

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Is the Brooklands the most collectable modern Bentley?](#)

Lead

Speculating on whether a car will enjoy future classic status is an everyday occurrence for collectors and enthusiasts. Here at Classic Driver, we're inclined to think the Bentley Brooklands is one such vehicle...

Timed with a recession



Unveiled to the public at the 2007 Geneva Auto Show, the entirely hand-made Bentley Brooklands enjoyed a four-year production lifespan from 2008 to 2011. At launch, a total of 550 examples were planned; however, only around 430 were actually sold - partly due to its being launched at a time of recession. It was also rather expensive, at £230,000 in standard specification.

Two-door sporting coupé



Taking its name from the banked Surrey racing circuit where Bentley scored many victories in pre-War days, each car required more than 650 man-hours to build, around 130 of which were spent on welding the body alone. There are many amazing facts that surround the Brooklands, a car that - given its timing and lineage with pre-VW-era models such as the Azure and Continental R - is uniquely positioned in the brand's history. Look even further into Bentley's history books and the Brooklands shares much in common with the Mulliner-bodied R Type Continental of the early 50s: a sporting, two-door coupé and the first Bentley designed to carry four at speeds of over 100mph, in great comfort. Don't believe us? Bentley Motors quietly bought a stunning 1952 example in 2000 to form part of its heritage fleet; such is its landmark importance to its modern-day coupé-model lineage.

A car from the old school



Received with universal acclaim in the UK, the Brooklands was praised by journalists for its muscular drivetrain, genuine driver-friendliness, gloriously appointed cabin and, most importantly, for the way it made its occupants feel – arguably a secret weapon of sorts in ‘future classic’ credentials. Which begs the question: in a market where sub-£30k used Bentleys are commonplace, is the Brooklands the last truly collectable Bentley? We put this exact question to Derek Bennett of Jack Barclay Bentley, Mayfair's and indeed the world's longest running official Bentley dealer. "I would have to agree. The Brooklands is a Bentley through and through. Built from the ground up, entirely by hand at Crewe, it's certainly a car from the old school; a coach-built Bentley made in the traditional way. A low-mileage, Bentley Pre-Owned example, represents a sound and enjoyable investment in my opinion."

Havana Project



Launched before the current Mulsanne flagship, the two-door Brooklands retained the brand's legendary L Series 6.75-litre twin-turbo V8, with power upped to 530bhp and 1,050Nm of torque – the highest torque figure produced from a production V8 petrol engine in 2008. A clichéd superlative? Perhaps, but more than that, it reinforced the maker's philosophy that Bentley cars should always offer power in reserve. It also helped the 5.4m long, 2665kg Grand Tourer achieve its 0-60mph time of five seconds and top speed of 184mph. Bennett adds, "Prior to launch, the Brooklands was known as the 'Havana Project' internally; perhaps due to its elegant, cigar-shaped bodywork or because it was designed to provide the ideal environment in which to enjoy a Cuban cigar on the move."

Looking at the evidence, the model offers exclusivity, pedigree and the air of a car-maker that was flexing its muscles at a time when the rest of the car industry was tightening its purse strings. As a feat of craftsmanship and engineering capability, it pushed boundaries in its day and still impresses today. For this reason, in our opinion, Bentley's most recent swansong and crowning achievement is, indeed, named Brooklands.

Photos: Michael Bailie for Classic Driver Bentley Brooklands book

Gallery

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