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Issue 42
Spring 2023

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Classic Mercedes

Spring 2023 • Issue 42

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"IN 1953 THE PONTON ARRIVED, RE-ESTABLISHING STUTTGART'S CREDENTIALS"

setting it on course to become the prestige car leader it is today. Starting on page 22, we celebrate its arrival 70 years ago, looking at its development and featuring one of the very best examples in existence.

In that largely pre-photographic era of advertising, two of Germany's finest artists, Walter Gotschke and Hans Liska, produced Mercedes-Benz promotional material with brush and palette, and few would disagree that their work is stunning, and wonderfully evocative art in its own right. Thankfully, Mercedes' meticulous archiving has preserved it for us to enjoy, and on pages 70-75 we reproduce a selection.

Regardless of era, Mercedes is the four-seat coupe champion, and on pages 64-69 you'll find 10 classic models reviewed. You'll also notice that over half of them are affordable – food for thought for classic Benz buyers!

David Sutherland
Editor

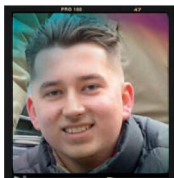


Who's been bringing you the classic stories in this issue



Tim Slade

We can't think of anyone better placed to contribute our cover story (page 22) on the Ponton than Tim, who many years ago inherited the 180b his father collected new from Stuttgart in 1960, and which is the car you see photographed in this issue. "In Godalming in Surrey, the Ponton was the car of my childhood," says Tim. "Nobody else's parents had a Mercedes-Benz, and they were a very rare sight on our roads, hence I was immensely proud of it."



Peter Wiazowski

Mercedes ownership began early for Peter, in the form of a 116-series S-Class poster on his bedroom wall, and once into long trousers he vowed to one day have the real thing. It finally happened in February 2021 when he and his father travelled 300 miles to view a 450SE for sale: "It was a day I'll always remember," says Peter. "As soon as the garage doors opened to reveal that familiar Benz tail, we knew this was our car." His story starts page 30.

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story

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VON WOLFF FARBWERT

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CLASSIC NEWS

UK AND INTERNATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE CLASSIC MERCEDES WORLD



R129 going up

The once cheap-as-chips SL is predicted to increase in value this year

The long years during which the R129 has been the sole classic SL model not to appreciate significantly in value may be about to end, according to a leading classic car insurer in the UK. It reckons the often overlooked 1989-2001 roadster could leap 20 per cent in value in 2023.

The R129, models ranging from six-cylinder 2.8-litre to the rare AMG 7.3-litre V12, is included in Northamptonshire-based Hagerty's '2023 Hagerty UK Bull Market List', highlighting 10 cars that

price-wise are going places. The diverse selection also includes the 1923-1939 Austin 7, Saab 99 Turbo and Lamborghini Diablo.

"This is a car built to the pinnacle of Mercedes engineering know-how that can be found

loitering with intent in classifieds for less than £10,000," Hagerty reports. "And because it remained on sale for an extended period, there is a plentiful supply and buyers can afford to be picky.

However, post-lockdown average of £14,550 has now risen to £17,475, a 20 per cent increase."

It adds, "The bigger engines are likely to achieve the greatest increases – a further average rise across the board of 20 per cent over the next two years would not be unexpected."



RM Sotheby's sold the top SL500 for £16,500; SL60 AMG the most collectable.



The E200 taxi boasts 1.6m kilometres.

Merc in a million

Reminding us of the toughness and durability of the Mercedes-Benz 124-series is news that a 1993 E200 run by an Albanian taxi driver has covered around 1,584,600km (990,400 miles), and appears still to be going strong. The speedometer in fact reads 584,600km – because it rolled back to zero once it hit one million.

Luan Nina, now 70 years old, bought the five-speed manual saloon 15 years ago from Germany, and day in day out has used it to serve passengers in Durres, a city on the coast of the Adriatic Sea where he was born, and which is a popular holiday destination in summer. Rides cost about 300Lek (€3), and Luan keeps things in period by using a vintage mobile phone with buttons.

"I haven't changed anything," Luan proudly said in a DW channel documentary, which estimated that one in three used cars in Albania is a Mercedes-Benz. "I only had to repair it once, the head gasket."



It'd been reliable, says owner Luan Nina.

Mercedes are auction favourites

Mercedes-Benzes are the vehicles bought in largest numbers at UK classic car auctions, data from a leading UK auction house suggests. Historics Auctioneers, which in 2022 held five sales – in March and May at Ascot Racecourse, in July at its Windsorview Lakes HQ, in September at Bicester Heritage and in November at Mercedes-Benz World – said it presented 139 classic Benzes, with a "very bullish" sale rate.

Over the five sales, the hit rate was between 72 per cent and 82 per cent, with the average sale price just under £28,700. Among the "proper" Mercedes classics, a 1971 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet (above right) at Windsorview Lakes achieved the highest price at £156,800 including buyer's premium, followed by a 280SL Pagoda (right) at Bicester Heritage making £140,000. The lowest priced 1970s modern classic was a left-hand drive 450SLC sold at Mercedes-Benz World for £3,962 (see page 10 for the Mercedes-Benz World auction report).





Loading 123-series expert... and now mug purveyor.

123 action!

Long-established UK 123-series specialist, Mark Cosovich of Swansea-based W123 World, has turned film producer! He plans to release a short video every six weeks or so on a particular 123-series variant.

Already, two can be found on YouTube, on a 240D saloon owned for a long time by a doctor in Brixton in south London, and on a 300CD Turbodiesel coupe that was shipped over from the US for some mechanical work.

"We'll keep them for no longer than five minutes, and they'll have a 'human' content, they're basically videos to show why this Mercedes is loved so much," says the W123 World proprietor. "They're not 'how to do...' or 'car for sale' videos."

After four decades fixing and restoring all 123 models, Mark is also now flirting with the pottery trade, presently offering his W123 Mug, the £19.99 plus delivery price including a 10mm (the most useful size for a 123-series, he insists) Stahlwille spanner for early buyers. It can be purchased at the w123world.com shop.

In other news...

C-Class now a classic - official
Mercedes-Benz vehicles are the most numerous classics on Germany's roads, as defined by the 30-year watershed, with 158,843 registered with the H-plate. This status confers tax exemptions, and the latest model to become eligible is the early 202-series C-Class, launched in May of 1993.



Date for Pagodas at Brooklands

Having announced in the autumn that it would hold a mass W113 SL gathering at Mercedes-Benz World in Summer to mark the model's 60th anniversary, SLShop has now named the date: Friday, July 14, 2023. It follows the R107 SL meeting at the same Surrey venue in 2021.

60 years of the Pagoda, 600

2023 is the 60th anniversary of arguably Mercedes-Benz's most breathtaking year in the post-war era for model launches. In March 1963, the first W113 model, the 230SL, was unveiled at the Geneva motor show, then in mid-September the W100 600 made its debut at the Frankfurt show. Both models were styled by Paul Bracc.

Silchester Garage moves to Europe

Two decades after setting up in Berkshire, W113 Pagoda specialist Silchester Garage has closed its premises in Hampshire following liquidation. Proprietor Paulo Custódio, who is Portuguese, hopes to establish a classic/modern classic Mercedes-Benz specialist business in Lisbon, a long-held ambition.

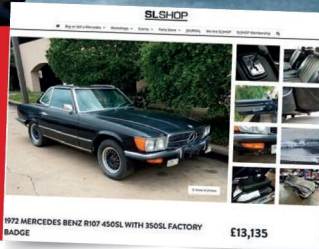


New classic Benz sales site

A new online car sales site has been established that claims to be the first such platform totally dedicated to Mercedes-Benz classics and modern classics, and which is free both for buyers and sellers, and also regulated to filter out cars that are not suitable, for example stolen cars. It was first set up in Summer 2022 by Warwickshire-based SL specialist, SLShop, and is now fully up and running.

The site is accessed through SLShop's regular website, but is run independently of the firm's own sales showroom, and no selling fees are due. Sellers have two options. The first is to go the Marketplace Appraised route, which for a \$595 fee provides a full a pre-sale check by SLShop technicians, and also highly quality photographs for the advertisement. These cars, not just SLs, have their own sales section on the website and are clearly labelled "SLShop Appraised". "In the same way as a full service history record, an SLShop stamp of authenticity will give buyers confidence that your vehicle is of the best quality on the market and worthy of your asking price," promises SLShop.

Option two is the free-of-charge Marketplace Classified, cars in this section being photographed by the seller and there being no direct involvement with SLShop. Advertisements are accepted from anywhere in the world, for example the early 450SL seen in the lower photo, offered in Texas for £13,135.



More classic parts

Mercedes-Benz has strongly hinted that parts supply for classic models – a thorny subject for some owners – will improve in the future, as the car maker expands its Classic Partners initiative, whereby an existing Mercedes-Benz dealer adds a classic department to its showroom. There are presently 56 Classic Partners established in seven countries, but none in the UK.

The move comes with the heavyweight appointment of Marcus Breitschwerdt (right, also a Pagoda owner) in 2022 as the boss of the car maker's Mercedes-Benz Heritage division, who revealed in a recent interview that "You won't have to retire your car because parts are not available."

The clear message is that Stuttgart plans to strengthen its classic car operations as a way of promoting new products, the first indication of this being the opening of the new Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Long Beach, California last August.





Getting better

Post-Covid, the annual Essen Motor Show, a key European classic vehicle event, appears to be in revival after a shaky return in 2021. **Chris Eckermann** was there for us and reports on what was to be seen in December 2022 to thrill Benz fans

IMAGES Messe Essen/Chris Eckermann/Schuchtrat Kurbanov

Essen Motor Show

Location Messeplatz, Essen, Germany

When December 2-11, 2023

The beginning of December is a fixed point for car enthusiasts in Germany – time again for the Essen Motor Show, the largest German annual motor show, and a major European car event. It attracts visitors from all over Germany, and from many other countries too. Yet, as we all know, its continuity was interrupted by Covid and, as with so many events, the show did not happen in 2020. It resumed in 2021 but visitors were still reticent to come, and masks were mandatory.

With this in mind, and some new elements added to the portfolio of fears, this year's edition was awaited with tension. The war in Ukraine, lingering Covid, the cost of living crisis and even fears of environmental protests were overshadowing what is intended to be a happy motoring festival. And Friday, the preview day, generated a relatively low attendance – fewer halls and fewer exhibitors seemed to be the trend.



Yet... on Saturday, the second day, the halls filled up, and the last Saturday of the 10-day event saw them nearly bursting with visitors; on Sunday afternoon, even just three hours before closing, visitors were still queuing up at the cashiers. In total, some 200,000 visitors came to the show for "automobiles, motorsports, tuning, classic cars, and show and action", and left the organisers satisfied; young

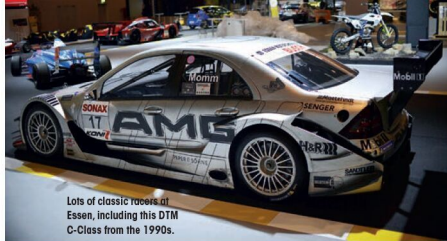
ABOVE
When it comes to sheer numbers of classic Merces at a show, Germany leads.

LEFT
Peter Teden from Brabus with the Best in Show award for a 280SE 3.5.

visitors in particular seemed to be attracted by the mix of 500 exhibitors that has been so characteristic of the Essen Motor Show of the last few years.

Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts enjoyed a wide choice of vehicles, ranging from classic models to intensively modified examples. For admirers of the latter, the TuningXperience with 150 privately modified cars from all over Europe displayed Benz classics including Stroke 8s, 124- and 126-series with air ride suspension and other modifications too. For 2022, this part of the show was moved from the easy-to-miss basements of Halls 1 to 5.

Of course, such cars are rarely to the taste of Mercedes purists, who would be far happier in Hall 1, the centre for classics. Celebrating its 40th year, the Classic & Prestige Salon hosted a display of classic and current supercars, including, unsurprisingly, Mercedes-Benz 300SLs in Gullwing and Roadster form. Nearby, the Brabus Classic booth offered fully restored examples of highly coveted models such as the W111 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet – this car



Lots of classic racers at Essen, including this DTM C-Class from the 1990s.



Cars on the Brabus stand were mouth-watering.



AW123 280E modified for 2023 rally entries.



valued at over £600,000 and awarded the Best in Show award – and a W113 Pagoda. In the same hall, various collectables like 190SLs and a larger number of other Mercs from the 1970s, 80s and 90s were also on display.

In Hall 3, an imposing range of Mercedes-Benzes was seen. The Mercedes Fan World again put on its display of classics, allowing old school fans to admire cars like a 1992 400E project car that was still a work-in-progress, a R129 SL60 AMG and a 190SL. A 1955 Gullwing and a W123 280E were present in rally form, while others including a G-Class, a 190E and a W108 280SE 4.5 were in fine condition.

Indeed, Mercedes classics of all kinds were as well spread across all halls, many of them in a restored condition and with various examples of the former DTM racing cars included. With a bandwidth like this, the Essen Motor Show proved again that a visit is reaching out to all corners of the Mercedes-Benz universe.

ABOVE LEFT
400E from the US is under restoration: the colour is 'California Rockhard Gold'.

ABOVE
The presence of an L319 commercial at a car show always raises smiles.

BELOW
It's probably now harder to find a good 190D Ponton than a 300SL or Pagoda.



Benz central

Classic cars were stacked high at Mercedes-Benz World for the Historic auction last December, and many of them sold cheaply, **Tim French** reports

IMAGES Classic Mercedes

Historics Auctioneers Winter Sale

Location Mercedes-Benz World, Surrey
When November 26, 2022

For some time now, Berkshire-based Historic Auctioneers has been the biggest seller of classic Mercedes models at auctions in the UK, and, on vehicle numbers alone, possibly internationally too. More evidence of this was seen at Mercedes-Benz World in December when 39 of them, almost all classics or modern classics, were presented for sale.

It will surprise few that nearly half the star-badged lots were SLs, the rising values of Stuttgart's two-seat roadsters in recent years no doubt encouraging owners to attempt to cash in. The 1963-1971 W113 Pagoda and succeeding 1971-1989 R107 were the most numerous SLs, and among the former, the best result in relation to pre-sale estimates was the 1964 230SL that exceeded it by nearly £12,000 to make \$41,884 including buyer's premium. However, another 230SL selling at £40,752 was £13,000 below it, and a 280SL fetching £56,000 fell \$9,000 short. The cheapest Pagoda of the day was a no-reserve 280SL at £31,929 – but it was a bare shell with lots of parts!

Half a dozen ordinary-grade R107s sold for between £8,960 for an early, 1972 350SL and

£24,080 for one of the comparatively rare 420SLs. We're pretty sure that the former owner a 1962 190SL restored in the late 1990s left Brooklands with a smile, after selling it for £118,720 – nearly £44,000 above estimate.

The Mercedes with the most interesting history was a 1951 170S Cabriolet B, used during 1955-1956 in West Berlin by MI6 agent Howard Greville, whose neighbour was George Blake, later exposed as a Russian spy. However, the historical espionage aspect didn't set the bidding on fire, as the car, restored and a show award winner, sold for \$86,240, a long way off the hoped for £105,000-£125,000.

The intended star of the sale was a stunning silver 1954 300B Cabriolet D with a £175,000-£210,000 estimate and displayed prominently the Mercedes-Benz World foyer. It had been owned by Mercedes-Benz UK until 1965, and one owner kept it 46 years until 2017. But with a too high reserve it didn't sell. An interesting car that did sell was the 1989 560SEC customised in-period by the Belgian company Carat Duchatelet. Other than AMGs, converted classic Benzes are generally not worth a lot and this no-reserve lot made £10,640, a lot of SEC for the money. But the two steals of the day were arguably the 1995 124-series E300D estate at £1,904 and the left-hand drive 1978 450SL making £3,962.



Beautiful 300b had to return home unsold with its seller.



Carat Duchatelet 560SEC lots of Merc metal for £10.7K.



ABOVE
170S for \$86,240 was used in the 50s by Cold War spies.

RIGHT
LHD 450SLC a nice project at under \$4K.

FAR RIGHT
£118.7K 190SL was \$44K above estimate



Bertha's big day

After buying a pre-war 170V he christened Bertha, Oliver Attard headed for two classic rallies in Sicily

IMAGES Oliver Attard

◆ Trofeo Del Gattopardo, and Mitice Spider a Taormina

Location Sicily
When June 30-July 3, and July 8-10, 2022

We bought Bertha, a 1936 Mercedes-Benz 170V Cabriolet, to enjoy trips abroad, as we have few places here in Malta to drive to, and traffic conditions are not ideal. Therefore, our obvious destination is our neighbouring island of Sicily, the most significant Mediterranean island, part of the Italian archipelago and famous for Mount Etna with its still active volcano.

Our friends at Old Motors Club Malta suggested the Trofeo Del Gattopardo event, June 30-July 3, 2022, which kicked off just after the astronomical clock in the Cathedral's bell tower in Piazza Duomo in Messina marked noon. We arrived at Piazza

Duomo to a warm welcome from the organiser Andrea Alessi, President of ACAIS (Association of Car Lovers of Historical Interest), his family and other event participants.

As noon struck, we drove from the red carpet in the square, escorted by two police motorcycles and a patrol car. Before each car left the square, a compere read out information about the model and history of each car. Then, the escort took us to the port of Milazzo, where we crossed to Lipari on the ferry.

The tour around this magical island was in the form of a 'regularity' race, which determined the winners of the Giuseppe Lenzo Trophy and the Gattopardo Trophy. Old Motors Club Malta won their respective classes. However, the unforgettable moment of the whole trip for us came when we won the Art and Design Award for Pre-War Cars with our beloved Bertha.



