



The origins of the Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring

It takes an avid and passionate collector, with a taste for special coach building, to be at the basis of a project like the Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring. Exactly such a person contacted Touring Superleggera in early 2008.

An interesting initial creative process emerged involving parameters for design, proportions, vehicle concepts and - last but not least- feasibility and technical factors.

Many steps from design to execution were shared with the customer, who contributed with his own ideas and taste to personalise the project and create a unique automobile.

A basic idea was formed by the desire to diversify Bentley's very successful Continental model range, and to explore new concepts.

The transformation of a 2-door coupé, by expanding the roof line and enlarging the interior dimensions, has led to a design concept baptised as *shooting brake*: a sports car featuring enough space to join a hunting party or a golf tournament with elegance and efficiency. Touring Superleggera explored the same field back in 1966, resulting in the amazing Lamborghini Flying Star II prototype. It was a dramatic interpretation of a sports car based on a new 2-volume design, safeguarding the dynamic performance. The Flying Star reference is a Touring parameter of sportive elegance, applied to many famous cars since the companies' start in 1926.

Flying Star in 2010 - the Bentley challenge

The Bentley Continental GT range set innovative and high standards for a new generation of very sophisticated Grand Tourers. As such, this model triggered the imagination of automotive designers and coach builders elsewhere. The GTC convertible, featuring a very rigid platform, proved to be a fully congruent basis to Touring Superleggera's plans for the new Flying Star.

The new project required the modification of a number of external dimensions starting from the car's A-pillar backwards: extended roof line, a wider section including the doors, new aluminium door skins and a new all-aluminium, electrically operated tailgate. It also includes a completely new rear compartment with two foldable rear seats and a variable loading space.

This long list of modifications and transformations had to be paired with, and to remain fully compatible to the basic car's technical layout and components. Given the sophistication of the basic car, a new challenge was laid out for Touring's craftsmen and engineers. The final result proves that special coach building can live on well into the 21st. century working with respect to the original manufacturers.

Touring Superleggera is particularly proud of the fact that the complete productive cycle of the special coach building process was realized in their workshop near Milano. Modern body engineering went hand in hand with traditional handicraft skills, maintaining the highest quality directives for the final product.



The Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring

Project Engineering

The body engineering processes at Carrozzeria Touring are aimed at safeguarding key parameters for quality, safety and feasibility, within the perspectives of low-volume automotive production. The project went through 1:4 and 1:1 modelling, based on the CAD and CATIA data from the basic vehicle. This digital basis resulted in a milled 1:1 master model and a number of 1:1 moulds for the manufacturing of the new external skin, and for important new body components. The rear bodywork was reinforced with an integrated structure between the rear suspension domes, functioning both as roll bar, and as support for the new, extended roofline. All structural additions and modifications were thoroughly studied, using advanced simulation methods and FEM-analysis. As a parallel process, these data served for the homologation of the structural changes, including the new foldable rear seats. An important number of hard points from the basic car could be saved and carried-over. The engineering team at Carrozzeria Touring was particularly pleased with the quality assurance support from Bentley engineers.

Design

'Variations on a theme' not rarely implicate a larger design challenge, than starting-off with a white sheet of paper. The basic mission was to create a body incorporating the essence of Touring elegance and harmony, while clearly recognizable as a Bentley. This task was challenging because a fully new volume had to be added to the GTC basis. The proportions were totally new, but the overall design had to be kept consistent. That is why only the section in front of the car's A-pillar, including the windshield has been maintained.

Viewed from the rear, the new tailgate dives between the wide rear wings. The oval rear light chrome bezels are a reference to Bentley fastback cars of the '50. The side view features a low roof, prominent quarter panel shoulders and wide wheel arches, suggesting perfectly mastered energy.

The Touring Superleggera designers were challenged by the target to give the new interior equal elegance, whether the back of the rear seats are folded or not. The solution was to design an "S" shaped trim of the rear quarter panels linking the passenger area to the rear luggage area. The beige and dark green leather contrast also adds to this visual unity.

First time ever in this class and size, the twin individual rear seats fold completely to create a flat loading surface more than 2m long with 1200lt capacity. This is instrumental to fulfill the functional mission profile, which requires loading in full comfort a wide array of leisure equipment, including 4 full golfing bags with the rear seats up. An example of bespoke finish is the woven leather boot carpet offering superior endurance and coordinated with the special luggage set.

