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Bid on a czar's table; break 200 mph in a Bentley. . . .



BRITISH WIDE OPEN ✦ In 1923, Walter Owen Bentley, founder of the car company that bears his name, determined that driving enthusiasts wanted a more potent version of the standard 3-liter Bentley. Thus were born the Bentley Speed models, 4-cylinder vehicles that reached the then extraordinary velocity of 90 mph. More recently, the firm concluded that drivers wanted a faster Continental GT, so now we have the Bentley Continental GT Speed (www.bentleymotors.com). With 15 percent more torque and 9 percent more horsepower than the standard Continental GT, the GT Speed reaches 202 mph, making it the first Bentley production car to exceed the

200 mph barrier. First deliveries are expected in December, at a price, the firm says, of no more than \$200,000. . . .

PHOTO OP ✦ During a rough stint covering World War II, British photojournalist George Rodger took some remarkable photos in Africa, including the one of horsemen shown here. In 1947, Rodger, along with his colleagues Robert Capa, David Seymour, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, founded Magnum Photos, a cooperative that produced some of the most memorable images ever recorded by camera. Twelve original platinum prints, three by each of the four founders, appear together in *Magnum Founders*, which will be published in February by Verso Limited Editions (www.versoeditions.com). Verso is offering only 75 of the leather-bound, 14-by-16-inch volumes, each encased in an English buckram clamshell. The prepublication price for the book is \$12,500. . . .

ROMANCING THE STONE To the citizens of the Roman Empire, lapis lazuli (in powder form) served as an aphrodisiac. Over the years, the blue stone also has been used for painter's pigments, as dressings for boils, for jewelry, and for furniture for Russia's royal family. The



gueridon shown to the left was carved in the first half of the 19th century for Czar Alexander II. Valued at \$275,000 to \$400,000, it will be among the rarer items offered at Sotheby's Important Furniture and Works of Art auction (www.sothebys.com) on October 16 in Paris. . . .



Bentley Continental GT Speed; photograph of Hausa chieftains by George Rodger; gueridon made of lapis lazuli.

RIGHT: GEORGE RODGER/MAGNUM PHOTOS