TOPTO BOTTOM
The proceedings included a ferry crossing to the nearby island of Lipari. Cruising round Sicily and Lipari in Bertha in the sunshine was enjoyable. Oliver packed his family for the trip, which they hope won't be the last. Bertha was much admired and returned to Malta with the Art and Design award.



While in Sicily we also took part in the Mitice Spider at Taormina event, organised by the Automotoclub Del Minotauro, July 8-10, during which some 40 convertibles cruised around the villages and the countryside around this hilltop town on the east coast of Sicily, including through Santa Teresa Di Riva to get to the municipality of Savoca, famous for *The Godfather* having been filmed there. The first proper outing in our 170V went exceptionally well: we travelled 825 miles in nine days, exceeding our expectations. It augurs well for future events in Europe.

LEFT
Oliver's crew being flagged off from the bell tower in Piazza Duomo.



£10K heroes

Four Mercedes-Benzes sold for four figures at auction

◆ Not among the sexiest Benz classics, the 1968-1976 'Stroke 8' saloon remains affordable, £6,226 securing this 50,000-mile, 1972 250S at Historics Auctioneers' December sale at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey. It's left-hand drive US spec, with the larger, 2.8-litre six-cylinder engine, and as such has air and auto transmission.

◆ This late-model, 1960 190D (1.9-litre diesel, 49bhp) was expected to make £2,000 tops when offered at Anglia Auctions' classic sale in November in King's Lynn, Norfolk, but on the day it was bid up to £3,888. It's definitely a project, with paintwork and upholstery "a bit tired", but it did come with a V5C document.

◆ A bid of £6,720 was all it took to liberate this 1994 E220 Cabriolet auto in the likeable Almandine over mushroom leather combination at Brightwells in Herefordshire in December. It showed an about average 124,450 miles and the usual minor 124-series rust. But it looked sound enough as a budget cabrio for summer.

◆ It was the top model in the R107 SL range, but the left-hand drive, not-for-Europe 560SL doesn't have to be expensive, as this 186,000-mile proved when it sold for a mere £8,550 at H&H Classics' auction in December in Buxton, Derbyshire. A fair amount of work has been done, including fitting European style bumpers.





photo by

Felix Staudel

1937 Mercedes-Benz
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Letters

WE INVITE YOU TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON ANYTHING TO DO WITH MERCEDES CLASSICS

Smooth operator

Having owned a 1985 500SL and latterly a 2001 SL320, I was enjoying the R107 versus

R129 article in the Winter 2022 *Classic Mercedes* right up to the comment, "Many who know their R129s prefer the M104 engine to the M112 vees because it has that almost indefinable but wonderful straight-six character". It seems every article involving an M104 has to take a backhanded swipe at the M112.

"A V6 is not as smooth as a straight-six" were the cries when it first came out. In the case of a 90-degree V6, that is (mostly) true, which is why Mercedes-Benz fitted a balancer shaft. I did go in with lowered expectations but the M112 is smooth enough.

The 300-24 DOHC multi-valve engine doesn't have a great reputation, being arguably a knee-jerk reaction to BMW's M50 24-valve engines. Mercedes had to redesign it as the 3.2-litre to iron out some of the flaws, and even then it still had issues.

The M112 is cleaner, and also more economical than the M104 due to a better spread of torque and a 25 per cent weight saving. The reduced mass sits mostly behind the front axle of the R129, resulting in better turn-in than with an iron block hanging out front. The M112 is also more reliable – no oil leaks, head gasket issues or disintegrating wiring looms. Mine is just turning 100,000 miles in 21 years and it's still bone dry underneath.

Andrew Scott, North Shields, Tyne and Wear



Mike's sons, Dave and John, with the 220S Fintail.

The right gear

I love the architecture of the Fintail Mercedes, and owned a 220Sb for a couple of years in the early 1970s. So, I bought the Autumn 2022 *Classic Mercedes*, which had a Fintail buying guide.

I noticed you described the automatic transmission as a "torque converter type". Actually, the W110, W111, W112, the Stroke 8 and the W108 all had a fluid flywheel. Yes, you could call it a converter type, as it has a pump wheel and a turbine

wheel, but lacks a stator (a third wheel which captures the energy of the fluid exiting the turbine and redirects the circulating fluid to assist the pump).

A fluid flywheel is more efficient than a converter but allows a lower first gear to get a reasonable start. They fell out of favour when later models had more efficient torque converters which made the low first gear unnecessary, hence automatic gearboxes in that era reverted to three speeds.

Mike Belfield, Sydney, Australia
Thank you for that useful technical clarification!

Valued contributor

Even though we buy classic cars to cherish, maintain and enjoy, there is always a fascination with what they might

be worth. I'm sure I'm not alone in scanning advertisements and realised auction prices to see if others appreciate a particular model as much as me!

I was therefore surprised and pleased to recently see an owner of a Mercedes C124 E320 Coupe achieve a very strong price at an Anglia Car Auctions sale, and I wondered if the article on my E320 in the Autumn 2022 *Classic Mercedes* helped raise awareness and interest in this yet to be fully appreciated model?

Quite soon after the magazine appeared in early August, this owner in Norwich entered the warranted 54,873-mile car into the sale with a £7,000 to £9,000



John points out the £17,000 price of an E320.

pre-sale estimate. But it sold for £16,956 including buyer's premium! Is this now a representative price for six-cylinder C124s, I wonder? It often seems that there are trigger points which suddenly mark changes in sentiment and values.

John Griffiths,
Chippenham, Wiltshire

Modified opinion

As one who believes that car makers, especially Mercedes-Benz, are better at designing their products than people who set up thinking they can improve on them, I was horrified to open the Winter 2022 issue of *Classic Mercedes* and see a full article on an E320 estate smothered in Lorinser bits. I forced myself to read to the end... and must admit that I was charmed by the owner, one Dash Cela from Albania, who had gone to great lengths to ensure that from start to finish everything done to the Mercedes was faithfully as it



Emerson isn't comfortable with a Lorinser S124.

would have been back in the day. I even ended up quite liking what he'd done to the car. But Mr Editor, in future please stick to the factory standard Mercedes-Benzes we love most, OK?

Emerson T Gonzales,
San Clemente, California

It's our normal policy to avoid modified cars, unless they were converted in-period, but we liked Dash's project enough to make an exception.

Then and now

What a magnificent car the 450SEL 6.9 was, and is (*Classic Mercedes* Winter 2022). Reading the article, it still seems to be great to drive, and I absolutely adore how it looks identical to a 280SEL. Battery failure? That's what happens when a classic car isn't used!

Tobias Fischer, Düsseldorf, Germany



Tobias likes the 6.9 as much as the editor does.

Get in touch!

Email your letters and pictures to the Editor: david@classicmercedesmagazine.com. Or post them to, The Editor, *Classic Mercedes*, Sundial Magazines Ltd, Sundial House, 17 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 5JS. Or you can fax them to +44 (0)20 8639 4411. We do not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed in letters published



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Diana gate

In late 1991, the world's most famous woman took delivery of a Mercedes-Benz 500SL, and in doing so Princess Diana upset the establishment by not driving a British car. Tim French looks at why she did so and what happened next

IMAGES Getty Images/Mercedes-Benz Group AG/John Mathew Smith



ABOVE INSET
Being the first A-list royal driving a foreign car caused a huge row.

For just under a year Di dashed around in this.



When, in 1981, Lady Diana Spencer emerged, smiling bashfully from the nursery school in London where she worked, into the glare of paparazzi flashlights, following the announcement that she would marry Prince Charles, the nation – or at least the national press – was ecstatic. The previously unknown 19-year old was expected to be the perfect, traditional princess. Pretty, of impeccable noble breeding, and growing up near to the Queen's Sandringham estate and therefore familiar with the royals' lifestyle, she looked the perfect match for the future king. Charles' bachelor days, which more than a few considered had gone on a little too long

at 32, were ending and the blessed couple would settle down to a jet-setting but loving and stable life and would in time become the adored mother and father of the nation.

The would-be queen moved out of her flat-share in Kensington to live in Clarence House until the marriage. The Austin Metro she ran the gauntlet of the press to get into on that memorable news day, believed to have been a gift from Prince Charles, would soon be replaced by something more befitting her new life (after it was disposed of a year later it would survive, and periodically pop up at car events in the UK). At that time royals personally drove only British badged cars, the Queen being particularly fond of her Land Rovers, and

Charles still owned (and still does) the Aston Martin DB6 Volante he received on his 21st birthday in 1970. Diana graduated through a series of Fords, including the Escort RS Turbo that in August 2022 fetched an extraordinary £725,000 when auctioned in The Midlands by Silverstone Auctions, and by the late 1980s was to be seen driving a wholly appropriate Jaguar XJ SC in British racing green, with sons William and Harry, plus her security guard squeezed in.

But by the time the Jaguar was replaced in 1991, it was common knowledge that, even if neither Charles nor Diana or anyone else in the Royal Family had publicly admitted it, the fairy tale marriage





was in trouble. And by then the once seemingly timid debutant had grown into a global icon whose star quality eclipsed all other royals including even The Queen, who was embarking on her 'Annus Horribilis' and was arguably not the revered monarch she would become in older age.

Diana, now at odds with 'The Firm', knew she had the power to break protocol and did so left, right and centre, and so when she fancied a Mercedes-Benz, the men in tights around her acquired one for her use. Her choice was indeed fit for probably the world's most glamorous woman: a 500SL, the flagship of the R129 range launched two years earlier. The metallic red over tan leather roadster was the original spec, powered by the five-litre, 32-valve M119 V8 whose 322bhp was slightly more than post-September 1993 models, and three decades on is regarded by some enthusiasts to be the 'purest' and best R129.

The moment the news broke that Diana had become the first royal to drive a foreign car, a storm erupted.

Buckingham Palace tried damage limitation by pointing out that the Mercedes was for her personal use only, and that she would continue to be seen in a Jaguar for state occasions, but even UK government ministers and industry and trades union leaders criticised her choice of wheels. Meanwhile, one imagines Mercedes-Benz top management were quietly overjoyed at the highest possible endorsement of their product. Diana came under such pressure that the 500SL was returned to the car maker after just 11 months and, still with its J548 LRP registration has been a permanent exhibit in the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart since 2006, in the Gallery of Celebrities, sharing plinth space with the G-Wagen 'Popemobile'.

The darker, tragic association with Mercedes-Benz is of course that in August 1997 Princess Diana, along with her companion Dodi Fayed and driver Henri Paul, died following an accident in a 140-series S-Class in an underpass in central Paris. No doubt in an attempt to prevent the car becoming a focus of morbid attention, the Royal Family and the authorities in Paris have sought to keep it securely out of sight, and reports say it was and may still be stored in a container in a police car pound in the south-western outskirts of Paris. But anyone can go to the Mercedes-Benz Museum and see Diana's pristine SL, and build a picture in their mind of the princess who with her radiant beauty, sense of style, obvious caring nature and humanitarian values held the world at her feet, but was taken far too soon.



SPECIFICATIONS

Mercedes-Benz 500SL (R129)

ENGINE **M119 4,973cc V8**
 POWER **322bhp@5,500rpm**
 TORQUE **332lbft@4,000rpm**
 TRANSMISSION **4-speed automatic**
 WEIGHT **1,375kg**
 0-62MPH **6.2sec**
 TOP SPEED **155mph**
 FUEL CONSUMPTION **21.4mpg**
 YEARS PRODUCED **1989-2001**
 NUMBER BUILT **103,531**
 All figures from Mercedes-Benz



TOP
Poignant to think that the 'people's princess' occupied this seat.

ABOVE
Still with the 'J548 LRP' UK plate issued on first registration.

LEFT
The 'Popemobile' is its neighbour in the M-B Museum in Stuttgart.

BELOW LEFT
The Museum has had the SL on permanent display for 16 years.

"DIANA KNEW SHE HAD THE POWER TO BREAK PROTOCOL, AND SO WHEN SHE FANCIED A MERCEDES-BENZ, THE MEN IN TIGHTS AROUND HER ACQUIRED ONE FOR HER USE"



OLD SCHOOL MERCEDES DEVOTEE REED HITCHCOCK
SHARES OWNERSHIP THOUGHTS

Winter warrior



Deep in winter, Reed promised himself he'd sort out various issues on his hibernated 560SL to freshen it up for the coming warm spring weather and driving season. Here he explains how many of these tasks were completed. Or not

IMAGES Reed Hitchcock



Problem 1: the garage storing the 560SL has been too cold for jobs to be done.

By the time you read this, the warmth of a sunny spring season will hopefully not be far off, resplendent in its green glory with pretty leaves on the trees and classic cars back on the road after a well-deserved winter rest. As I write this, however, I am looking out my office window at bare trees and all too aware of the arctic freeze that the US has recently been subjected to, and tooling around in my R107 560SL with the top down and the wind in my hair is about the last thing on earth I'd want to do right now.

But that said, for those of us fortunate enough not to have to rely on our classic



Problem 2: Reed finds other stuff to do rather than venture outside.

Mercedes as daily transportation, the cold weather presents the opportunity to take care of those niggling things that come up throughout the driving season but which we can get away with deferring until another day. And I have amassed a list of 'nice to haves' to get done while the car is temporarily relieved of duty; something of a new year's resolution list. What was it the road to hell is said to be paved with? Yes, good intentions.

The biggest issue, and frankly the least likely to get done, is to have the rust taken care of. For a car with 181,000 miles that spent the majority of those miles in the

humid summers and snowy, salty winters of Massachusetts as a daily driver, my blue roadster has remarkably little of it. But it has had some metalwork in the past, and it needs some more. The undercarriage is actually surprisingly clean of corrosion – just some whitish residue on a few of the alloy bits. No, the rust on the car is in four spots on the body all on the driver's side: the side sill, the front wing behind the wheel, just above the side moulding behind the door, and right at the panel seam semi-hidden by the rear bumper. None of the patches are large, but they are there, and if I've learned anything in my nearly 52 years on this rock, it's that rust doesn't get better.

But, with proper care, it doesn't get a lot worse, at least not quickly. Sure, it'll worsen over time, but with a quote of nearly \$5,000 (about £4,100) to cut out the bad, weld in new, and refinish to match, fixing this is a major investment. My wife also wants a new kitchen, so, well, I'd like to get the 560SL's rust sorted, but may end up procrastinating for another season (or another owner, given my history of changing cars like underwear). So the repair may well find itself in the same bucket as that diet I just started.

Then there's the cracked dashboard top, which happens to many 107s. It's barely noticeable from the driver's seat, but once you see it you really can't unsee it, and like the rust, it ain't gonna heal itself.

Now here I have a three potential options. First, and most preferred, there are companies that mix up some sort of vinyl repair goo and fill and blend the cracks. To me, this would be the best combination of form, function, and cost. Sure, I could adopt option two and replace the entire dashboard with an uncracked original, but even if you're lucky enough to find one, they cost in excess of \$1,500 (about £1,200) and for a classic car is apparently one of the most daunting dash replacements one can undertake – certainly above my pay grade. I'd guess at least as much again in labour.

The cheapest option by far is the third, a moulded dash cover. In all fairness, the ones they make for R107s are among the better looking ones out there, so long as you do your installation properly. For the 560SL, there is the added challenge of measuring (twice) and cutting (once) a hole for the dash top temperature sensor, but surely even I couldn't botch that up, right? If the guy I found who does dash crack repair tells me that he can't do anything for the cracks, I'll likely go with the cover, because those cracks just bug the ever loving heck out of me. This project actually has a reasonable chance of getting done, but would require the car to be

got out of hibernation and taken over to the crack repair man for a look and a quote.

The job I have the highest confidence about – both from ease of completion and likelihood of completion standpoints – is replacement of the blower motor. Now I've replaced blower motors on a fair number of cars in my time, and some of them require a contortionist for success. The R107's, however, is just about as straightforward as they come: there's an access panel in the

"I'D LIKE TO GET THE 560SL'S RUST SORTED, BUT THE REPAIR MAY FIND ITSELF IN THE SAME BUCKET AS THAT DIET I JUST STARTED"

rear of the engine compartment that is removed with a handful of bolts, and the motor is literally right there. No drama, no harm.

Frankly, the only reason I haven't done it already is because the garage at my mum's house where the car has wintered is not heated, and that combined with the aforementioned arctic freeze means that's not a place I want to spend the coldest of days. Surely the temperature needle will swing wildly the other direction any day now and I'll pack up my tools and get it done. Who knows, maybe I'll tick off another of my resolutions and jog over there – it's only a few miles! Wait, who am I kidding?

⇒ *Reed Hitchcock lives in Virginia, USA and is co-host of the [Totally That Stupid](#) motoring podcast and blog [Web totallythatstupid.com](#)*



Problem 3: deciding which solution for a split dash top to adopt.



Problem 4: life without a working heater blower motor isn't that bad.



Outcome: It'll soon be spring and Reed can drive the SL and forget the jobs.

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INSIGHTS AND OPINIONS FROM INSIDE THE CLASSIC MERCEDES TRADE



Classic ending

After 20 years as a classic Mercedes specialist, Charles Ironside is retiring. Or so he says. Here he reflects on how it all went for him

IMAGES Richard Mason/Laurens Parsons/Terry Osborne

Several things have impacted my life, causing me to consider the future of my classic car business. My father, Lord Ironside, died two years ago and I inherited the title. Naturally that brought a potential new aspect into my life, namely the possibility of a seat in the House of Lords..

I turn 67 this July, and you can't go on forever. To run a one-man classic car business takes energy: there's a lot of running around behind the scenes, collecting and delivering cars, getting them repaired, detailed and MOT'd. It makes sense to leave when you still feel at the top of your game, which I do.

Looking back over the 20 years since I started, aspects of the market have changed, especially in recent years. The internet has had a huge effect, with more and more online auctions that must take a bite out of the business of people like myself.