The overall result is perfectly in line with the Touring and Flying Star heritage: a timeless shape, a design statement combining elegance and sportiveness, with a strong and unmistakable own personality and individuality.



Manufacturing

When digital technologies are blended with traditional manufacturing skills, a fascinating process emerges that is typical for Touring Superleggera. A discriminating factor for traditional coach building was and is the vast amount of handwork that is involved in the creation of a new body. In this process, multiple practical solutions are also found for a wide variety of minor technical issues. This includes quick, practical solutions based on years-long experience, common sense and an expert eye.

The result is a final product entirely produced within the high quality parameters of today's automotive industry.

From the A-pillar backwards, new exterior body panels were hand shaped in steel - including the roof, new wider rear wings, and the internal reinforcements of the complete rear section of the car. Aluminium was used for the door skins, and for the complete rear bonnet including its structure. New, handmade brightwork was added according to the new exterior design.

The all new rear compartment required shaping of the foldable rear seats and a full set of interior panels, leather trimmed with meticulous care. Wide leather hides were selected with great attention to provide uniform finish to the vast continuous surfaces.

After inspection, the body in white was prepared and painted in the Touring state-of-the-art paint facilities. The final result underwent again a special final quality audit.

Performance

The Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring inherits the chassis of the Continental GTC. The 6-liter, W12 engine is available either in the 560HP version which delivers 650NM of torque at 1600rpm or the GTC Speed variant which delivers a massive 750Nm from 610HP. The car exhibited in Geneva Motor Show features the GTC Speed specifications.

Performance braking, cornering and traction functions mesh together to provide precise and immediate driving control under extreme or difficult conditions.

Self-adjusting air springs and electronic dampers operate independently for each wheel. All-wheel drive promotes advanced traction.

Homologation

The model is CEE homologated according to the new low-volume production directive. For the first time since its introduction, the type approval was awarded without destructive test, using simulation and FEM-analysis.



Future Programme

Touring Superleggera undertakes a limited production run of up to 20 units of the Continental Flying Star. This series will be exclusively built to special order and customer specifications. The car is offered at a basic price of € 590.000 when based on a Continental GTC - 560 PS. Other versions on request.

The car will be serviced at the Bentley dealers. Bentley Motors and Touring Superleggera have developed a special mutual warranty program, which safeguards warranty clauses for both the basic car, and the transformation by Touring.

Personalisation

The customers are actively involved in the early stage to choose the specifications of their own unique automobile, ranging from bespoke cabinetry and trim to a wide choice of dedicated options. The accessory collection includes the Touring designed luggage set coordinated with the boot trim, and the distinctive Borrani X-Ray spoke wheels.

Blending advanced technology with craftsmanship, Borrani 20" 9.5j X-Ray spoke wheels provide distinctive design, precision and comfort. Featuring monolithic spun aluminium rim and hand assembled steel spokes, they can be tailored to the car's painting and finish.

Louis de Fabribeckers, Head of Design

Responsible for the design team of the Flying Star project is the 32 years young Belgian designer Louis de Fabribeckers.

Graduated from the ISD of Valenciennes in France in Engineering Design, de Fabribeckers started to work with Touring in 2006 as project leader.

Under his hands, the Maserati based Bellagio and A8GCS Berlinetta projects materialized; the first one being a fastback, 5-door version of the Quattroporte model, and the second a magnificent concept for a light and compact, modern sports car. Both new projects were presented at the occasion of the 2008 Villa d'Este Concours d'Elégance. The A8GCS Berlinetta was granted the 'Plus Belle Supercar de l'Année 2008' award by the expert jury of the 24th. Festival Internationale de l'Automobile in Paris.

Louis de Fabribeckers lives and works in Milan.



