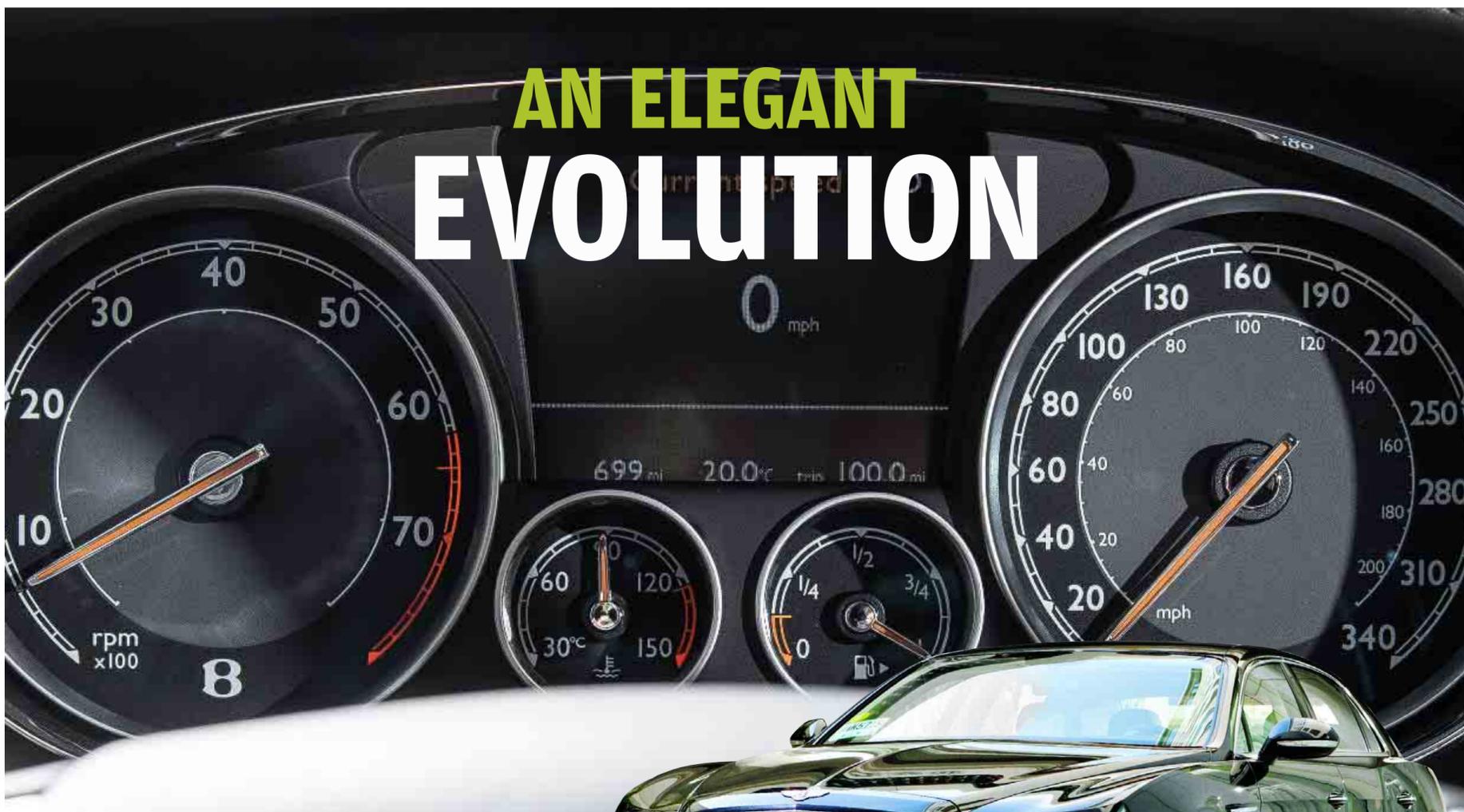


TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN

AN ELEGANT EVOLUTION



Bentley hopes the latest generation Flying Spur will further accelerate its sales on the mainland, writes Mark Andrews

It's no accident that Bentley chose Beijing for the international media test-drive of its new Flying Spur. China is now the carmaker's No. 2 market and accounted for 55 per cent of sales of the first-generation Flying Spur. With the new model, the Volkswagen Group's upscale marque is hoping that will increase to 60 per cent. Bentley is keen to point out it is an all-new model, but with its evolutionary approach to design it could easily pass for a facelift of the previous generation.

Going along with the dropping of the Continental name, the headlight arrangement is no longer the same as its GT siblings and the outer lamps are now larger than the inner ones. There is a less boxy look than the old model, with sculpted lines running the length of the four-door grand tourer. Surprisingly, the car has a drag coefficient of only 0.29.