However, most customers who bought from me did so because of the service and attention I gave them. And I was willing to take their classic in part exchange, particularly if it was one I'd sold before. My aim was to build a relationship with customers, so that they came back again for their next car. Also, by having a rapport I could approach previous customers who I thought might like to know about a car I had. I'll miss these conversations. But although I'm retiring, I'll still be on the lookout for a bargain. I love classic cars, especially Mercedes, which were always in my family, and I love buying and selling them – it's like an addiction, it's in the blood.

I can barely believe I've sold 1,400 cars in two decades. Some I've lost money on, but in the main I've come out ahead, and I've made around £3m on them before tax – call that about £2,000 per car. When I started, it was

It's goodbye after two decades and 1,400 classic Benzes sold.



"COME THE 2008 CRASH I WENT INTO A RIGHT SPIN, WONDERING 'WHO'S GOING TO BUY A CLASSIC CAR?' BUT THE MARKET DID THE OPPOSITE AND TOOK OFF"



Charles' garden more than once served as a photo location for us.



Customers traded cars back – he sold this 300E-24 eight times.

pretty risky but 2002 was a very buoyant, improving market. Come the 2008 crash I went into a right spin, wondering 'Who's going to buy a classic car?' But the market did the opposite and took off. Hong Kong

and Thailand 10 years ago were very good markets for me. The only problem was, I couldn't get the cars back to resell.

If I had the time again, I might well have run the business on a bigger basis. I would have employed someone to do all the running around, while I focused on strategy and making the right decisions. Of course, a larger business with more overheads would have eaten into my weekends.

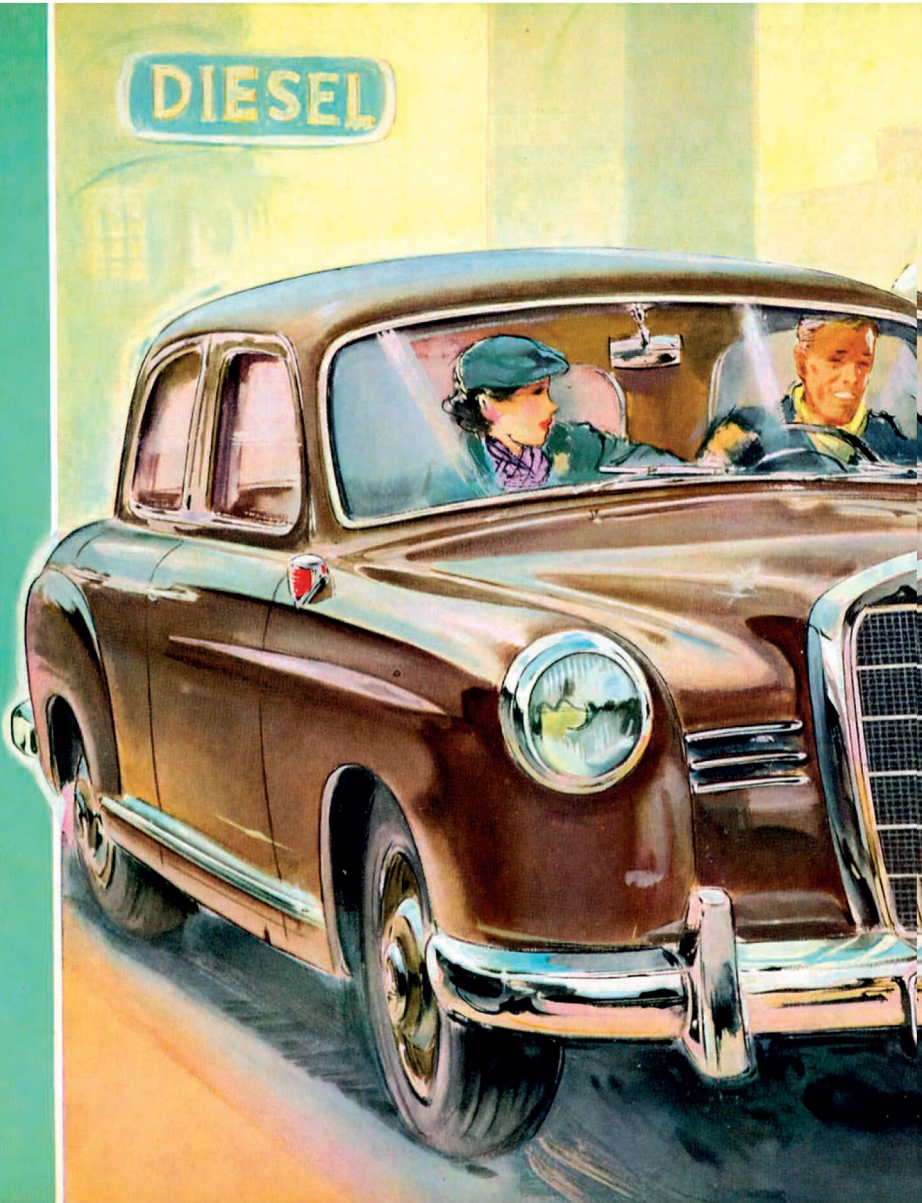
But the business model I followed was to be small, sell quality cars, own my own garage, purchase my own stock, and decide how much to spend on the car. That ruled out selling cars on commission, because there's less control over expenditure.

With my elephantine memory I can recall many of the cars I've sold. I sold a W124 300E originally owned by Procter and Gamble about eight times, and I've had lots of very happy customers who would only sell their car back to me rather than someone else, even though I was probably offering them less money. One client, a judge, bought at least 10 cars from me. I've received lots of cards and letters of thanks, which have made for happy memories. When there have been problems, dealing with them promptly has often turned a negative into a positive.

Looking back, I'm glad I started the business, but you need to be a younger person to take all the knocks and the pressures. There are many things I could have done, but I'm glad I chose classic cars and I've been lucky enough to run the business from home. Thinking of the future, I considered wedding cars but that means working weekends, so no. Maybe I might become involved in the auction world. So we'll see, time will tell. But I'll always be a classic car dealer – only now as a hobby.

Typ AOD

MERCEDES-BENZ





**Stuttgart, 1954:
 180D Ponton brochure**

Overleaf, and over seven pages, the story of the four-cylinder W120 Ponton is told in full by an expert on the model, and who for decades has owned the 180 his father purchased new. The Ponton was launched in 1953 and proved the car that properly re-established Daimler-Benz after World War Two, a clean-sheet, unitary construction design that moved the car maker on from the pre-war adaptations it had sold hitherto.

The reproduction quality that colour photography offered in the early 1950s was not considered good enough for advertising or promotions, hence brush and palette still ruled in creatives' studios. And Mercedes-Benz employed two of Germany's best artists to produce the material, Walter Gotschke and Hans Liska, both of whom we profile elsewhere in this issue. Their work is subtly different and equally beautiful, evoking images of more than simply the cars (and trucks) they were commissioned to represent. Thankfully, Mercedes' more than century-long practice of meticulously cataloguing and safely storing material meant their artworks were saved from being the throwaways such items often were in an age before heritage as we now know it had been thought of.

The utterly charming yet clearly aspirational image seen here is Liska's front cover for the 180D catalogue, the diesel Ponton, which was launched in February 1954, seven months on from the petrol 180. It was very much a golden age of automotive artwork, for even before the Ponton production run had ended Stuttgart had decided that film was now good enough and was using photography in brochures. More efficient probably, but from today's perspective not nearly as charming.

IMAGE HANS LISKA/MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP

Cover
story

Premier Ponton



It's been in his family since he was just three years old, and after inheriting it from his father **Tim Slade** made it possibly the best right-hand drive Ponton there is. Here he describes how important the W120 saloon now is to him, and also to Mercedes-Benz during the 1950s

IMAGES CRAIG PUSEY

When we think of Mercedes-Benz, what we really think of is post-war Mercedes-Benz. The 1930s grand prix cars, the SS and SSKs, and the magnificent 500 and 540Ks are remembered, but the more 'proletariat' cars are not. They existed, but were pretty dull. In 1931, Mercedes made its first stab at the mass market with the 170, but, even with six cylinders, it was a weary, upright little side-valve device. 170s continued with four-cylinder side valves, and better looking bodywork, until World War Two, and even sold in good numbers though they were never marketed in countries outside Germany.

In 1945, Mercedes was left with destroyed factories and a small, though motivated workforce. Somehow the tooling for the humble 170 was salvaged from the rubble and the model stumbled back into production. It was what Germany needed, and with both petrol and diesel engines nearly 140,000 170s were sold. But of course, the 170, even in S form, was really a pre-war car. Mercedes realised the need for a modern car, and the 180 was just that.

The first year of the W120 180 was 1953, and with it came the banishment of separate chassis, separate headlamps and running boards to a past most wanted to forget. The 180 'Ponton' was unitary, giving it a strength and a lightness impossible with a separate frame and body. It was designed at the time when manufacturers were struggling to style a full width body, and many of them got it very wrong – the Singer Hunter, Standard Vanguard and even BMW 501 showing how difficult the challenge was. Mercedes, however judged it correctly, taking inspiration from surely the best looking four-door saloon of the day: the American '49 Ford, which had an enormous, though still underestimated influence on automotive styling worldwide; cut it off at the waistline, and see how close the top half is to so many European cars of the 1950s.

The 180 may look a little serious and stolid, but it was a car with a job to do, and it accomplished it extremely well. Thoroughly modern in every way, with the exception of its engines, inherited from the 170, the M136 1,767cc side-valve unit churning out 51bhp and not a thing of loveliness; at least the diesel got overhead valves. Mercedes was the first to produce diesel cars, and in 1955 they won the Mille Miglia's diesel class (Stirling Moss' overall victory in the 300SLR may be better remembered...). I've driven that very class-winning diesel, and the throttle has only two positions, with on not much different to off. Somehow they averaged over 60mph, although the driver couldn't have touched the brakes much in over a thousand miles.

The diesels outsold the petrol models. Their qualities of extreme longevity, rugged simplicity and economy outweighed their lack of performance, and the noise and vibration of the early diesel. Their appetite for high miles was proved when a 180D claimed the official record for miles driven: a 1957 180D, owned by Mr Robert O'Reilly, of Tacoma, Washington State, covered a verified 1,184,000 miles. I hope he had a good radio. Later 180Ds gained an overhead-cam diesel, which lived on for decades in various capacities in both cars and commercials. ⇨



Ford Motor Company

“The 180 Ponton was unitary, giving it a strength and a lightness impossible with a separate frame and body”



TOP LEFT INSET
When styling the Ponton, M-B looked very closely at the American '49 Ford.

ABOVE LEFT
'Petrol dog' was owner Tim Slade's plan for world domination but it failed.

LEFT
Like most '50s cars, it was basic: exposed metal trim, manually wound windows.

Six-cylinder Pontons

They looked much the same as the fours but had a longer nose and fancier trim, **Tim French** explains

The four-cylinder Ponton range launched in 1953 can be seen as the forerunners to what would become the E-Class, and one year later the spiritual predecessor of the future S-Class arrived. It took the form of a Ponton with a 170mm wheelbase stretch, six-cylinder engines and more decorative exterior trim. Part of the increase in body length was the 100mm extension ahead of the front windscreen, necessary to accommodate the longer, 2.2-litre M180 straight-six with its single carburettor and 84bhp, as fitted to the original, 220a model.

Two years on, this was replaced by the 220S (pictured), using the same engine but with twin carburettors boosting power to near 100bhp, and increasing slightly the year after. At the same time, the 219

model appeared, a curious mixture of the four- and six-cylinder Ponton bodies, and with the 220a engine, and basic trim. The top spec model was the late arriving 220SE, built as from September 1958 and with a new engine of the same capacity, the fuel-injected M127 delivering 113bhp. It was current for less than a year, with under 2,000 made

Unlike the four-cylinder Pontons, the sixes were offered with an automatic transmission – of sorts. This was the Hydrak system, effectively a manual four-speed shift on the column but with a self-engaging hydraulically operated clutch. Six-cylinder Ponton production ceased in 1959, three years before the fours, to make way for the Fintail series. A little over 111,000 were produced, approximately half of them the 220S.



ABOVE INSET
Seen here is the mid-cycle model, the 220S with its twin-carburettor engine.

LEFT
Ponton sixes plusher inside than the fours and had a front bench seat.



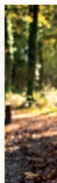
The very first 180s had the high pivot-swing-axle independent rear suspension from the 170, a design infamously unstable and shared with the 300SL Gullwing. It was soon replaced with the low pivot system, that continued through the Fintails, Pagodas and W108/W109 into the early 1970s. The 180 lacked the horizontal compensating spring or self-levelling device of the later models, and carrying generously proportioned rear seat passengers would produce some apparently alarming angles of negative camber. It would also wear the inside edges of the tyres.

At the front was a clever subframe that carried the engine, gearbox, front suspension and steering. It could, at least in theory, be removed from the car as a whole. It was attached to the body via rubber bushes, and the arrangement made for excellent insulation from noise. Early on, one motoring journalist compared it to a transportable pontoon bridge, and the 'Ponton' name stuck forever.

The essential rightness of the chassis design meant that few changes were made when it went under the 'Fintails', and later the big W108s. A 300SEL 6.3 really does feel a lot like a very overpowered 180... that's my opinion, anyway!

ABOVE
The Ponton feels compact on the inside by today's standards but not cramped.

RIGHT
A fog lamp sat on one side, and this driving lamp the other, which Tim painted.





Being a later, 180b it has the M121 overhead cam unit.



ABOVE
Tim replaced the dynamo, which boosts electrical charging.

ABOVE LEFT
In 1959 a round of styling changes included fitting these larger tail lights.

BELOW
Almost 443,000 4-pot Pontons were built but sadly not many are left.

The first 180s lacked quarter lights, and used the old fashioned hub caps from the 170. In August 1957, the 180 finally received the engine it deserved, the properly modern 1,897cc M121 overhead-cam unit, as seen with an extra carburettor and higher compression ratio in the 190SL Roadster. Once the 180 gained the same unit, there were very few differences between it and the 190 (which had been added to the range in 1956 as a third, higher spec model), apart from an extra carburettor choke for the 190 and a bit more chrome trim. The 1957 car was the 180a.

The 180's next development was in 1959, when it became the 180b. There were many changes to the interior, with the indicators getting their own stalk, rather than being operated by turning the horn ring. A large, soft steering wheel centre

“Like so many old Mercedes it was under geared, Benz preferring top speed to coincide with maximum engine power”

and soft switches appeared, the grille became lower and wider, bumpers got fatter and the rear lights were enlarged.

On the technical side, the timing chain gained a second row, and the brakes were widened. The 180 was the last Mercedes to have drums all round, heavily finned at the front. Another modernism that passed four-cylinder Pontons by was automatic transmission, four speeds and a column change lasting throughout the whole of production.

Like so many old Mercedes, the transmission was under geared, Mercedes preferring top speed to coincide with peak engine power. That maximum for the 180b was only 84mph, but like a lot of German cars, it was designed to run all day at top speed, if you could stand the revs.

In June 1961 came the 180's last gasp, the 180c. With the four-cylinder Fintail in full production, it was now relegated to being the economy choice, the only changes being valve rockers on individual balls rather than a shaft, and slightly different door catches. Ponton production finally came to an end in October 1962 after nearly 443,000 deliveries.

The 180 was a workhorse, and workhorses go to the knacker's yard when they're worn out. It also had an enthusiasm for rust, leaving it a rare and rather forgotten motorcar. They were assembled from kits in both Australia and South Africa, and in recent times a good many have returned from the latter, but finding a good and correct 180 is nonetheless difficult.

The Ponton surely deserves far more attention and accolades, as without it, Mercedes would not have prospered after the war. It was the first modern Mercedes and laid the foundations for Daimler-Benz as a mass producer – it's arguably Stuttgart's most important model ever. →

Specifications

Mercedes-Benz 180b (W120)

ENGINE M121 1,897cc 4-cyl
POWER 67bhp@4,400rpm
TORQUE 95lb ft@3,500rpm

TRANSMISSION

4-speed manual

WEIGHT 1,065kg

0-63MPH 21.0sec

TOP SPEED 84mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

25.0mpg

YEARS PRODUCED

1959-1961

NUMBER BUILT 29,033

All figures from Mercedes-Benz



Life-long owner: Tim Slade

When his father died at a relatively young age, the 180b he'd bought new remained in the family garage until eventually Tim took it on, and many years later fully restored it to the stunning car it now is

My own entanglement with the 180 is nearly life-long. My father took the family off to Malta in 1958, where he was to run Britain's Naval Supply Office, and brought his rather splendid, though very old fashioned Alvis TA14 shooting brake along with him. But in 1960 he decided to sell it to the governor of Malta, and ordered a brand new Mercedes-Benz, a bright red 190 model.

Cadging a lift on the stores ship RFA Fort Duquesne, he made his way to Stuttgart to take delivery, but when he arrived his car wasn't there. He was asked, would a maroon 180 do? It did, and it did my father for the rest of his life.

Due to very high import duties, most Mercedes in the UK were brought home, tax-free, by servicemen. The cars had to be a year old, and to have covered a certain mileage, which is why there are 2,000 more miles on my 180's clock than it has done. On our return to England in 1961, the car wasn't old enough, so on the way home we took a month-long tour through Sicily and Italy. These were difficult places to travel to then, and it must have been quite a challenge, especially with a one-year old daughter and a three-year old son to look after.

Back in Godalming in Surrey, the Mercedes was the car of my childhood. Nobody else's parents had a Mercedes-Benz, and they were a very rare sight on our roads, hence I was immensely proud of it. Mum had a Morris Minor, so when the 180 came out of the garage, it was a big treat for me.

