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## Bentley ignites racing revival via GT3 debut

September 30, 2013



By JOE MCCARTHY

Bentley Motors is continuing its return to racing Dec. 13 after a ten-year departure with the debut of its Continental GT3 at the Gulf 12 Hours, Dubai.

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**Luxury Daily**

The British automaker revealed the model during July's Goodwood Festival of Speed and will debut it on the racetrack after months of refinement. An automaker such as Bentley is able to cultivate new fans and bolster its legacy by engaging in and performing strongly at races.

"Bentley is a brand from racing," said Lauren Fix, automotive expert and author of "[Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car](#)," Lancaster, NY. "Their goal is to have their high-end clientele be aware that they're keeping the heritage alive."

"They're producing and investing in new technology because the great technology comes from races," she said.

"They're saying that we're not making something different. We're evolving the brand and looking to win."

Ms. Fix is not affiliated with Bentley, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Bentley** did not respond by press deadline.

## Back to the basics

Since the GT3's official debut at Goodwood, the race car has undertaken a rigorous testing series at tracks across Europe. Bentley expects the vehicle to be ready to race by December.



### *Bentley Continental GT3*

The Dubai race will build upon the revival of the brand's racing legacy that began in June's 24-hour Le Mans race.

Bentley celebrated its heritage through a short film that traces its role in the development of the 24-hour Le Mans race to educate car enthusiasts and win over new fans.

“Le Mans 24 hours: Les Bentley Boys” coincided with the actual Le Mans race that ran for 24 hours June 22. This year’s race marked the 10th anniversary of the British automaker’s previous victory and the 90th anniversary for the race itself, both of which the film discusses in its sweeping panorama of the company’s roots ([see story](#)).

The Gulf 12 Hours, Dubai will take place at the Yas Marina Circuit and is described as a two-part endurance race.



### *Bentley Continental GT3*

Testing and development of the GT3 is being handled by a team comprising engineers from Bentley and the Continental GT3 Technical Partner, M-Sport Ltd. from a motorsport facility at the Bentley factory.

The car is preparing for entry in the 2014 FIA Blancpain Series as Team M-Sport Bentley.

### Surging market

Bentley's reemergence into racing parallels the automaker's solid sales numbers.

Company sales surged through the first six months of 2013 with a 9 percent increase compared to the year-ago period due to 14 showroom openings, new models and expansive markets in the United States and Europe.

Revenue in the Americas jumped 12 percent and sales throughout Europe soared 22 percent. Although countries in which Bentley has traditionally done well constitute the bulk of sales, the Volkswagen-owned British brand has shown that it aims to ingratiate new consumers in emerging markets who are just as finicky about getting the right model ([see story](#)).

As it continues to expand, Bentley will likely derive inspiration from its racing background.

"The subtext of the race is that they're making a state-of-the-art vehicle and they're continuing with the heritage of the brand.

"[A Bentley] is a performance super-luxury car well beyond the other luxury cars," she said. "When you own a Bentley, you make a statement."

### Final take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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