

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## On its 100th birthday, Bentley showed us the future...

### Lead

Exactly 100 years to the day since W.O. Bentley founded his eponymous motor company in Cricklewood, North London, the illustrious British marque has presented what it believes to be the future of Grand Touring: the EXP 100 GT...

Bentley's got one hell of a history - 100 years, to be precise. But rather than rest on its laurels, it's taken the occasion of its centenary to present its vision of the future of luxury motoring. And we're sure you'll agree that the result, the gargantuan EXP 100 GT, embodies a future we'd all love to be a part of. A spaceship-like coupé that's as grand, opulent and elegant as a proper Bentley should be, the concept Grand Tourer - which can be driven manually or entirely autonomously - has been designed to anticipate the year 2035 and therefore encompasses technology that, at present, is still very much in its infancy. Think autonomous driving and artificial intelligence.



Take the battery system, which will power the four electric motors and propel the 1,900kg car from 0-62mph in under 2.5sec and onto a top speed of 186mph, for example. Bentley suggests future battery technology will be five times as energy-dense by 2035 and cites an impressive 435-mile range for the EXP. What's more, it'll take just 15 minutes to recharge it to 80-percent capacity. While the car has been built around an all-electric architecture, a hybrid battery-and-fuel-cell combination has been mooted.



At a whopping 5.8 metres long, 2.4 metres wide and 3 metres tall with the huge doors swung upward, the EXP 100 GT is definitely a car you'll want to enjoy on the open roads rather than manoeuvring around Waitrose car park. Its carbon-fibre bodywork is nothing short of sensational, coming to an imposing head with that gargantuan matrix grille, whose intricate (and suitably blingy) latticework extends to the headlights. There are some really clever exterior features, too, such as the 3D OLED screen on the horseshoe section of the boot that depicts different lighting effects in order to blend in with the rear lights.



Naturally, much of the car's onus is on sustainability - there's 5000-year-old Riverwood throughout the interior 'infused' with recycled copper, the 'Compass' paint is made from recycled rice husks, and while there is an abundance of strong-smelling leather, a similar material that's a by-product of winemaking has also been utilised.

Inside, the seating can be configured in three different ways depending on whether the occupants are in control of the car or not and the materials all seamlessly blend into each other in one, sci-fi-like blur. There's an innovative glass roof that actually transfers light inside the cabin via fibre optics, in a bid to enhance and improve the passengers' states of mind. The so-called Bentley Personal Assistant also anticipates occupants' moods and optimises driving modes, comfort, sound and air quality using a cutting-edge AI

system and biometric tracking. As a reminder of the distant past, Bentley has developed a special scent for the car that's said to have traces of sandalwood and moss.



So, is the EXP 100 GT all a bit far-fetched or will we genuinely live in a future where our cars care more about our well-being than we do? As cliché as it is to say, only time will tell. Happy 100th birthday, Bentley - here's to the next century of distinguished wafting.

*Photos: Bentley*

**Gallery**





















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