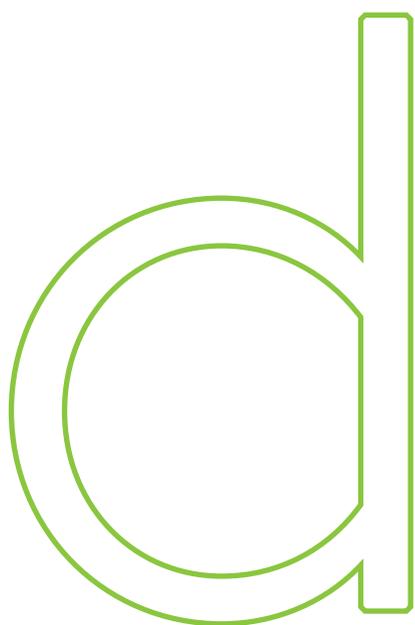


AN EYE

Abigail Bassett meets Drew Perkins, tech entrepreneur and proud owner of a co-created Bentley Flying Spur First Edition with a rock and roll touch

FOR DETAIL



rew Perkins is no stranger to blending analogue and digital worlds. The entrepreneur and founder of smart contact lens company Mojo

Vision has always been interested in combining old-school functionality with high-tech features. But blending analogue and digital offerings into an elegant and user-friendly package is no small feat, whether at the size of the human eye or customising a Bentley. Perkins learnt this first hand when he became the new owner of a Bentley Flying Spur First Edition.

The limited edition grand tourer was revealed at the Elton John AIDS Foundation Midsummer Party, held in the South of France in July last year, and an example was auctioned to raise

money for the charity. Buying a Bentley was probably the last thing on Perkins' mind that day, but he ended up as the winning bidder in what turned out to be a very exciting auction.

"I didn't know that Bentley was auctioning the Flying Spur First Edition, but when I saw it I thought it was a beautiful car and it would be a valuable showpiece," he says. "I ended up bidding against Elton John. When he outbid me, Pete Townshend offered to contribute to outbid Elton. They were sitting next to each other and there was a friendly rivalry there. Ultimately, with Townshend's help, I ended up with the winning bid."

Along with the vehicle, Perkins also won access to Bentley's exclusive Co-Creation Luxury Service, which introduces customers to a Bentley designer who will guide and inspire them in the curation of their next extraordinary car. In many ways, the programme is a lot like what Perkins is creating at Mojo Vision, a Silicon Valley start-up that's working to create something you might see in sci-fi blockbusters – a contact lens with a tiny inbuilt



computer that gives the wearer real-time information such as weather forecasts, directions and calendar details.

The Co-Creation Luxury Service allows designers to work closely with customers either at Bentley headquarters at Crewe or digitally through Bentley Network App. Perkins chose a unique experience: he travelled to Pebble Beach, California, last August where he worked with Brett Boydell, Head of Interior Design, to create his own Alpine Green Flying Spur First Edition with Linen and Cumbrian Green interior.

“Brett made the process fun. He and his team displayed incredible expertise,” says Perkins. “At the Home of Bentley in Pebble Beach during Monterey Car Week, there was an area where you could see all the paint colours and interior options. You work with a specialist for each area, and I got to pick them all and see what they looked like together before settling on the final version. Seeing the huge variety of colours, styles and choices was my favourite part of the Co-Creation experience.”

The entrepreneur was delighted that a piece of wood signed by Elton John at the charity auction was worked into the dash. “I have always been an Elton John fan, and I’ve been to a number of his concerts,” he says. “To have his signature as part of such a good-looking vehicle is fantastic.”

Perkins took delivery of his car in early March this year and plans to drive it to Monterey to revisit the area where he worked with Boydell to design it.

“The whole experience was much more personal than with other car purchases,” he says. “The level of expertise and artistry was so high, and I can’t wait to experience my Flying Spur First Edition on the road.” **8**