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1957 BENTLEY S1 CONTINENTAL DHC BY PARK WARD

1957 Bentley S1 Continental Park Ward DHC

- One of only 31 left-hand-drive Park Ward Drophead Coupés
- Sold new to Greek shipping magnate and George Embiricos
- Recent restoration by marque authority P&A Wood
- Presented in the original two-tone colour scheme of Sand over Sable
- Arguably the most coveted post-war Bentley

Any Bentley S1 Continental offers a rare combination of style, performance and usability, but the Park Ward Drophead Coupé is the most coveted version of all.

Introduced in 1955, the S1 shared its mechanical components with the new Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud, which meant a refined 4.9-litre straight-six engine driving through a four-speed automatic gearbox. The Bentley, however, was even more exclusive than its stablemate and featured a wider range of coachwork options that enabled it to be tailored to its owner's individual taste.

The Continental model was more powerful than the standard S1 and featured a longer final-drive ratio – making it the ideal choice for a wealthy aristocrat or captain of industry who relished covering large distances at speed and in perfect luxury. When it tested one, *The Autocar* wrote that the Bentley's all-round abilities were 'beyond the experience and perhaps even the imagination of the majority of the world's motorists.'

This particular example is one of only 31 left-hand-drive cars to be fitted with Park Ward Drophead Coupé coachwork. The factory build cards show that chassis number BC30LCH was finished in stylish two-tone Sand and Sable, with a Beige interior, and handed over to its first owner on 8 August 1957.

That owner was Greek shipping magnate George A Embiricos, whose family had an enduring relationship with the Bentley marque over the years. They had famously commissioned the "Embiricos Bentley" which was a custom Georges Paulin designed 4 ¼ which raced at Le Mans three times finishing as high as 6th. George Embiricos was a discerning and sophisticated client who also had an eye for fine art – he owned masterpieces by the likes of Picasso and van Gogh – and he had his own mascot fitted to the car, plus a 'Made in England' plate, a miles-per-hour speedometer, Marchal headlamps and deep amber tail lights.

The Bentley had been ordered via the Garage de l'Athenée in Paris and was shipped to France on the *SS Dinard* on 16 August 1957. The factory records note company addresses for Embiricos in London and New York, and the car must have crossed the Atlantic at some point because in early 1970 it was acquired by Tom Mix – the founder of a Massachusetts-based dealership called Foreign Motors West where Jay Leno once worked as a lot boy.

Mix was a keen collector who kept the Bentley for more than 30 years until he passed away in August 2001, having used it only sparingly. It was then sold to MH Van Son, whose family had founded an ink-manufacturing company – Van Son Holland Inc – in 1872. He immediately sent the car to marque specialist P&A Wood for a thorough inspection and some remedial work, and then revelled in driving it on long holiday journeys – a task for which it remains supremely well suited.

In 2017, the Bentley was sold to a well-known collector who sent it back to P&A Wood for a more comprehensive restoration. Having been resprayed blue early in its life, it was stripped to bare metal, any areas of corrosion were attended to, and it was beautifully refinished in its original two-tone colour scheme. The interior wood was refinished, the rear seat retrimmed, and all mechanical areas of the car were overhauled.

The work was completed in time for the car to attend the 2020 Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court, and is meticulously recorded not only in photographs taken by P&A Wood during the restoration, but also on invoices showing the considerable investment that was made in the rebuild and subsequent servicing.

Having been cared for with no expense spared, this striking Bentley S1 Continental would not only grace any concours lawn, it is also ready to be used and enjoyed in the same way that George Embiricos would have done almost 70 years ago.

SOLD




350 XWD






350 XWD


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