Weekend walks were a regular, and when I was 14 Dad took me up to the army ranges, disappearing off with the dog, and



BELOW
A custom upgraded rotator keeps the motor much cooler in town.

BELOW LEFT
Mileage is round the clock, hence actually 138,200; 40,000 miles are Tim's.

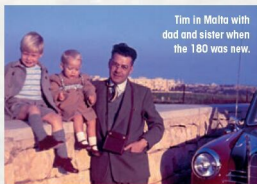
leaving me to work out how to drive the car! So here I am, over 50 years later, still with the first car I ever drove.

At 17, I obtained an Austin A30 and Dad taught me to drive, though he wouldn't insure the Ponton for me. Then, when I was 21, Dad died, the age I am now (I nearly beat him to it, when a few years ago I had my own run in with cancer). I drove the car for a short while after Dad's departure, but something went wrong and I couldn't afford to fix it. The 180 returned to its garage under the back of Mum's house and there it stayed. And stayed.

Then in 2000 I woke from a dream of the 180. I realised I had owned it longer than my dad, and something had to be done. I was doing well as an illustrator, and my home was rocketing in value, so on a recommendation, the car went down to Mercedes specialist John Haynes in West Sussex.

ABOVE INSET
Once the modest thip and column shift are mastered the 180 feels fleet of foot.





Tim in Malta with dad and sister when the 180 was new.



Earlier 180s didn't have quarterlights on the side glass.



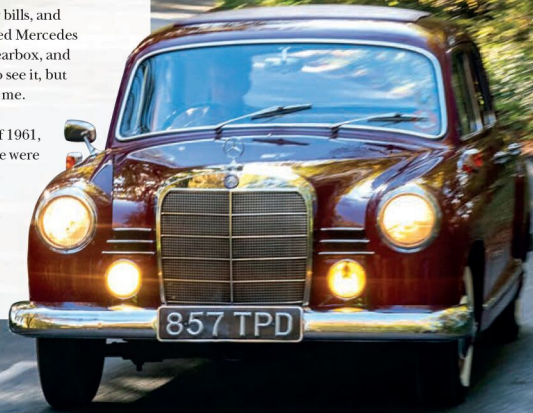
ABOVE LEFT
Side minor with the Mercedes that many years later would become his.

LEFT
Tim doesn't need a modern car, he loves driving his 180, even on trips abroad.

During the restoration I was sent bills, big bills, and photographs, one shot showing my beloved Mercedes with no wings, glass, interior, engine or gearbox, and no paint. I asked if I should come down to see it, but was told this would probably only depress me.

My aim was to re-enact the journey of 1961, 40 years on with my sister. But there were hold-ups, the main one being that the cylinder-head was rotten, due to a blown head gasket. Eventually a bare casting was found on a shelf somewhere in Germany, lurking under a van part number.

By the time we needed to go, I had hardly driven the car. It's incredible ⇨



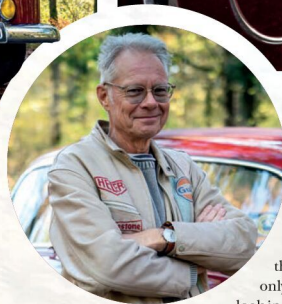
**"In Surrey, the Mercedes was the car of my childhood.
Nobody else's parents had a Mercedes-Benz, hence
I was immensely proud of it"**



LEFT
Behind these lovely colour matched hub caps are drum brakes, front/rear.

FAR LEFT
You won't spot a prettier UK spec Ponton, Tim confidently assures us.

LEFT INSET
Even after all these decades the Ponton still makes him smile broadly.



"In the last two decades, attitudes have changed enormously. People no longer thrust out an arm at my car and shout, "Taxi!"

⇒ that it got to Palermo and back, but it did, the first of many continental journeys. Dad always cruised at 80mph, but I stick to 75, just fast enough for long journeys. The excellent handling, good ride and lively nature make it a great drive.

I had a BMW 323i Baur cabriolet back in 2001, but the trouble was that when the sun was out, I drove the Mercedes, the convertible only going out in the rain. So I sold the Baur, and spent much of the cash on having a Webasto sunroof fitted. I had one very rude comment about what I'd done, but it has won lots of concours cups with the roof there.

Another departure from original are the carpets, which weren't even a factory option, 180s coming with grey rubber mats and that was that. An Australian publication commented it was "like finding lino at Buckingham Palace". It was my car,

and I was definitely having carpets.

I also strayed with the radio. The huge and splendid Blaupunkt valve radio Dad had ordered no longer worked so, inspired by driving an ex-Eric Clapton AMG G-Wagen with a mighty sound system, I went a bit daft. The head unit is in the glovebox, the speakers are all hidden, and you can only see the 12-inch sub and amp if you

look in the boot. Moreover, all the wiring follows the loom, so zero damage. It has kept

evolving, and I love it. Its presence makes people giggle.

My dad maintained his car and I've carried on the tradition. No one else has touched it in the last 20-odd years. I've made a few little modifications to aid reliability, but otherwise I strive to keep it as it should be, and I've yet to see another 180b as good.

Even in the last two decades attitudes have changed enormously. People no longer thrust out an arm at my car and shout, "Taxi!" Its place at the bottom of the range is now forgotten. As every year goes by, it becomes more special and garners more admiration. My very special relationship with this Mercedes means I am eternally in love with it. ©



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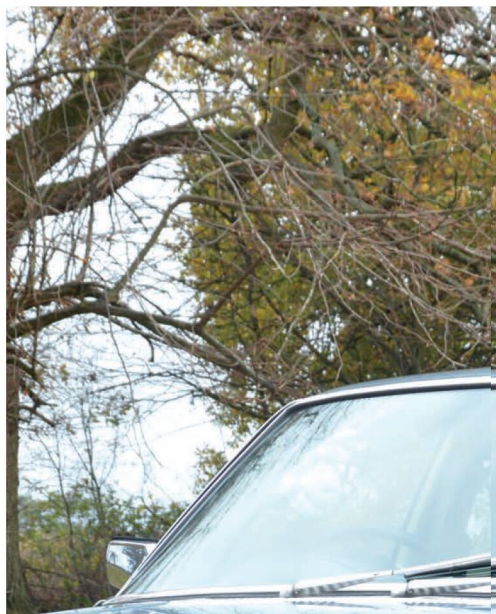
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Runs in the family

Peter Wiazowski has loved the 116-series since he was a boy. His father, **Victor**, has too, and gave Peter the S-Class poster he had on his bedroom wall as a boy. It was only a matter of time before they bought one together

IMAGES DEREK GOARD



**"I REMEMBER A POSTER AT MY GRANDAD'S HOUSE IN
WARSAW OF A GOLDEN 116-SERIES. THAT SAME POSTER WAS
PASSED ON TO MY DAD, AND NOW IT'S IN MY BEDROOM"**

RIGHT INSET
The 450SE made a brief
appearance in an O2
phone company advert.



In 1972, Mercedes-Benz presented the 116-series as the successor to the W108/W109 range. The new design direction gave it a much more modern (at the time) and lithe look. And it was the first Mercedes model series to be called S-Class, the title derived from the word *sonderklasse*, or 'special class'. It became the undisputed benchmark design for large, prestige saloons, and was the worldwide best seller in its market segment.

Stuttgart's attention to detail when engineering the model was second to none. Gutters were integrated into the trim around the doors so that water would not stand and obscure vision through the side windows. The door cards have their own air ducts for

ventilation, preventing mould or stale odours. In 1978, the 116 became the first car equipped with a modern electronic anti-lock braking system, and in the same year it could claim to be the fastest diesel car in the world when offered with the three-litre,

BELOW LEFT
Whitewall tyres aren't often seen in a Euro spec 116 but they look good.

BELOW
Front parking poles were a rare factory extra, and preceded parking sensors.

BELOW INSET
With a three-speed auto the 450SE is no ball of fire but still delicious to drive.

turbocharged five-cylinder OM617 engine, a car that was instrumental in establishing the luxury oil burner car. The 116 received the prestigious European Car of the Year award, 1974.

I remember a poster of a golden 116-series at my grandad's house in Warsaw. That same poster was then passed on to my dad, and now it's in my bedroom where I presently live, in Bracknell, Berkshire. It was the car of our dreams for a very, very long time.

For my father, his love for old Mercedes started in his childhood in Warsaw, when he used to see the same golden coloured W123 every day on his travels around his hometown. Mercs were a rarity in the Soviet-block Poland of the 1980s, and those that were seen were usually W123s and W115s, all diesels. Whenever there was an opportunity to take a taxi ride, he would join the orderly queue to get into the Mercedes taxi, not the Polish-built Fiat 125, which was always empty. The 116 S-Class was of course an

unachievable dream for most people, young or old, in Poland during that time, but after many years of patiently waiting, matched with the eventual affordability of the car, the



Mercedes-Benz 450SE (W116)

Engine M117 4,520cc V8 Power 214bhp@5,000rpm Torque 265lb ft@3,250rpm Transmission 3-speed automatic 0-62mph 9.3sec Top speed 131mph Fuel consumption 19.5mpg Produced 1972-1980 Number built 41,604

All figures from Mercedes-Benz





ABOVE INSET
Peter Wiazowski and dad Victor began searching for a V8 116 in early 2020.

ABOVE LEFT
This S-Class generation was the last to feature MB's enormous wheel.

LEFT
Leather is showing a few creases but is in great condition for its 45 years.



opportunity arose to start seriously looking for one of our own.

The plan was to buy a 116 jointly with my father, who 25 years ago moved to the UK, and it was here that, with a set budget in mind, our search began in 2020. But for a long while, our mission was unsuccessful, many hours of scouting the deepest ends of the internet turning up only rotten projects, undesirable examples and cars that were simply too far gone. We finally concluded that our only option was to up the budget, and hunt for exactly what we want – it had to be a big V8, the 450 model. A V8 Mercedes was always a car we would watch and salivate over when one drove past.

Then one day, while undertaking our regular browse of eBay, we found what might well be the perfect example. A few inferior pictures hovered over a short description of a metallic blue 450SE – which we instantly fell in love with. In Scarborough on the North Yorkshire

coast, it was only a short 300 miles away from home, and after a brief but inquisitive conversation on the phone with the owner, we went to see it.

It was February 20, 2021, a day I will always remember: as soon as the garage doors were opened to reveal that familiar Benz tail, it was love at first sight, and we knew this was going to be our car. Once the M117 4.5-litre rumbled into life, Dad and I just looked at each other and smiled. We inspected the car thoroughly but

quickly, itching to get the sale over and done with, and drive it home.

**"IN ALL OF THE
EXCITEMENT,
WE MANAGED TO
SECURE A DEAL
AND BUY A 44-
YEAR OLD CAR
WITHOUT TAKING
A TEST DRIVE!"**

In all the excitement, we managed to secure a deal and buy a 44-year old car without taking a test drive! I'm positive it was the fastest sale that seller had ever conducted, and for us, it was the first car we've bought without driving it.

We only realised this a few days after the purchase when the excitement had worn off a little. Of course, it swallowed up the long journey home with great ease. Our neighbours soon realised the big Mercedes was ours, and were all transported back to the 1970s as soon as they sat on the 450SE's sofa-like rear seat.

The car came with a lot of factory options for its time: metallic paint, cream leather, air conditioning, a →

BELOW
77 M117 has mechanical injection, better than the earlier electronic setup.





⇒ Blaupunkt radio/cassette and, rather unusually, parking poles on the front bumper. It was first registered in December 1977, and from detailed online searches we believe it to be the last 450SE registered in the UK in this colour; there are apparently three 450 examples from 1977 left in the UK.

Unlike on six-cylinder 116s, which have a four-speed automatic transmission, the likeably lazy and lumpy V8 is paired to a three-speed auto, so it'll never set any land speed records. Fuel consumption? Irrelevant, is the best way to think of it. One of the rarer features are the parking poles which took an awfully long time to source. As the car is rather long, it was Mercedes' 1970s equivalent of the modern parking sensor.

For a long time, the Mercedes was owned by one family in the north of England, and was used for business trips to Italy several times a year during the 1980s and 90s. The car's history isn't 100 per cent known – as it had unfortunately outlived most of its previous owners.



ABOVE
The SE chassis locks the stretched SE's rear leg space but is still luxurious.

ABOVE RIGHT
Headlamp washers are a safety feature that wasn't common in the 1970s.

BELOW
Like Peter, Victor loved Mercs as a boy, and passed down his 116 wall poster.

BOTTOM
A 280SE had only six cylinders but looked identical to the V8s.

But we do know it was bought new in 1977, for a then stratospheric £36,000 from a Mercedes-Benz dealer in the UK, but we don't know which one. It was passed down father-to-son as if it were a family treasure until finally, it made it into our garage at home for a planned permanent residence.

So far during our ownership, it has been pretty much faultless. Given its age, we weren't surprised that some welding work was required, but I'd say it was relatively little for a 44-year old. The points which required attention were mainly the floorpan and some small patches on the sills. Apart from regular servicing and maintenance, not much else has been needed.

A classic Mercedes specialist not far away in Basingstoke had taken care of the 450SE's needs up until late 2022 when, sadly for us, it closed permanently. However, over the years my father and I have gained confidence in working on cars such as this one. And

luckily for us, it is actually fairly easy to work on, maintain and care for. Space under the bonnet seems infinite, and the simplicity of the whole vehicle makes it enjoyable to work on.

Sourcing and paying for parts is unfortunately less enjoyable. Items such as trim, plastics and body panels especially are, in my opinion, far too expensive. The more frequently required mechanical parts are much more reasonably priced, though. For example, the ignition coil managed to burn itself out and melt while on the way to a Goodwood event in early 2021, but a replacement arrived within a few days for £18. An easy fix!

Some mechanical parts, including the coil, were purchased from a mixture of sources. These includes official dealer Mercedes-Benz of Ascot, as well as online suppliers like classicmercedesparts.co.uk and autodoc.co.uk and which supply a useful mixture of new and used parts. Only one trim panel needed replacing, which was the door step plate. This was purchased second hand from somebody breaking a W116 in Lithuania. Good old eBay!

We also have another, somewhat newer Mercedes on our small fleet – a W204 C63 AMG. I mention this



Six-cylinder 116s

The 2.8-litre engine has its work cut to shift the big S-Class but does so with surprising gusto, Tim French explains

Peter and his father were considering only V8 116s, wishing to enjoy the power and torque plus the refinement of these engines. However, the six-cylinder models also introduced in 1972 – the 280 in carburettored S, and fuel-injected SE and SEL form – should not be dismissed as the V8s' poor cousin, as they have their own appeal and some even prefer them to the bigger-engined cars.

With any other engine, the 280 would have been struggling for pace, but the 2,746cc M110 used was one of Mercedes' classic motors of the 1970s. A



"THE W116 ISN'T A SPORTS CAR, ITS PURPOSE IS TO COVER SERIOUS MILEAGE EFFORTLESSLY WHILE DROWNING YOU IN WHAT WAS CONSIDERED LUXURIOUS IN 1977"

because although they are on the face of it completely incomparable, and behave and perform in totally different ways, they do have similarities. Both are Mercedes icons of different eras, and the superior build quality can be felt wherever you lay your eyes upon them. The W116 most certainly isn't a sports car, but more of a cruiser. Its purpose is to cover serious mileage effortlessly while smothering you in what was considered highly luxurious in 1977.

The car causes a sensation on the streets and car parks – and definitely at old people's homes. I mention this because on the fifth day of ownership, a fuel relay decided to stop working and the Mercedes glided to a stop

outside an old people's home in Surrey. It was one of the most enjoyable breakdowns I've ever had! When I park outside an old pub, probably the most common comment heard is, "I remember when these used to drive around, y'know". It has also been used for an O2 advertisement but unfortunately, the only thing you can see in the advert is a bit of the windscreen and some interior shots, which was a little annoying given that filming took 10 hours!

For us, originality is key. Therefore, modifications are ruled out. I am aware of some 116s in the UK that are on air suspension, sit less than an inch from the ground when parked up and have fancy wheels and so forth, which

double-overhead-cam unit, it revved hard and easily, producing its 183bhp (or 175bhp in the middle years) in the 280SE/SEL at a heady 6,000rpm. Hence with an automatic transmission to disguise the M110's peakiness, the Mercedes offered sparkling pace provided you kept your foot down; even the 280S gave acceptable performance. The M110 also looks very distinctive due to its huge camshaft covers on top, and efficient sound deadening keeps the noise generated by the twin-cam valvetrain in check.

And petrol six-cylinder models significantly outsold V8s, the most popular 116 being the 280SE with over 150,000 deliveries. The best selling V8 was the 450SEL, which found just under 59,600 homes. North America took 28,600 300SD diesels.

BELOW
With huge cam covers, the M110 looked great well as delivering big horsepower.



I love by the way, but Dad and I knew this car deserved to be treated with respect, and kept it looking how it was when it first left Sindelfingen.

The 450SE attends local classic car meets as well as larger events. For example, Players Classic at Goodwood is one of my favourite events. For summer 2023, we plan on bringing it to more classic car shows and showing it off as much as possible. We'll probably join The Mercedes-Benz Club in the UK, which will allow us to meet more fellow Mercedes enthusiasts.

In the future, the car will benefit from a full respray (in the same colour of course) and most certainly an interior refresh. Our 450SE – with 'made in Stuttgart' on the VIN plate, which I think is so cool – is a true representation of Mercedes build quality, simply made to last, and during our two years of ownership has brought us nothing but happiness. 🏆



ABOVE RIGHT
 Now shocking to think that the 1974 World Cup buses sported ashtrays.
MAIN IMAGES
 The 16 team buses M-B supplied were the O 302 model, launched 1965.

