

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring



To be shown at Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este on 23-25 April 2010, Carrozzeria Touring's Bentley Continental Flying Star is the first of just 19 planned for production. Classic Driver visited the factory that has created this most exclusive shooting brake, costing nearly 600,000 euros apiece.

Hidden away in Milan's northern suburbs, **Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera** was founded in 1926 by **Felice Bianchi Anderloni** and immediately built a reputation for the highest quality in innovative, lightweight coachwork, building on techniques learnt in its aviation industry work. On Anderloni's death in 1948, son **Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni** continued the enterprise until, refusing to compromise on quality, Touring fell victim to an economic crisis in 1966. Four decades later, **Touring** was revived in 2006 by the Dutch company, **Zeta Europe BV**.

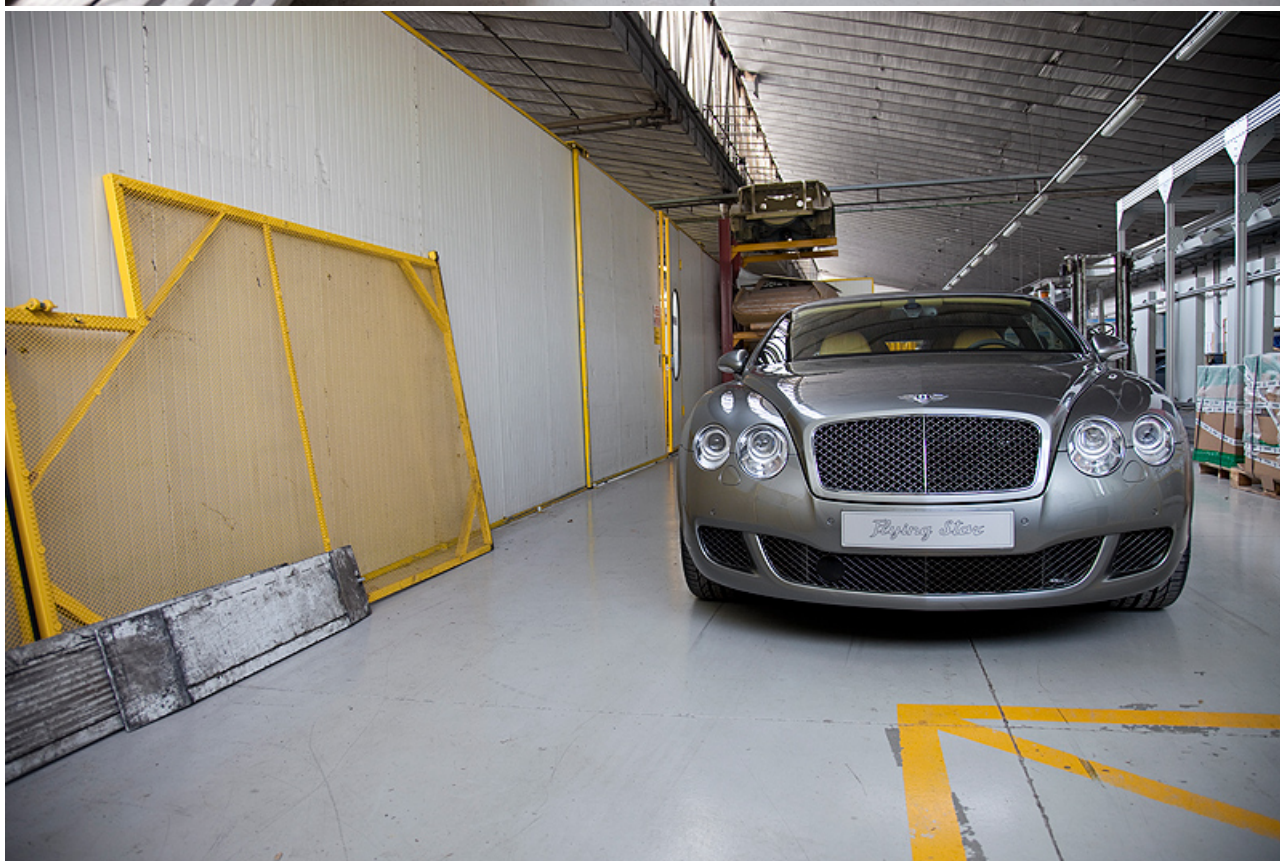




Managing Director **Piero Mancardi** welcomed us into a simple office, an unpretentious setting for the hub of a business that provides the best in automotive design to the world's multi-millionaires. Three major new projects have been realised since Touring was re-established: the **Maserati Bellagio Touring**, the breathtaking **Maserati A8GCS Berlinetta Touring** and now, the latest and most ambitious of all, the **Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring**, which met with universal acclaim when it was revealed to the Press at Geneva in March.



"We were contacted by a customer who wanted a luxurious shooting brake," explains **Mancardi**. Bentley was his natural choice of partner. "We were put under the magnifying glass by Bentley," states the Touring boss, "as the quality of our work had to be correct." Following this successful examination, Touring received all the technical data and assistance required from Bentley to bring the project to fruition. Engineers from Crewe often travelled to Milan, giving advice to the team in Touring's workshops.



With this factory assistance, the full worldwide warranty and service conditions required for the **Bentley Continental Flying Star by Touring** have been met. Mancardi justifies the price of this small production run on the basis of its quality and the immense work that went into it: "More than 4000 working hours of our best craftsmen are in each of these cars. After receiving the donor car, it takes approximately six months to complete each one, and more than that if certain extras are ordered."



The fascination created by the **Bentley Continental Flying Star** lies in the combination of its all-wheel drive chassis, the superb engineering specification and the unique shooting brake design that guarantees undivided attention to its owner at any of the world's most exclusive country clubs.





Louis de Fabribeckers, Touring’s young Belgian **Chief Designer**, conducted us through the workshop, revealing the many sketches, CAD drafts, pressed forms and clay models used in the design process. He showed us how the **Superleggera** traditional methods save weight while maintaining extreme strength. Above all, however, it’s how the car looks that interests the customers and in that respect Touring’s treatment of this Bentley is pure art. From the A-pillar forward it is unchanged but everything else is completely new.



This creation, with its surprisingly massive baggage compartment, is supremely elegant yet it’s easy to get four big golf bags in there. Then, with the back seats down, over two metres of flat floor and 1200 litres of loading space are exposed.



With 560HP and 650Nm of torque, the W12 engine provides all the performance required of a Bentley, but you can opt for even more. The speed option, as fitted to this first model, has 610HP and 750Nm. On our test run, it proved to be every bit as fast and surefooted as the standard **Bentley Coupé** or **Cabriolet**. In only 4.8 seconds it can go from rest to 62mph and top speed is 200mph. More importantly, when cornering fast, no dramatic shift in handling characteristics is to be felt. It's here that the invaluable assistance of those engineers from Crewe is most obvious; it really has paid off.



The extraordinary quality of this bespoke product from **Carrozzeria Touring** will be appreciated by customers in the same way that they might enjoy having a suit made by one of the best tailors. Mancardi understands the importance of this personal relationship and his extensive knowledge of the world's many different cultures means that he can welcome customers from all continents with confidence.

Meanwhile, as well as the new Flying Star, selected Touring models from the company's illustrious history will also be on show at **Villa d'Este** this weekend; prepared, of course, to Concorso standard by the experts themselves.

Text & Photos: [Jan Baedeker](#)





























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