Technical information

(where appropriate based on a Continental GTC Speed)

ENGINE

Capacity 5998 cc W shaped 12 cyl.
Max.Power 610 PS /449 kW @ 6000t/m
Max. Torque 750 NM @ 1700-5600t/m

DRIVELINE AND TRANSMISSION

Continuous all-wheel drive
6-speed automatic transmission

PERFORMANCE

Max. Speed 322 km/h (TBC)
Acceleration 0-100km/h 4.8 seconds (TBC)

DIMENSIONS

Overall length 4815mm
Width 1943mm
Overall Height 1395mm
Min. Boot volume 400L
Max. Boot volume 1200L



The Touring A8 GCS Berlinetta is now ready for one-off production

Geneva is the first public appearance of this prototype after the Concours d'Élegance previews.

Touring Superleggera has completed the development stage and is now ready to produce a rolling concept for one of the passionate clients who showed their enthusiasm since the first debut.

The Berlinetta is based on a high-end production platform revised by Touring. It has been carefully selected to match the mission profile in power, torque, and handling.

Compact, light and powerful, the shape embodies the perfect high performance sports car in the Touring tradition. The A8 GCS Berlinetta is a strict two-seater with perfectly balanced volumes and frugal decoration.

“We wanted a strong project” – says the Belgian Head of Design of Touring Superleggera, Louis de Fabribeckers – “I drew from the stylistic heritage of Touring the work of surfaces and also this sinusoidal line across the side of the Berlinetta”.

The car is 4,20 m. long and only 1,22 m. high on a 2,50 m. wheelbase. Engineers target a 1500 kg weight for the finished car.



Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera

Founded by Felice Bianchi Anderloni and Gaetano Ponzoni in 1926, the company started to produce custom built automotive bodywork with two distinctive features from the very beginning: sporting elegance and lightness. Early customers were reputed car makers as Isotta Fraschini and Alfa Romeo. It would mark the start of a flamboyant period, also culminating in the 'Flying Star' period with several spectacular spider coachworks.

Touring Superleggera also gradually researched the streamlining process. The marriage between this, and their Superleggera construction system using aluminium body panels over a light but rigid tubular steel frame, resulted in some extremely elegant masterpieces such as the 1938 Alfa Romeo 8C2900 Touring spider, which today have become icons of automotive design and body construction. In 1945, the excellent Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni joined his father at the company, which soon started to receive its first orders from a motivated Modenese entrepreneur called Enzo Ferrari. The Tipo 166 Touring 'Barchetta' of 1950 formed a new milestone for light, elegant and effective design on a competition chassis.

Under Carlo Felice, Touring saw its industrial customer basis grow in the mainstream of the expanding automotive industry in Italy and Europe. A number of niche models were designed and built on Alfa Romeo 1900, Lancia Flaminia and Maserati 3500. Another new inspired car manufacturer from the Bologna area relied on Touring's skills: Lamborghini. At the same time, Aston Martin produced their DB4, 5 and 6 models with a license for the Superleggera system. The energy crises of the early seventies, and the increasing mass production methods in the car industry would regrettably force many specialist companies to close their doors. The last production car left Carrozzeria Touring in 1966, but the true Touring spirit was firmly consolidated in the company's products, that found their ways to an international community of motor-ing enthusiasts and car collectors.

In 2006, the year of its 80th. Anniversary, Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera of Milan restarted its activities, now part of Zeta Europe BV, a private company specializing in automotive high-end products and brands.

*Press Contact: communications@touringsuperleggera.eu
Luca Grandori +39 335 599.1857*



Ruote Borrani presents a new wire wheel at 2010 Geneva show for the Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring

For the discerning client who wishes to add a very special accent to his car, the prestigious wire wheel manufacturer from Milan took up the challenge to develop an innovative new tubeless wire wheel with the dimensions of 9,5J X 20". This exciting new product finds its origins in Borrani's new technological wire wheel generation, baptized **Borrani X-Ray**.

The new **X-Ray** program required an intensive development programme over several years, and a grueling test procedure. The wheels feature a high-quality, strong monolithic spun and polished aluminum rim, a forged alloy center hub and special stainless steel spokes to the highest quality standards.

Different other finishes like bespoke paintings can be specially ordered, offering possibilities to meet a wide variety of individual tastes.

The wheels were developed to offer maximum performance and safety.

Ruote Borrani, member of the same industrial group as Touring Superleggera, is currently expanding its new S-Ray, X-Ray and Bimetal ranges of new wheels for modern vehicles, thus reviving and developing the fascinating wire wheel heritage and know-how since 1922 into the 21st. century.