Cup wheels

IMAGES
 Mercedes-Benz Group AG

A delve into the Mercedes-Benz archive reveals how for the World Cup staged in Germany in 1974, Mercedes-Benz seized the opportunity to remind the world that besides making great cars, its buses weren't too shabby either

Great sporting events provide many rich opportunities for product endorsement, not least for transport for participants, be they teams or individuals. In the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, Hyundai won the contract to supply over 600 vehicles, including 226 electric buses.

Wind the clock back nearly half a century to 1974 and West Germany is hosting the World Cup, following a deal made eight years earlier with Spain whereby Spain would not oppose West Germany's bid if it supported Spain for 1982. The 16 qualifying teams – which did not include a

number of the normally successful football countries including 1970 hosts Mexico, France, Spain and the 1966 champions, England – played for a new trophy due to the previous one having been permanently awarded to Brazil after its third championship win.

Between June 13 and July 7, stadiums in West Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart hosted the games, and in those days only one vehicle maker was in the frame to supply the team buses in Germany – Mercedes-Benz, of course, which made available 16 specially





ABOVE
Seat top covers withstood anything footballer's hair could throw at them.

ABOVE RIGHT
The German team song, *Football Is Our Life*, was no doubt played many times.



ABOVE
This was the West German livery; East Germany also played.

ABOVE RIGHT
Many German people will fondly recall the 1974 tournament logo.

"MERCEDES-BENZ MADE AVAILABLE 16 SPECIALLY EQUIPPED BUSES TO TEAMS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL COLOURS, AND WITH NATIONAL FLAGS FLUTTERING IN THE WIND"

equipped buses to teams in their respective national colours, and with national flags on the roof fluttering in the wind. The West German team bus now resides in the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart – well, at least one that looks identical to it, as after the World Cup all the buses were converted back to 'civilian' spec and put into normal commercial use, in time all of them including West Germany's disappearing without trace.



The buses, built in the Daimler-Benz plant in Mannheim, were the O 302 series, the successor to the O321 H/HL that two decades earlier had transformed single decker bus design and turned Mercedes-Benz into a world leader in the field. Whereas buses of the 1950s were typically based on pre-war trucks with a separate, ladder chassis, the O321 H, in recognition that people carrying is a very different discipline to cargo transport, featured a super tough floor section that effectively made it a unitary construction design – just as the Ponton saloon, introduced a year earlier, was. The closed centre of the floor served as heating and ventilation ducts, and fixing points to the front and rear subframes were damped with rubber for improved ride quality.

A compact, 16m turning circle made the O 321 H very manoeuvrable in cities and also on southern Europe's network of mountain roads with many hairpin bends. The bus, powered by a 5.1-litre, six-cylinder diesel engine, was

ABOVE
The O 321, on which the O 302 was based, offered a very tight turning circle.

ABOVE RIGHT
For the 1950s, the O 321 was a super modern bus design and a big success.

BELOW LEFT
Daimler-Benz built 18,000 of the O 302 series in the dozen years until 1976.

also very modern in appearance. An advertising slogan stated that the new bus "handles like a passenger car", and glowing press reviews did not dispute this and other claims.

The O 321 H/HL became a very popular export earner for Daimler-Benz, around half of production sold outside Germany. It became a familiar 'face' for people across continents and brought the high quality of German engineering to a wider audience. It was even delivered in CKD knockdown form for local assembly.

The O 302 bus which replaced it was built from spring 1965 onwards. With it, Mercedes-Benz achieved even higher standards in terms of speed, suspension comfort and ease of use. Air conditioning became available for the first time as special equipment, the 1974 World Cup buses equipped with the Thermo King system, located at the back of the bus on the roof. This was initially a special equipment option, but was fitted as standard from 1971 onwards. The bus was available with a choice of four →

RIGHT
None of the 1974 team buses survive, so a 're-creation' stands in.

BELOW RIGHT
Bus is wired so that when a visitor boards, the team song plays.

⇒ six-cylinder in-line naturally aspirated diesel engines and outputs from 124bhp to 237bhp.

It was a successful model: by 1976, Mercedes-Benz had produced more than 32,000 of the O 302 bus range, compared to just over 18,000 of the O 321 H/HL. The next generation, the O 303, had already gone into production in 1974, which raised the bar for travel comfort to an even more impressive level.

The 1974 World Cup logo on the outside of the bus represents a stylised rolling football. The mascots of the West German team greet one from the rear: Tip and Tap, two laughing boys with red cheeks in the black and white DFB (German Football Association) kit. They were created by Saarbrücken graphic artist Horst Schäfer, who also designed the 1974 official World Cup poster. Inevitably, the mascots were available as soft toys and key rings, as well as on ties, children's pyjamas, beer mugs and mustard jars among other things.

A walk through the bus is like a journey back in time to the bus interior styling of the 1970s. The red-orange seat cover fabric glows vibrantly, and each chair carries a head restraint cover to cope with the onslaught of the footballist buffiant. The individual equipment also includes ashtrays at every seat, an on-board toilet and even a tap for fresh beer. Yes, times were different – non-alcoholic barley juice would not become widespread until much later, and smoking was still socially acceptable, even for competitive athletes.

On his well-suspended seat, the driver turned the large black steering wheel and set his sights on the next venue through the large panoramic window. In the seat next to him? Probably national coach Helmut Schön, perhaps also assistant coach Jupp Derwall or captain Franz Beckenbauer. It is known that each player had their own assigned seat. Germany's Bierkeller-esque World Cup song, *Fussball Ist Unser Leben* (Football Is Our Life) was almost certainly heard on the Blaupunkt stereo radio-cassette player quite often. The players in the senior national team of the DFB (German Football Association) sang it in person in the recording studio before the tournament, and the technicians naturally couldn't resist wiring the Museum exhibit's sound system to play it as soon as visitors enter the bus.

Why is BR Deutschland (FR



"THE ON-BOARD EQUIPMENT ALSO INCLUDES ASHTRAYS AT EVERY SEAT - SMOKING WAS STILL SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE, EVEN FOR COMPETITIVE ATHLETES AT THE TOP LEVEL"

Germany) written on the outside of the bus? At that time, Germany was still a divided country and had been so since 1945, the division underlined by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the team of the German Democratic Republic – better known in the west as East Germany – from the other side of the 'Iron Curtain' also took part in the tournament. On their bus it read DDR (GDR). The GDR, making its only World Cup appearance before Germany was reunified in 1990, was eliminated in the second round.

In the final held on July 7, 1974 in Munich, the German team met their Dutch counterparts. Twenty-five minutes after kick-off, the score was 1-1 from a first-minute Dutch penalty, and later one for Germany. Then just before half-time, Germany's Gerd Müller scored to make it 2-1 with a skillful pivot after good work from Rainer Bonhof during the build-up.

A disallowed goal for Germany in the second half meant that this was how the game ended. Germany, the 1972 European champions, celebrated winning the World Cup for the

second time, the first being in 1954 – and it can safely be assumed that copious amounts of celebratory beer flowed from the tap on the bus on the journey back to the team hotel.



★
Headlines of 1974

★ In F1, Brazilian Emerson Fittipaldi in a McLaren took the second of his two F1 championships (and McLaren's first, below), but the 1974 season's most significant aspect was the revival of Ferrari with their promising new signing, Austrian-born Niki Lauda. He was 1975's champion.

★ It was arguably the worst ever year for Britain's once proud car industry, as near bankrupt volume producer British Leyland was forced to seek financial aid from the government, which nationalised the ailing multi-marque corporation.

★ The so-called energy crisis, brought about by hiked oil prices, saw Mercedes-Benz introduce its first high-end 'economy' models. The V8-engined versions of the R107 roadster and C107 SLC were joined by the, six-cylinder 280SL and 280SLC.

★ In August, Richard Nixon announced he would step down as President of the United States – the first ever to do so. He did so in the face of an imminent impeachment trial and possible removal from office over the Watergate break-in affair of 1972.

★ The British aristocracy was rocked by the disappearance of Lord Lucan, suspected of killing his children's nanny. The Peer, also said to be an often-losing professional gambler, was never seen again, and officially declared dead in 2016.



ABOVE
With Emerson Fittipaldi, McLaren were F1 champs.

LEFT
Tip and Tap were West Germany's team mascots.

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THE WHITE ALBUM

In 1968, Beatle George Harrison purchased the 600 seen here, but kept it only two years. **Richard Mason** tracked its history thereafter, and presents us with a full collection of its owners and travels

MAIN IMAGES Tom Burup

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This car has caught fire, seen an owner killed in a freak accident and been used as a bridal car at least once

Living with George Harrison's personal AMG-modified 126-series 500SEL for seven months sparked my interest in his other Mercs. My research yielded interesting stories, none more so than his first Mercedes, a regular-wheelbase 600 in white. This car has caught fire, seen an owner killed in a freak accident and been used as a bridal car at least once – a case of one wedding and a funeral.

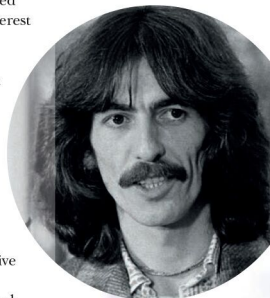
Over lunch with Pattie Boyd, George's first wife, I learnt they bought two Mercedes in 1968 – a new, red 280SL Pagoda, and a second hand 600 first registered in February 1967. Pattie couldn't remember the registrations, but luckily internet photos showed the 600's OLA 600E plate, vital to track the earlier history of a 56-year old car.

Approximately 100 SWB 600s were imported to the UK in right-hand drive form, so it's a rare machine. My search began with the M100 Group on Facebook. Disappointingly this produced just one reply, suggesting Denmark, which I thought pretty unlikely, as it's not a right-hand drive country.

The internet revealed it was auctioned by Cheffins of Cambridge in April 2001. Luckily, staff member William King recalled the car, saying it didn't make its reserve and possibly came from a Yorkshire client. That's all he could offer because their office had burnt down, destroying all records.

PRESS CUTTINGS SHOW THAT A FEW DAYS BEFORE GEORGE'S 600 WAS AUCTIONED, JOHN LENNON'S 600 PULLMAN WAS ALSO UP FOR AUCTION IN LONDON. Coincidence, or a ploy to increase the value of George's car on the assumption that Lennon's would break all records? Ironically, George owned John's car after him, but the Lennon provenance created a reserve of £200,000 as opposed to £20,000 for George's. Neither car reached its reserve, although both sold later.

My only lead was the unlikely Danish one. Emailing the Mercedes-Benz Klub →



ABOVE
George loved his cars and this was the first of two Mercedes 600s he owned.





The 600 had been used to ferry Roy Orbison to The Flamingo Club in Sheffield in the mid 1970s!



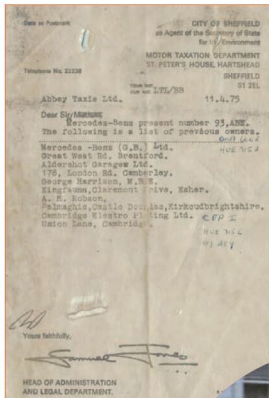
TOP
It has only 99,000 miles under its belt, so the 6.3 V8 is still young at heart.

TOP RIGHT
No doubt assorted Fender, Gibson and Rickenbacker guitars were slung in here.

⇒ Denmark, a prompt reply revealed member Tom Burup, had owned OLA 600E since 2001. Tom emailed me documents showing all the former owners and a receipt from Cheffins for £18,000; photos of Tom and a family wedding with the 600 underwrote the Danish connection. Unlike the Lennon Pullman, it hasn't needed extensive restoration and has led a quieter life, as Tom surmised from the car's background. "This car was a demonstrator," he explained when we first communicated. "When George Harrison wanted it, Mercedes-Benz had a waiting time of one year, so he settled for this demo model. I wanted a 600 and especially one owned by a member of The Beatles. I keep it in a warm dry environment at my factory. It's in outstanding condition, with the original leather, and has covered 99,000 miles. But I've only averaged 75 miles a year in it. We used it in 2016 for my son's wedding. These are very expensive cars to own with complicated mechanical systems that need constant attention."

ONE OF THE DOCUMENTS TOM SHARED WAS A LETTER, DATED 1975, FROM SHEFFIELD MOTOR TAXATION DEPARTMENT ADDRESSED TO ABBEY TAXIS, THE THEN OWNER, SHOWING ALL THE PREVIOUS OWNERS. So the detective work recommenced. I recalled the Cheffins' auctioneer mentioning Yorkshire, within which Sheffield lies, and sure enough, the 600 had sported registration 93 ABY, because Abbey Taxis Ltd of Sheffield owned it from late 1974. Although it went out of business years before the 600 came up for auction, one of the former directors retained ownership and a Sheffield plate, RWE 420E, replaced 93 ABY.

What follows next is pure speculation, but given the car spent 27 years in Sheffield, possibly it had done 30,000 miles when Abbey bought it in 1974. We know that when Tom bought it, there was 99,000 on the clock, so over those 27 years it might have clocked up 68,000 miles or an average of 2,500 a year. Conclusion: the 600 had seen light use as a taxi!



722 Mercedes-Benz 600 (W100). Formerly the property of George Mathew. Registration No. W 100 1234567. Chassis No. 10401234567. Engine No. 10401234567.

ABOVE
This letter from Sheffield Council helped Richard work out the 600's history.

ABOVE RIGHT
In 2001, still in the UK, George's car was put into an auction but didn't sell.

RIGHT
Various bits of footage establish that OLA 600E was the original plate.



I mentioned that George was fastidious with his, but undeterred, Keith added he didn't much care for The Beatles either! The document tells us his company owned the 600 for only about two years.

THE OWNER AFTER GEORGE, IN 1970, WAS ONE A H ROBSON OF BALMAGHIE, IN WHAT IS NOW DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY. Google Maps showed little in the vicinity, mainly forest, and Mr Robson's name didn't crop up either. Time for some lateral thinking: whoever could afford a 600 would have lived in a large house, not a croft. Estate agent CKD Galbraith, in nearby Castle Douglas, had popped up on my Google search list, and on its website I found for sale the Balmaghie Estate comprising 268 acres of land plus a seven-bedroom house.

I called Galbraith, and was soon collaborating with a surprised but intrigued Joyce Chapman, and for the next 24 hours she was my detective partner. She knew the vendors, although they were not called Robson.

"I've spoken to the current owner but he isn't sure of the former owner's name," she revealed to me. "However, he will speak later with his wife, as her mother may know some further details. The owner only knows back to 1979 – he says that the previous owner was a multi-millionaire who was killed on the driveway by a fallen tree, and that he had a Spanish wife."

Confirmation came through that the victim of the tree accident was indeed A H Robson, after which his widow returned to Spain and both the house and car were sold. When I relayed this story to Tom in Denmark, he revealed, "Well, actually about a month ago a 20m tree fell down on our driveway, but no one was hurt."

Back to the famous first owner. It's rumoured George wanted to buy a Rolls-Royce, and thought he could walk →

- Mercedes-Benz 600 (W100)**
- Engine** M100 6,332cc V8
- Power** 247hp@4,000rpm
- Torque** 369lb ft@2,800rpm
- Transmission** 4-speed automatic
- Weight** 2,475kg
- 0-62mph** 9.7sec
- Top speed** 128mph
- Fuel consumption** 15.9mpg
- Years produced** 1964-1981
- Number built** 2,190
- All figures from Mercedes-Benz*

Trawling the internet, I found a Sheffield community group with a thread about Abbey Taxis. I contacted one of the contributors, Cheryl Donohue, who shared that her uncle had worked for Abbey and revealed that the 600 had been used to ferry Roy Orbison to The Flamingo Club in Sheffield in the mid 1970s! Apparently Roy liked the car and offered to buy it – but not at the price Abbey wanted. Cheryl recalled the car was used sparingly, and that some people mistakenly thought it had belonged to John Lennon.

The letter from the taxation department told me that, prior to Abbey Taxis, the 600 was purchased in 1972 by Cambridge Electro Plating, which put on the CEP 1 registration. Keith Jones, a senior member of the company, and now in his 80s, recalled the Mercedes but was unaware of its rock star ancestry. In fact, Keith was even indignant, saying that pop stars were notorious for abusing their cars.



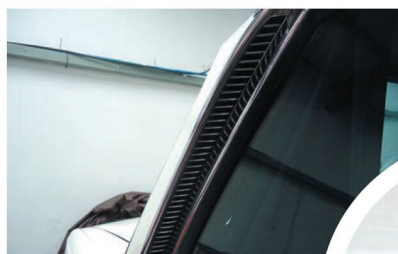
⇒ into the showroom, pick one and drive off. But Rolls-Royce dealers observe certain protocols and don't offer a same day service. One of George's staff took him to Aldershot Garages near Camberley which offered him an ex-Mercedes Brentford 600 demonstrator there and then (Brentford Mercedes being the UK concessionaire, it dealt only in new, not used cars).

A mechanic who'd worked at Brentford confided in me that the 600 had caught fire while being serviced, something George probably never knew about. A mechanic was using a flammable cleaning agent, possibly petrol, in the engine bay, and to see better, clipped a mains inspection light above the car. It wasn't fastened properly and popped off, landing on the engine and smashing its bulb which sent a spark igniting the cleaning fluid. Only lightning fast reactions prevented damage to the car.

GEOERGE'S TENURE WITH THE 600 WAS FROM 1968 UNTIL 1970, COINCIDING WITH THE RECORDING OF THE *LET IT BE* ALBUM.

In 1968, Apple Corp opened its Savile Row office and there are photos of the 600 parked outside with George wearing a distinctive hat. The registration OLA 600E, is partially visible in some photos and a few seconds of video footage of it were included in the *The Beatles Anthology*, shown by ITV; more recently, footage of George pulling up at 3 Saville Row is seen in the 2021 Disney+ marathon documentary *Get Back*.