Under the bonnet, the new Flying Spur is powered by a six-litre W12 engine that has an output of 616 brake horsepower and 800Nm of torque.

Inside, everything – with the exception of the control dials and stalks – is swathed in either luxurious leather or wood veneer. Everything screams quality, right down to the Breitling clock – there are no hard plastics to complain about.

Buyers have a choice of 12 leathers and two veneers to go with the 17 standard paint schemes. For a price, everything is negotiable, and there are more than 100 extended paint colours to choose from.

There is an emphasis on the passenger experience, as most owners are likely to be chauffeured. In the rear there is now what Bentley calls a Touch Screen Remote (TSR) which controls the front infotainment unit, rear seat heating and



ventilation, climate and rear blind, and displays vehicle data. The rear seats are electrically adjustable and have a comfortable massage function. There is an option for two 10-inch LCD screens mounted on the back of the front seats along with Wi-Fi. The fold-down rear arm rest can house an optional champagne cooler and there is also a fixed rear central console four-seater option.

Put your foot down and the car is deceptively fast, shooting from a standstill to 100km/h in 4.3 seconds and with a top speed of 320km/h. The eight-speed ZF gearbox provides nearly imperceptible shifts, but select the sports mode and use the steering

**The fold-down rear arm rest can house an optional champagne cooler**



column-mounted paddle shifts and the car drops its cool demeanour with a hearty growl. Permanent rear-biased all-wheel drive ensures excellent road holding. The sheer size of the car, though, means it's most at home as a highway cruiser.

Instrumentation for the price really should be better. The new BMW 3-Series has a head-up display and yet the Bentley, a much faster car, makes do with a relatively low mounted satellite navigation and a small display sandwiched between the rev counter and speedometer. It would also have been good to not have a key fob which is little different, spare the badges, to that of the new Volkswagen Santana.

Only the keenest drivers will notice any real difference between the air suspension's comfort and sport settings

4.3 secs

The time it takes the Flying Spur to reach 100km/h from standstill

(largely tuned to the former). Bentley has also made considerable efforts to dampen noise, creating a cossetting environment.

The car is refined, and while it's a little staid on the surface it has unbridled power underneath.

The Flying Spur, which accounts for half of Bentley's sales in Hong Kong, will be launched here in July, and the carmaker is now taking orders. Prices start at HK\$3,880,000. [life@scmp.com](mailto:life@scmp.com)



Clockwise from top: the Bentley Flying Spur's dashboard; the all-new car; the touch screen remote control for the infotainment and climate system; the car's interior. Photos: Bentley Motors

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FASHION  
That's one smart dummy

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As oxymorons go, Allan Chan Chee-kooi has created a fitting one: a smart dummy.

The sophisticated mannequin, which goes by the name of i.Dummy, looks just like any other mannequin, but what separates it from the crowd is its hi-tech capabilities. It can change body shape at the press of a button, morphing from the smallest size to the largest in just eight seconds.

Developed by researchers at Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), the mannequin is set to streamline the apparel and garment industry.

"It really is a bonus for the fashion world. The i.Dummy is unique as the changes are three-dimensional, varying in width, thickness and length all at once.

"It rotates automatically so it can be viewed in 360 degrees, so that every angle of clothes fitting can be assessed," says Chan, associate professor at PolyU's Institute of Textiles and Clothing.

Chan and his PolyU team members collected a massive amount of data on the different body profiles of people from different nationalities.

"People from different countries have varying body shapes so we gathered a lot of information and profiled this

data from American, British, Japanese and Hong Kong people to understand how the body changes from small sizes to larger ones."

Chan says the mannequins can be used across the clothing spectrum. "Its robust design means it's suitable for a variety of garments, from ball gowns to occasional wear to tight-fitting swimwear."

The i.Dummy is controlled using common graphics software on any PC and Bluetooth smartphone technology. It means potential clients from anywhere in the world can input measurements remotely to achieve fittings and then purchase online.

Chan says the potential market for the i.Dummy is enormous.

"Fashion designers, pattern masters and merchandisers all

**It's suitable for a variety of garments, from ball gowns to occasional wear to tight-fitting swimwear**

ALLAN CHAN (RIGHT WITH AN I.DUMMY), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT HK POLYU'S INSTITUTE OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING



require fitting mannequins, so there is a huge potential market for this product," he says, adding that it also serves as a training device for students and apprentices of fashion design and pattern development.

Chan, who has worked in the industry since 1980, says i.Dummy will also save money

and space. "Fashion chains need dummies of various sizes which mean lots of different dummies have to be kept. The i.Dummy solves this problem."

The mannequin has been four years in development with most research spent on the study of the body shapes of different nationalities.