known Greek fashion-world personality named Lakis Gavalas. Later, I would see the car at social gatherings and in Athens and often felt sad for having sold it.

Now, I have a second chance; the chance to be reunited with the car that once belonged to me. I feel like I sold that car with a cold heart but am getting it back with a warm heart.

Together with Bentley Athens we had the idea to restore the car to reference condition and that's the project I am involved in now.

The car is in good condition, and it has been maintained excellently. But it is a 10-year-old car. It will require cosmetic work and it will also require mechanical attention that will be handled by Athens. Trevor Gay is the man at Bentley who showed me what could be done there back in 2002, and he has taken patronage of this project.

The good thing is that there has been an unbelievable shift in technologies that are being used in the production of Bentley cars over the last decade, for environmental as well as other reasons. It will be a very nice challenge, however, to see how the materials – leathers, lacquers, for example – will be done again.

I don't think this kind of restoration has been done yet. These cars are not yet collectable, so people have not yet invested in them in any serious way to get them back to reference condition.

So, in many ways this is a bridge between the previous era of Bentley and the current era of Bentley. It has enough of the old world, but one foot of this is in the past and one foot in the future.

For me, apart from the technical prowess, the best thing about driving a Bentley has been experiencing this sense of modernity and tradition. I remember one of my first experiences driving the Arnage T, and feeling enveloped by the extreme silence and being impressed by the way the car carried its great tradition with a lightness of touch and ease.

A second fond memory was how extremely proud I was when Bentley won Le Mans in 2003 after so many years. At that time in Greece, the only Bentley around was mine. And so, I waved the British flag for a while.

I suppose one is getting older and one is trying to grab as much of what can be retained from all these memoirs. The fact that Bentleys are built in Crewe, the same factory that they always had since after the war, is a great thing. The bricks are the same ones that were there when I took hold of the Arnage. That's something that's difficult to find; other makers have moved to new places.

I love technology. I work in technology. I also miss tradition. I guess this is why I'm attracted to the heritage aspect of Bentley. In many ways, this project is really about continuation **B**

As told to Avis Cardella



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