When George bought the 600, The Beatles were in their final years as a band and maybe the stress was getting to him, because he had an altercation with the law in September 1969, accused of brushing a policeman's legs with the 2,500kg 600. At the original court hearing, George couldn't find his driving licence, hence it wasn't until February 23, 1971 that he was



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George wanted to buy a Rolls-Royce, and thought he could walk into the showroom, pick one and drive off. But Rolls-Royce dealers don't offer a same day service

financed £35 and banned from driving for a year.

In March 1970, OLA 600E moved from George's bungalow in Esher to an impressive gothic mansion known as Friar Park, set in 35 acres in Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. It cost £140,000, which compared with the £12,500 paid for the 600 makes the property look something of a bargain.

Pattie thinks George sold OLA 600E because of the imminent arrival of John Lennon's 600 Pullman, as John was relocating to America. George disposed of OLA 600E through Woking Motors, which was a good move, because 52 years later it proved a useful connection when the original registration was being reinstated.

Why did George buy these leviathan motorcars? The 600 was the best car in the world then. It was outstanding in all areas: speed, handling, comfort, technical sophistication and road presence. ⇒

ABOVE INSET
The star on the 600 grille is large – 20 per cent larger than on other Merces.

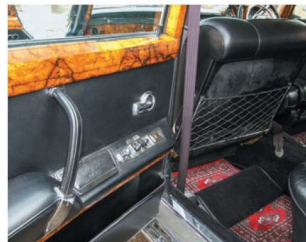
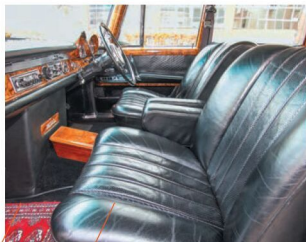
ABOVE LEFT
Slim rear body pillars on the limo have air vents neatly built into them.



BELOW FAR LEFT
The leather and walnut trimmed cabin was perfect for a top grade rock star!

BELOW LEFT
Not the same rear seat space as in the Pullman but still pretty generous.

BELOW
Window winds famously operated by the 600's complex hydraulic system.



George had been driving Jaguars, a Mk2 and an E-Type, plus an Aston Martin DB5, but none could match the 600 driving experience

⇒ George had been driving Jaguars, a Mk2 and an E-Type, plus an Aston Martin DB5, but none could match the 600 driving experience.

I MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH TOM UNTIL 2019, BY WHICH TIME HE WAS RETIRING AND SIMPLIFYING HIS LIFE BY SELLING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE 600 – AND THE NEXT OWNER LIVED LESS THAN FIVE MILES FROM MY NORTH LONDON HOME! He is the founder of Euro Car Parts, Sukhpal Ahluwalia, and was happy to meet. Sukhpal explained that as a Ugandan refugee, he had a fondness for the cars from his childhood in Uganda, and of course dictator Idi Amin had a white, right-hand drive 600. The Beatles connection wasn't important to him, but the 600 being RHD was. Sukhpal spent about £50,000 fixing mainly mechanical issues, and the chrome was refurbished in Poland. He hardly used it, and sensing he might sell it, I recommended reinstating the original registration. This would secure its provenance and value, and with the help of the Mercedes-Benz Club and Peter Crawley, who had documents from Woking Motors where his father had been managing director, the DVLA reinstated OLA 600E. In August 2021, via an online auction site, Sukhpal sold it for £145,000.

The next, and present, owner is Brendan O'Neil, who

lives in Scotland and likes music, hence bought the 600 because of the George connection. Brendan intends to use his 600, thus mechanical well being is a priority. Entrusted with this task is Colin Nicol of Klasse Series Automotive near Edinburgh. Already knocks in the rear suspension have been eliminated by new anti-roll bar bushes, while a gearbox leak will necessitate removal for gaskets to be replaced. Brendan allowed Colin to display OLA 600E at the Mercedes-Benz Club's 70th Anniversary event in Musselburgh, where it won car of the show. Great that a piece of rock n' roll history was shared with fans.

⇒ Our thanks to Tom Burup of Mercedes Klub Danmark for help with research, and for the use of his images

BELOW LEFT
Joe Salamone of SS Motors in Surrey has done recent work on the 600.

BELOW
This was it at the M-B Club event in Musselburgh, where it won best in show.



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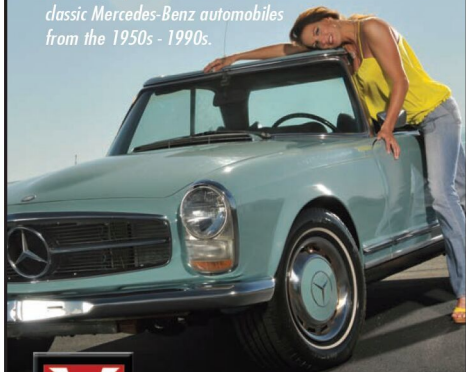
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Perfection!

When searching for a 560SL, **Steve McHugh** had two rules: it had to be pristine or very close to it, and definitely within his pre-set budget. Here he explains that the beautiful looking example he eventually found matched his first stipulation, if not the second

IMAGES RICHARD TRUESDELL



"A COMPANY I WORKED FOR DURING COLLEGE HAD 123-SERIES MERCEDES-BENZES, BOTH OWNERS DRIVING 300Ds AND THE SALESMAN A 240D. I RODE IN THEM AND FELT LIKE ROYALTY"



LEFT
Steve McHugh planned to start a small collection and wanted an R107 for it.

RIGHT
This car locks the optional rear "sear", but it's far too small – the shelf is better.

BELOW RIGHT
He had to go over budget to win the auction but it was a 10,000-mile car.





***"WE WERE PRICED OUT OF W113 SLs
AND W111 CABRIOLETS, SO WE DECIDED
TO FOCUS ON A TOP CONDITION R107,
AS THEY COST MUCH LESS"***

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Both my wife Kristine and I were born and raised in a small Seattle neighborhood called Magnolia, where we still reside. We also have a home in Palm Springs, California, where we are establishing a small classic car collection in anticipation of my retirement and the likely need for an absorbing hobby. As a kid, my first 'influences' were Matchbox and Hot Wheels cars, my favorite one an early 1970s Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow convertible in turquoise blue and with a trailer hitch that pulled a horse trailer around my Lego village.

My father was loyal to General Motors, and I grew to love big, heavy cars with 'thunking' doors and powerful V8 engines, including Cadillacs, Chevrolets and Oldsmobiles. My older brother liked cars as well and was constantly trading them. He had a 1959 right-hand drive Mercedes 190SL for a while, among other cool cars. I'd wash and detail both his and my dad's cars, so I could drive them around our cul-de-sac. My wife's stepdad was a keen car guy too, and she was around fun cars as well growing up: SL Pagodas, DeLoreans, and many old Volkswagens including an amphibious Schwimmwagen.

When I was 14 and at high school, I worked at a gas station and that's where I first noticed the fit, feel, and overall quality of Mercedes-Benz. A nearby attorney had his early 1970s 280SL Pagoda serviced and washed with us, and I drove it around the lot frequently. I could feel the quality and uniqueness of that Mercedes.

A company I worked for during college had a small fleet of 123-series Mercedes, both owners driving 300Ds and the salesman a 240D. I rode in them and felt like royalty being driven around. My career after college was with an electronics retailer, and

ABOVE
Steve thinks the interior colour is the best offered, and many would agree.

starting in the warehouse, I voluntarily washed the owners' cars when time permitted, partially, just so I could drive them. Len had a 300SD and his wife Eileen a 450SLC – more 'thunking' doors! My first aspiration to own a Mercedes-Benz took root here.

In the years since, I've had the opportunity to own many of them. These have included a 1990 190E 2.6, a 1995 210-series E320 station wagon and a very special 1997 E420 Sport in Azure Blue with the AMG styling package. I loved that car, but unfortunately it was written off during a service test drive at the dealership. Others that I've owned in the past include a 1986 560SL, 2005 CL55 AMG, and a 2000 S430 that was in danger of ruining me for driving anything other than an S-Class. I sold it after putting 60,000 miles on the odometer, at 100,000 miles. But the one we're concentrating on here is a 1988 560SL that's covered just 10,000 miles from new, and which is kept at our home in Palm Springs.

In 2020, we had put down a deposit on an 850sq ft car condominium in →

LEFT
He and wife Kristine don't do big miles in the 560SL but enjoy every single trip.



"I'VE BARELY DRIVEN IT 200 MILES IN MY OWNERSHIP, IF THAT, BUT I NONETHELESS LIKE TO 'MATURELY' PUT IT THROUGH ITS PACES NOW AND THEN"

RIGHT
Financial advisor Kristine authorised Steve will, as he terms it, "maturely" put the budget to buy the 560SL.

ABOVE RIGHT
Occasionally Steve will, as he terms it, "maturely" put the SL through its paces.

⇒ Palm Springs, visualising a storage unit for car enthusiasts, and also a clubhouse for car meets. I was working on the basis that we had room for four of our own cars and decided to look for a collectible Mercedes SL as our first one. We were already priced out of W113 SLs and W111 cabriolets, so we decided to focus on a top condition R107, as they cost much less.

I added the 560SL to my saved searches at Bring a Trailer (BaT, a leading used and classic buying/selling website in the US), and stood by to be alerted to all the newly listed cars. With a little under 50,000 made between 1986 and 1989, there were lots for sale, although there had been only one that had interested me, in blue-black and with a red interior. It was beautiful, but it was a 1986 model and I wanted an end-of-run 1988 or 1989 model, so I passed.

Then one day in February 2020 when I logged onto BaT, I became excited: here was a 10,000-mile example, stunning and arguably (you won't have to argue with many) in one of the best colour combinations

RIGHT
At 5.5 litres the 560SL's M117 is the biggest R107 V8 but not the most grumpy.

BAR RIGHT
Always good to see an original head unit in place, here a Becker Grand Prix.



Mercedes-Benz offered for the R107, anthracite grey metallic, black soft top and a medium red interior. The only comparable 560SL was an 800-mile 1988 example that had recently sold for \$134,000 – I wasn't looking to spend that much, but I had no clue what this car would make at auction. We needed to come up with a number.

Kristine and I decided on a top bid of \$60,000. I wanted to respect her feelings on buying the Mercedes, so was OK stopping at \$60,000, even though I thought it would surpass that point. If we didn't get this car, I now knew the limit of her comfort zone, I reasoned philosophically. It was a tough week leading up to day seven of the auction,

as lots of the comments that BaT is known for were saying, "nicest R107 out there", "best colour", "should fetch a million dollars", and other similarly flattering but potentially price-inflating observations.

I didn't know what to expect. As with many BaT auctions, the serious bidding starts in the last two minutes. This car got to \$60,000 pretty quickly in those last two minutes and I thought it just wasn't meant to be... but, my wife kept increasing the bid! We eventually prevailed and won the auction. We quickly learned from the auction comments that the seller of the car, Dean Laumbach, is known as one of the most respected R107 dealers, which helped us in our decision to pursue bidding beyond our

Mercedes-Benz 560SL (R107)

Engine M117 5,547cc V8 Power 227bhp@4,750rpm Torque 275lb ft@3,250rpm

Transmission 4-speed automatic Weight 1,680kg 0-62mph 7.7sec

Top speed 139mph Years produced 1985-1989 Number built 49,347

All figures from Mercedes-Benz



Jeanne Dierick



agreed limit. It all happened while we were in Hawaii celebrating two important dates: my 20 years of sobriety and Kristine's 55th birthday; because of that significance, we call the Mercedes roadster 'our 75'.

On arrival, it turned out to be near perfect, but did need some minor attention. Dean had replaced the valve cover gaskets as a precautionary measure, but one didn't seat well so we had a small oil leak. The engine also took a few extra cranks to start, so we replaced the gasket, both fuel pumps and regulator, so it starts as promptly now as it did when new. We also opted to replace the hood lining and transmission mounts at the same time, and Dean paid for all of it, in my opinion going above and beyond what

would have been expected. I upgraded the two in-dash speakers, preserving the originals, and bought some fun cassette tapes from eBay to have with the car.

The well-known downside of owning such a pristine, 10,000-mile car is the hesitation to drive it. It's a fine balance of good miles to keep it all moving versus driving it everywhere. We try and put some miles on it each month, typically taking it to get coffee with the top down, or to dinner in El Paseo or in Palm Springs proper. The good news about Palm Springs is the speed limit is now raised to 55mph on many arterial roads, up from 35-45mph. This means I can get up to highway speeds without actually having to take it on the highway. I'm planning on presenting it at a car show, but so far haven't been able to; unfortunately the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance doesn't yet invite R107s, but when it does, we plan to be there.

The 560SL is no lightweight at nearly 1,700kg and in stock specification it has just enough performance to satisfy the urges. I've barely driven it 200 miles in my ownership, if that, but I nonetheless



560SL

The flagship was a late arrival, but one of the most popular R107s, Tim French says

As the 1970s progressed and exhaust emissions became ever more strict in North America, the 450SL continually sacrificed output in order to meet them, this being the SL's key export market. And it didn't matter too much to customers that the last of the California spec 450SLs were reduced to under 160bhp, as it was never marketed as a sports car, 'sunshine cruiser' better describing it.

The 4.5-litre 450SL evolving into the five-litre 500SL helped restore some horsepower, but it wasn't until the arrival of the 1986 model year, in September 1985, that Stuttgart seriously grasped the nettle by adding the 560SL to the range. Its 5.478cc was half a litre up on the 500SL and as delivered to the USA, Australian and Japan - no other markets received this new flagship - it was lavishly equipped for the time, including the leather and air conditioning that was an R107 cost option elsewhere.

Mercedes didn't seem to give consideration to how the 560SL related to models in other markets. Its enlarged M117 V8 produced 227bhp and 275lb ft torque, the output emaculated so much by 'federal' pollution requirements that power and torque were around five per cent lower than that of the European 500SL.


Interestingly, the later model, Euro spec 560SEL saloon and 560SEC coupe made 197bhp and 336lb ft, illustrating how much the 560SL had conceded. But no matter, the 560SL proved popular, with 49,349 sold in just four years.



ABOVE INSET
Some 560SLs imported to Europe have been given Euro lights and bumpers.

ABOVE
US cars were Christmas tree equipment spec and with 'federal' bumpers.

like to 'maturely' put it through its paces now and then - although I did sometimes drive my previous, 1986 560SL harder during ownership.

This was a very important purchase for us and we like to think of it as an investment. My financial advisor, who happens to be Kristine, knows I love cars, especially Mercedes-Benzenes, and her willingness to support my car affliction means the world to me. As she says, "It makes me happy to see him so happy." A car guy, especially a Mercedes guy, can't ask for more. 

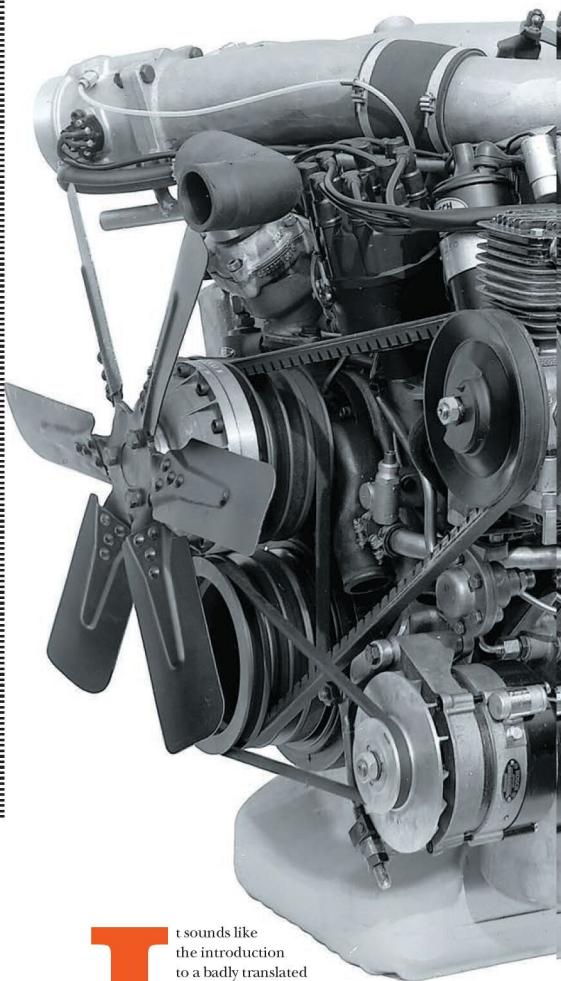


SIZE MATTERS

In the late 1950s, Mercedes began work on a V8 whose technology and output would eclipse any rival engine, the impressive result first seen in 1963 under the bonnet of the 600 limo.

Shane O' Donoghue tells the M100's full story

IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



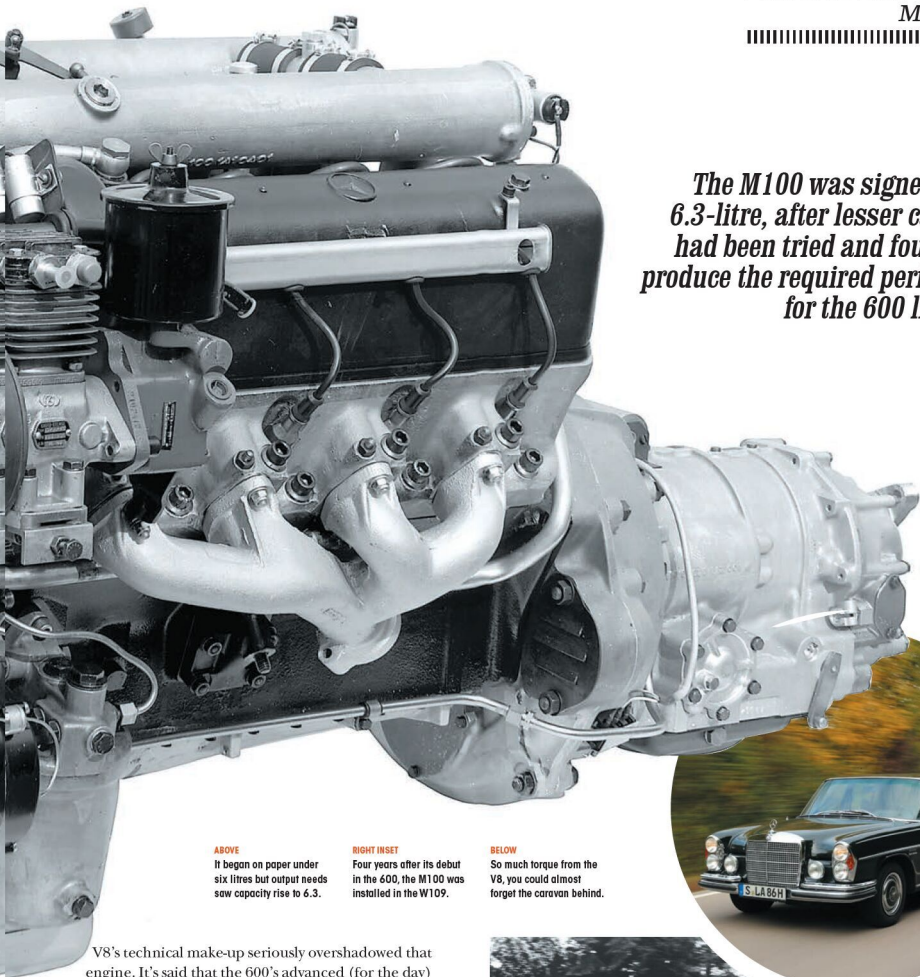
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It sounds like the introduction to a badly translated German joke, but what do the Pullman and the Red Pig have in common? Their M100 V8 petrol engine, of course, and this powerplant was no laughing matter. The Pullman in question was part of the W100 Mercedes 600 line-up, one of the most luxurious cars that the German manufacturer has ever produced. Unveiled in 1963, the 600 was designed to compete head-on with the most opulent cars that Rolls-Royce and Bentley of the day sold. Meanwhile, the Red Pig, or *die Rôte Sau*, was the nickname affectionately given to the 300SEL AMG race car of 1971, a one-off racer using an enlarged version of the M100 engine, taking second place at the Spa Francorchamps 24-hour event and a bigger share of the era's limelight than it had any right to.

But we're getting a little ahead of ourselves. The M100 was originally conceived to take pride of place in the Mercedes 600, the limousine succeeding the 300 Adenauer. It replaced the M189 straight-six, a three-litre unit, and the

LEFT
In a once-race career, at Spa Francorchamps, the Red Pig took a class win.



The M100 was signed off as a 6.3-litre, after lesser capacities had been tried and found not to produce the required performance for the 600 limousine



ABOVE

It began on paper under six litres but output needs saw capacity rise to 6.3.

RIGHT INSET

Four years after its debut in the 600, the M100 was installed in the W109.

BELOW

So much torque from the V8, you could almost forget the caravan behind.



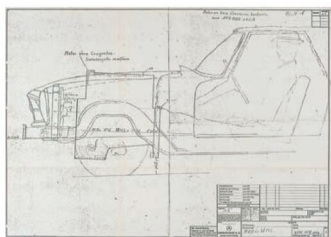
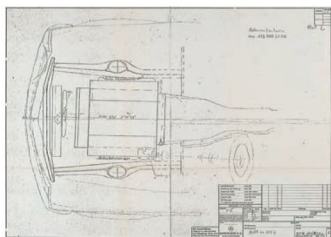
V8's technical make-up seriously overshadowed that engine. It's said that the 600's advanced (for the day) hydraulic sub-system, which powered the windows, seats, sunroof, automatically closing doors and the bootlid, required the equivalent of 50bhp of the engine's output to operate, hence the move to a much larger powerplant.

Designed under the leadership of car development chief Rudolf Uhlenhaut, the M100 was signed off as a 6.3-litre unit, after lesser capacities had been tried and found not to produce the required performance – that of a sports car – for the hefty 600. It featured a single overhead camshaft per bank and a heavy mechanical fuel-injection pump mounted within the vee. Officially, it produced 247bhp and 369lb ft of torque. The block was made of cast iron, but the pistons, crankshaft and connecting rods were forged items. Meanwhile, the cylinder-heads were made of aluminium alloy with hardened valve seat inserts, while the valves themselves were sodium filled to manage heat transfer.

With a lazy four-speed automatic transmission, a dry weight the wrong side of 2,400kg (for the smallest variant

of the 600, the regular-wheelbase saloon) and estimated fuel economy of no better than 16mpg, no wonder the 600 needed a 25-gallon fuel tank. Apparently it managed nearly 130mph, not that we imagine many of the six-door Pullman variants ever saw such a speed.

But it was the engine that grabbed the attention of one Erich Waxenberger. A Daimler-Benz car testing engineer since 1953, he had already been involved in the development of icons such as the W198 300SL Gullwing ⇨

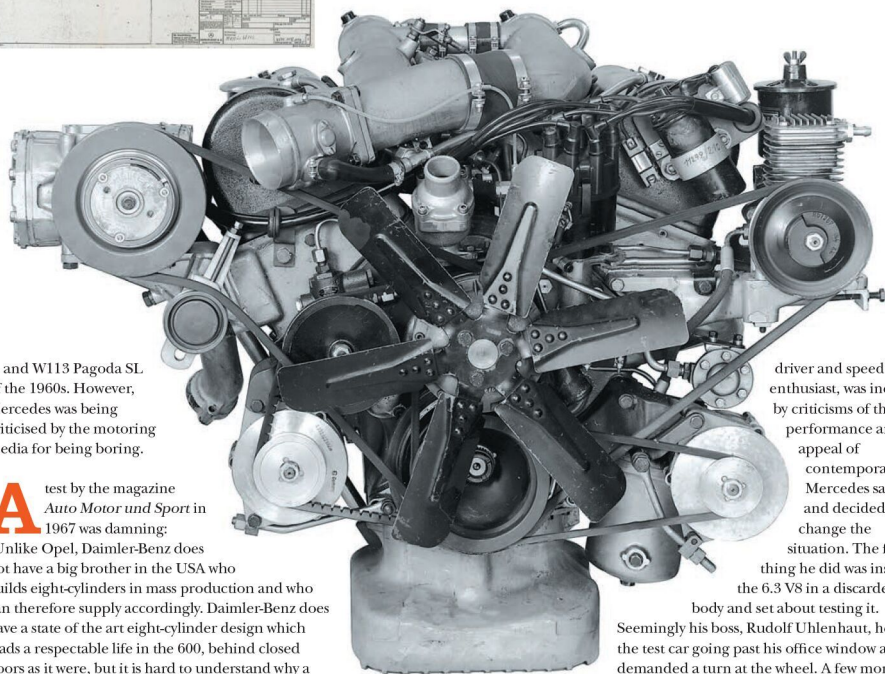


ABOVE LEFT
Stuttgart archive drawings show how tight a fit the M100 was in the W113...

LEFT
... and no way would it have gone in without a power bulge in the bonnet.

ABOVE
Testing showed a V8 Pagoda would be hopelessly nose heavy.

RIGHT
If the W113 couldn't take it, the W109 300SEL 6.3 was the perfect home.



⇒ and W113 Pagoda SL of the 1960s. However, Mercedes was being criticised by the motoring media for being boring.

A test by the magazine *Auto Motor und Sport* in 1967 was damning:

"Unlike Opel, Daimler-Benz does not have a big brother in the USA who builds eight-cylinders in mass production and who can therefore supply accordingly. Daimler-Benz does have a state of the art eight-cylinder design which leads a respectable life in the 600, behind closed doors as it were, but it is hard to understand why a smaller-displacement version of this engine has not long since been installed in the intermediate range saloon.

"The three-litre six-cylinder is only one desperate step on the way to creating more flexible and quieter engines. There is reason to expect the eight-cylinder will soon be making its appearance. This should not be asking too much of Germany's most renowned automobile manufacturers at a time when Ford comes home victorious from Le Mans using simple, mass-produced eight-cylinder engines."

The story is that Waxenberger, an occasional racing

driver and speed enthusiast, was incensed by criticisms of the performance and appeal of contemporary Mercedes saloons, and decided to change the situation. The first thing he did was install

the 6.3 V8 in a discarded SEL

body and set about testing it.

Seemingly his boss, Rudolf Uhlenhaut, heard the test car going past his office window and demanded a turn at the wheel. A few months later, the W109 Mercedes-Benz 300SEL 6.3 made its public debut at the 1968 Geneva motor show, kick-starting a whole new niche for the car world – the 'super saloon'. We say niche, but Mercedes discovered considerable demand for such a model, and more than 6,500 examples of the 300SEL 6.3 were manufactured until 1972, in the process providing an unexpected boost in amortising the M100's development costs.

While the M100 shone in the lighter frame of the W109, few would have considered it a likely candidate for

ABOVE
It's said that in the 600, 50bhp was needed just to power the ancillaries.

LANDMARK ENGINES

M100 V8

Waxenberger soon heard about the new outfit and, retaining a desire to see the car on track, essentially handed the pair what the stillborn race venture had produced, which would become the famous Red Pig, powered by an AMG-development of the M100 engine. This was bored out to 6.8 litres, but that wasn't the end of the upgrades. AMG also developed high-precision camshafts and modified rocker arms, lighter connecting rods, new pistons, larger intake valves, modified combustion chambers, polished intake and exhaust ports, a new intake tract with two throttle flaps and a racing exhaust system. The engine was hence able to run at higher speeds, while endurance was improved by installing an additional oil cooler and finely balancing the crankshaft. Mercedes reckons that this car's engine produced 422bhp at 5,500rpm and 448lb ft of torque.

While some 200kg of weight was trimmed from the bulk of the 300SEL's large body, it still weighed in at 1,635kg, and the large luxury car looked a little incongruous on the start line of the 1971 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, going up against supposedly more nimble and lighter sports coupes. Nonetheless, the Mercedes was very fast in a straight line, and reliable. In fact, it placed second overall, first in class, launching AMG onto the world stage. But the Red Pig was short-lived, as at the end of the 1971 season the FIA limited European Touring Car Championship races to cars up to five litres. AMG, in need of funds for the next racing project, sold the racer to the French Matra group for testing aircraft tyres and it was never seen again, despite more recent, and forensic searches for it or any traces of it. Modern images you see of that car are of a replica Mercedes built in 2006 to mark the introduction of AMG's first in-house engine from scratch, the 6.2-litre M156 V8.

“*Waxenberger actually shoehorned it under the bonnet of an unsuspecting W113 230SL and did some preliminary testing before it came to nothing*”

”

LEFT
The 300SEL 6.3 allowed Mercedes to spread the M100 development cost.

motorsport. Indeed, as Mercedes had ceased all involvement in motorsport after the 1955 Le Mans disaster (over 80 dead, 180 injured), there was no intention for such a thing. Unsurprisingly, Waxenberger took a different view and pushed through a racing development programme for the 300SEL 6.3 which got as far as participation in endurance races in 1969 before being abandoned because the car was simply too heavy for its tyres.

However, two engineers – Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher – had been working on a racing engine in the development department at Daimler-Benz. They continued to develop it in their own time, and it went on to win many races. That's not so important here, but what came next is, as the pair formed Aufrecht Melcher Großspach Ingenieurbüro, Konstruktion und Versuch zur Entwicklung von Rennmotoren (Aufrecht Melcher Großspach engineering firm, design and testing for the development of racing engines) in 1967. The name was soon shortened to AMG.

BELOW
In 1975 the M100 was dry-sumped and upped to 6.8 for the 450SEL 6.9.



“The 4Matic concept was unveiled at the 1985 Frankfurt motor show alongside the then-new 124-series estate and relied on electronics to optimise drive and traction”





4Matic's added road traction makes the S124 feel even more stable.

Country life

Lanes down your way get muddy and icy in winter, and very slippery? Kyle Molyneux tried a well preserved 124-series wagon that's perfect for such conditions

IMAGES
Terry Osborne

Mercedes-Benz has a long history of engineering four-wheel drive vehicles, but some may not appreciate the sheer length of that relationship. Paul Daimler, the son of company founder Gottlieb Daimler, put forward a four-wheel drive concept as early as 1903, and by 1907 *Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft* (DMG) had built the world's first all-wheel drive car for everyday use.

Sporting a 34bhp, four-cylinder engine and fitted with an upright touring body, DMG's one-off vehicle was produced in the Berlin-Marienfelde factory and became known as the 'Dernburg-Wagen' after the then Secretary of the Colonial Office, Bernhard Dernburg, who drove it almost 400 miles through Africa in 1908. Sadly, by the end of World War One, the vehicle had disappeared without a trace; no records were kept on how it was used during The Great War, but Daimler suggests the Dernburg-Wagen was converted to rear-wheel drive at some point to simplify its maintenance and reduce running costs. Nevertheless, the legacy of this extraordinary machine lives on.

Owing, at least in part, to the Dernburg-Wagen's success

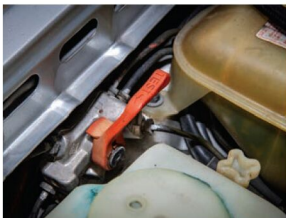
in Africa, Daimler continued to develop its all-wheel drive systems for off-road use. It wasn't until the 1980s, however, that four-wheel drive Mercedes-Benz passenger cars appeared. According to Frank Knothe, a former Head of Overall Development at Mercedes-Benz, work began on a new four-wheel drive system (to be called 4Matic) in 1982, and was destined to be used on the 124-series. "I don't know if it was ever considered for the W201 190 or 126-series families," Knothe explained, adding that 4Matic was ideal for the market in which the 124-series faithfully operated, and slotted neatly into the model's production life cycle.

"Winter testing was of course a special challenge for 4Matic," Knothe continued. "The main work was done in



ABOVE RIGHT
This car's voluminous roof storage box is an official Mercedes-Benz accessory.





ABOVE
To prevent 4WD engaging, just pull this mechanical lever – how simple is that!

ABOVE RIGHT
4Matic was more than 4WD, operating with other traction aids of the time.

LEFT
Very spacious and hard wearing, so no wonder most S124s worked hard.

Arjeplog, northern Sweden which has the best conditions – lakes with all kinds of ice surfaces, hills, public roads and of course Mercedes-Benz testing facilities. We also tested 4Matic in the Alps, Austria and Switzerland, as well as in the USA in both cold and hot conditions [Kapuskasing and Nevada respectively]. The test programme for the entire car was comparable to that of other Mercedes.”

Specifications

Mercedes 300TE 4Matic (S124)

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Engine | M103 2,962cc 6-cyl |
| Power | 178bhp@5,700rpm |
| Torque | 188b ft@4,400rpm |
| Transmission | 4-speed auto, part-time 4WD |
| Weight | 1,610kg |
| 0-62mph | 9.8sec |
| Top speed | 127mph |
| Fuel consumption | 23.4mpg |
| Years produced | 1989-1993 |
| Number built | 12,094 |

All figures from Mercedes-Benz

The 4Matic concept was unveiled at the 1985 Frankfurt motor show alongside the then-new 124-series estate (S124)

range, and relied on electronics to optimise drive and traction in all conditions. Mercedes-Benz announced that 4Matic would be available on six-cylinder saloons and estates from the 124-series family, but not without considerable reworking of their front underpinnings; such as the packaging of the 4Matic's transfer gear and differential on the front axle, it was necessary for the 124's front compensating gear arrangement to go directly through the engine's oil pan!

Note though, that 4Matic would not have been possible without Mercedes-Benz's pioneering anti-lock braking system (ABS), acceleration skid control (ASR) and automatic locking differential (ASD), which measure and ⇒

“The load-lugger appeared in remarkable condition, the two-tone bodywork, and hub capped wheels adding German charm, although I would have been tempted to upgrade the wheels”



ABOVE LEFT
Classic 1980s Mercedes interior design: restrained, elegant and high quality.

ABOVE
The 124-series offers vastly more rear seat space than the 190E.

4WD ESTATE 300TE 4Matic

⇒ ultimately limit wheel slip to improve vehicle stability and handling. Much like the current four-wheel drive systems, the original 4Matic only sent power to the front axle when it was needed in order to enhance traction, which helps with the car's fuel efficiency.

The system was presented to the press in Arjeplog in 1986 before making its grand debut on the W124 saloon in 1987 as the 260E 4Matic and 300E 4Matic. For 1988, a 300D Turbo 4Matic was added to the range.

Knothe was keen to highlight Mercedes' application of self-learning electronics in the 4Matic system to stop the wheels "polishing the snow" during tricky uphill starts. "Perhaps this was an early example of artificial intelligence?" he considered. Maybe he was right – and that makes Stuttgart's all-wheel drive set up all the more impressive.

The wagon pictured here was manufactured in 1991, two years before the 124's significant overhaul and rebadging as the 'E-Class'. Finished in Brilliant Silver metallic over a grey leather interior, this 300TE 4Matic ('TE' in this instance signifying an estate) is one of just 12,094 examples to emerge from the Mercedes-Benz works in Bremen between 1989 and 1995 (this model was known as the E300 4Matic Estate from June 1993).

When we tried this example, it had a mere (for a 124 estate) 112,800 miles on the odometer. The 178bhp load-lugger appeared in remarkable condition, the early two-tone bodywork, and hub capped wheels adding distinct German charm, although I would have been tempted to search the car parts advertisements and upgrade the road wheels to the period correct alloys.

Given the nature of the beast, most of these modern classic Mercedes were run into the ground, their ability to carry all and sundry making them vulnerable to living out their days as neglected workhorses. In the case of this 300TE, however, things

1991 car is pre-facelift, so has the Benz star on the grille, not the bonnet.

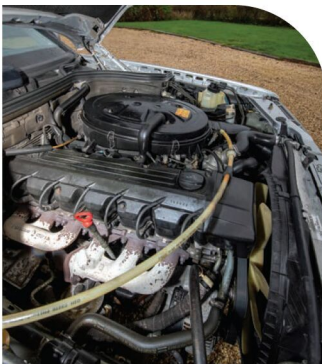


are much more positive. It was supplied new by Alan Day Ltd in London to ACL Limited, but by October 1991 it had already moved on to its second – and long term – keeper: William Charles Brown, Deputy Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, who held onto the Benz for almost 30 years.

Interestingly, according to Standard Chartered Bank's records, which are freely available to view online, Brown retired from his post as Deputy Group Chief Executive and Deputy Chairman in October 1991, assuming a non-executive Director role until 1994. Perhaps this Mercedes-Benz was an employer's generous parting gift?

BELOW
300E/TE's M103 six-pot is loved for its refinement and ease of maintenance.

BOTTOM
The period Mexico Becker 2000 radio/cassette is still in place, a nice detail.



Service books present with the car showed 13 Mercedes-Benz main dealer stamps to 56,000 miles, and then a further 16 stamps applied by renowned Mercedes-Benz specialist John Haynes in Worthing. Options specified when new included air conditioning (which still worked), an electric driver's seat, and even a rare factory roof box with a lovely aerodynamic profile and silver finish in-keeping with the metal below.

Replacing the 1978-1985 123-series wagon, the S124 was – officially speaking – Mercedes' second crack at an estate car (the 1960s Fintail Universal was contract-built in Belgium), and boy did it deliver. There's a dependable completeness to the drive, a solid simplicity to the interior, an enhanced sense of practicality and a general feeling of wellbeing. Of course, the well maintained 4Matic system on this car was part of its appeal, but it's only when you launch out of a wet junction or find yourself on a snowy road, that you really begin to appreciate its presence. Furthermore, its effect on fuel consumption would be acceptable to most owners, perhaps 3-4mpg when compared to a regular 300TE, if that.

The straight-six, two-valves-per-cylinder M103 engine is as sweet as you like through the rev range, peaking with a distant yowl. Its 9.8-second 0-62mph time with a four-speed automatic is not to be sniffed at, maximum torque of 188lb ft arriving at 4,400rpm and leading nicely to the full 178bhp at 5,700rpm. Certainly, this workhorse remembers how to gallop, that hydro-pneumatic level control on the rear so useful on the 124 wagon, adding an extra layer of stability on the move.

Healthy and good condition 124s are getting harder to come by, particularly estate versions whose original merits were to serve as daily hacks. Thankfully though, someone saw fit to keep this six-cylinder example in good working order, while maintaining its clean-cut appearance and pioneering all-paw system. Winter had arrived in the UK by the time I tested this 300TE 4Matic, and I couldn't think of a more elegant and capable car way to tackle the conditions.

“This workhorse remembers how to gallop, that hydro-pneumatic level control on the rear so useful on the 124 wagon, adding an extra layer of stability on the move”



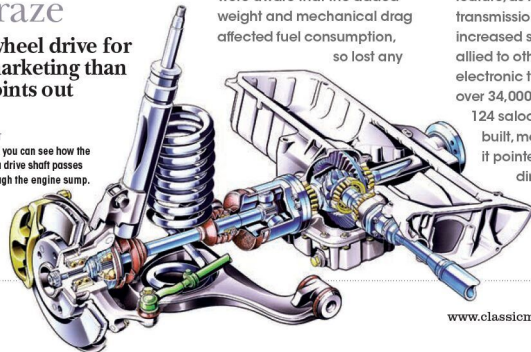
Although offered for most of 124 production, few 4Matics were made.

4WD: a 1980s craze

For most car makers, four-wheel drive for road cars was more about marketing than engineering, Tim French points out

By the mid 1980s, many car makers had followed Audi's 1980 Quattro and built a car with permanent four-wheel drive designed for the road, not the quagmire. A typical setup was an added, centre

RIGHT
Here you can see how the extra drive shaft passes through the engine sump.



differential splitting the torque, sometimes 50/50 front rear, sometimes about two-thirds in favour of the rear wheels. But when ordinary cars such the Toyota Corolla became available with 4WD you knew it had descended to gimmick level, and the craze was fading by the early 1990s – customers could not see or really understand what they were getting for the extra money, but were aware that the added weight and mechanical drag affected fuel consumption, so lost any

interest they might have had in it.

Mercedes' 4Matic was, however, different from the rest. Stuttgart engineers were unconvinced that having all four wheels driving all the time was a sound design principle for cars that would always be driven on roads, so made the system self-selecting, and only when the rear wheels were losing traction. Furthermore, it wasn't billed as a sporty, performance enhancing feature, as most rival's 4WD transmissions were, but one that increased safety, due to it being allied to other, albeit early electronic traction aids. A little over 34,000 4Matic-equipped 124 saloons and estates were built, mostly the 300E/TE, but it pointed Stuttgart in a new direction of chassis sophistication, and it's a badge you'll still see on present day Mercs.

Elegant, practical

We list and assess every classic four-seat Mercedes-Benz coupe since World War Two

IMAGES *Classic Mercedes/John Colley/Terry Osborne/Craig Pusey/RM Sotheby's/Hans-Dieter Seufert/Richard Truesdell*



64

Since 1951, when it launched the imposing Adenauer-derived 300S two-door, Mercedes-Benz has been the undisputed master of the prestige coupe. While other manufacturers have dipped in and out of the two-door hardtop market with varying degrees of success, Stuttgart has always had a presence and in the late 1960s, with the launch of the W114 series, extended the franchise to more affordable prices.

Making a four-seater coupe work is difficult. You start from the premise of asking customers to pay substantially more money for a car that has less room inside than the equivalent saloon, and which may not be built in sufficient volume to take it above the profit break-even point. So, what is it about every generation of Mercedes coupe that has allowed it to almost defy market logic?

First, Mercedes has generally refused to let rear passenger accommodation or boot space be overly compromised, the requirement to cosset rear passengers maintained even in the generations of smaller coupes, the W114 and its successors.

Secondly, the stylists have always struck the right note with the shape. The lack of centre roof pillars – or ‘B’ posts – was an inspired idea borrowed for the 1961 W111 from American coupes of the late 1950s, probably because the US was the market Mercedes-Benz was prizing open at the time. It gives a car a prettier, more care-free profile, and of course is great for summer driving (especially before air conditioning became widespread).

Subtle detailing helps, too, the cars looking just a little more virile than the saloon. For example since the C126 of 1981 (the ‘C’ as coupe designation began with the C107 SLC in 1971), the saloon-based coupes have used a star on the grille instead of the upright bonnet badge, and they ride lower too.

Mercedes has generally refused to let rear passenger accommodation be overly compromised, even in the generations of smaller coupes, the W114 and its successors



W188 300S/300Sc Coupe (1951-1958)

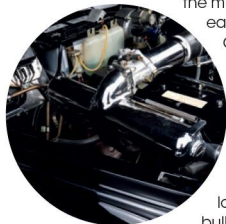
In its day the W188 was a powerful, luxurious two-door coupe with an image to match, and, priced at DM34,500 when introduced was nearly four times as much as Mercedes' cheapest model, the 170S. It was based on the big 300 'Adenauer' saloon but with a 150mm shorter chassis, and used essentially the same three-litre, six-cylinder engine that had powered the 1952 300SL racer. It was very probably the most luxurious car of the early 1950s, each one of the 216 (plus 344

Cabriolet/Roadsters) hand-built by the finest automotive craftsmen Mercedes-Benz could muster.

At a time when most cars would never see 100mph, the 300S was quick, able to achieve 109mph and a 15-second 0-62mph time. It was not a particularly modern looking car even for 1952, with its bulbous wings and vast, upright grille,

but it was praised by the press. Production

lasted three years, after which a revised model, the 300Sc, took over, using a new three-litre engine running with Bosch fuel-injection instead of triple carburettors. To show off its under-bonnet credentials, the 300Sc wore an *Einspritzmotor* (injection engine) badge on the bootlid, while chrome trimmed louvers were added to the sides of the bonnet, and chrome strips fitted to the wheelarches and sills. Both the 300S and 300Sc Coupe, of which only 98 were made (plus 102 Cabriolet/Roadsters), are now the highest-priced post-war Mercedes-Benz classics behind the 300SL Gullwing and its Roadster successor.



ABOVE
It's a milder version of the 1952 300SL race car's three-litre six.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2,996cc/6/148bhp & 173bhp

Price range £300,000-£700,000

Model choice 300Sc

Sum up It was the finest motorcar money could buy, and its traditional beauty and bespoke interior still stun 65 years on



Values starting to chase 300SLs, this 1956 300Sc sold by RM Sotheby's in 2021 for over £400,000.



In its day, no finer quality motorcar was available. Curved tail good news for bespoke case makers.



W180/128 Ponton (1956-1960)

Even in the mid 1950s Mercedes-Benz engineering was ahead of its time, as the 220S Coupe, launched in 1956, proves. Its newly engineered overhead-cam, 2.2-litre six-cylinder engine feels unexpectedly lively – all the more so in fuel-injected form for the 220SE launched two years later – and braking and handling place the car in a more recent era.

Based on the Ponton saloon, the 220S and SE retain that model's familiar outline, though the far-reaching coupe conversion brought a raffish character previously lacking, thanks to frameless windows in the doors, and the distinctive rear roof pillars which join the body at the door shut line. The look was carried over from the preceding 300Sc, and like that model was a car aimed at wealthy Americans, the USA's economy having been far less badly affected by the six-year war than most in Europe.

Inside, the car is a wonderful, 1950s high quality wood-trimmed time capsule, with rectangular strip speedometer, thin column gearchange and large, two-spoke steering-wheel with chrome ring horn push. Mercedes always knew how to design a super class interior.

In those days of post-war austerity, the 220S and SE were enormously expensive, low volume products, with just 2,081 produced (830 the SE) between 1956 and 1960. Today, sightings of the two-door Ponton are infrequent, and those that have survived have usually been the labour of love of an enthusiast prepared to turn a blind eye to the economics of restoration, which were previously uncertain.



THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2,195cc/6/99/98bhp-118bhp

Price range £70,000-£150,000

Model choice 220SE

Sum up This is glamorous, upper class motoring from the late 1950s, and in some respects the car belies its six decades



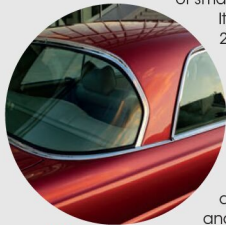
TOP
Shot in Southern California, where many 220s went.

ABOVE
Fuel-injection for the 220SE launched in 1958 gave 118bhp.

LEFT
Not quite in the 300S quality league, but beautifully trimmed.

W111/W112 (1961-1971)

Kicking off the full four-seat Mercedes coupe as we now know it, the W111 was based on the six-cylinder Fintail saloon launched two years earlier in 1959. It shared that car's look, though had smaller rear fins, and no body parts were interchangeable. It was a big and luxurious car, the styling and plentiful chrome adornments clearly designed to please the US market; indeed no other Mercedes since, large or small, has looked so Americanised.



ABOVE
Rear screen profile so perfect it was copied for the 1999 CL.

It began life in relatively modest 220SEb form, with Stuttgart's staple M127 six-cylinder, overhead cam 2.2-litre engine mated to a four-speed transmission, automatic or manual. This was soon followed by the addition of the 300SE to the range which, due to new features including a light alloy three-litre engine, air suspension and all-wheel disc brakes gained its own W112 designation. By 1969, the 280SE 3.5 had been launched, which was

Mercedes' first V8 coupe, built with America in mind. Production ended in 1971, by which time the W111 body and suspension were quite dated up against rivals.

Nearly 29,000 W111/W112 coupes were built, and the survivors have long since been regarded as classics, and valued correspondingly. Even the scruffiest examples fetch a minimum of £30,000 to £40,000, and the best ones well over £100,000, but caution is advised, as restoration of these mechanically quite complicated cars is likely to be enormously expensive. The one consolation on purchase price is that they are half the money of the cabriolet models.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2.195cc/6/118bhp - 3.499cc/V8/197bhp

Price range £40,000-£150,000

Model choice 280SE 3.5

Sum up Oozes massive charisma, and surely sums up what full-size, hedonistic Mercedes-Benz coupes were all about.



This example was restored a few years ago by Kienle in Germany, and is the very first 280SE 3.5 built.



The final W111 coupe model has a 3.5-litre V8.



M-B Interiors weren't hand-made after this model.



W114 (1968-1976)

The W114/W115 saloon was an angular, restrained design compared to the Fintail that preceded it, and the same applied to the pillarless coupe version.

Nonetheless the plainer styling set the template for how Mercedes cars would look for more than two decades. The W114 range was also known as the 'Stroke Eight', referring to the year of introduction, and enabling Mercedes dealers to distinguish it in conversation from the Fintail, which had used the same badging.

While the Stroke 8 saloon was available with four- and six-cylinder engines, all the coupes were six-cylinder and thus carried the W114 factory code, the

carburettored cars badged 250C and 280C, while the 250CE and 280CE benefited from fuel-injection. A facelift in 1973 saw a redesigned, slightly lowered and widened grille, a four-spoke padded steering-wheel, head restraints and inertial reel seat belts having appeared shortly before. The best model is considered to be the 280CE launched in 1972 using the twin-cam, M110 2.7-litre straight-six. Unsurprisingly, though, the W114 feels dated in driver appeal if not style.

Stuttgart's first smaller-sized coupe proved popular, with more than 67,000 built in eight years, but unfortunately it's one more Mercedes that didn't become a classic quick enough to prevent the majority suffering a rusty demise. For many years W114s had little market value, but recently their following has strengthened and prices have risen a little.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2.496cc/6/128bhp - 2.746cc/6/183bhp

Price range £5,000-£15,000

Model choice 280CE

Sum up Not the most exciting Mercedes classic, but has a no-frills, old school Mercedes charm which grows by the year



TOP
The W114 coupe used the saloon's platform, hence had a long tail.

ABOVE
All models were six cylinder; this is the injected 250CE unit.

LEFT
Everything about the W114's interior was plain but good quality.

C107 SLC (1971-1981)

A similarity between the 1971-launched R107 SL roadster and the SLC coupe arriving later in the same year is obvious, and that's because when replacing the decade-old W111, Stuttgart opted not to wait a couple of years and base it on the forthcoming 116-series S-Class saloon, but instead re-model the R107 as a hardtop. In one sense that blighted the SLC, depriving it of its predecessor's grandeur, but it was nonetheless a top luxury coupe of the 1970s.

The 2,460mm wheelbase stretch provided reasonable if not ample rear accommodation and, after some styling trickery at the rear C-posts, engineers managed to get the windows to drop fully out of sight to maximise the pillarless effect. From the front seats forward, inside and out, the SLC was identical to the R107, which might have looked something of an economy measure to some, but everything about the C107 was up to the usual Benz built quality.

A total of 62,900 C107s were made, the top seller the 450SLC using the wonderful M117 4.5-litre V8 offering ample torque and lazy power, fed through a three-speed automatic gearbox. The slightly more economical 280SLC with the 2.7-litre M110 straight-six was introduced in 1974, but the most interesting and collectable C107s are the rally homologation 450SLC 5.0 launched in 1978 and the 500SLC which replaced it in 1980.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2,746cc/6/183bhp - 4,973cc/V8/237bhp

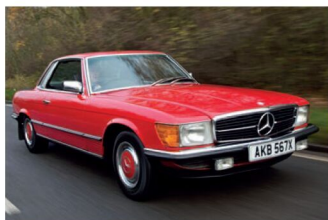
Price range £15,000-£70,000

Model choice 450SLC

Sum up Until recently a coupe shunned by the classic market, but interest is picking as buyers are drawn to its special 1970s character



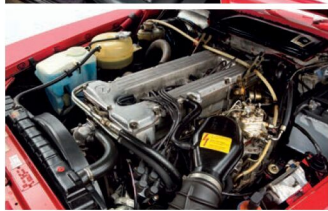
ABOVE
Not an enormous boot but big enough to take the all important golf club set.



TOP RIGHT
SLC was based on the R107 roadster, so has that car's driving feel...

ABOVE RIGHT
...and apart from the rear seat is identical to the SL on the inside.

RIGHT
The 280SLC launched in 1974 used the 2.7 M110 straight-six.



C123 (1977-1985)

Launched a year after the 123-series saloon on which it was based, the C123 was similar in configuration to the Stroke 8 it replaced. But horizontal instead of vertical lamps gave the nose a sleeker look, while softer corners to the bodywork and a shorter tail gave a less severe appearance; it was built on a shortened wheelbase, whereas the Stroke Eight used the saloon's platform unchanged.

For Europe, it was offered with two engine capacities. The base model was the carburettor-fuelled, 2.3-litre four-cylinder 230C, which ran until 1980 when it became the injected 230CE, while the 2.7-litre six powered the carburettor 280C (also dropped in 1980) and fuel-injected 280CE. The North American market was offered diesel versions using the five-cylinder, three-litre OM617 oil burning unit, first the normally aspirated 300CD and as from 1981 the 300CD Turbodiesel.

The most coveted model is the 280CE, its M110 engine giving spirited performance (in the US for the punchy performing 300CD has a cult following), but whatever engine is under the bonnet the C123 has a classic 1970s feel, providing a comfortable and relaxed drive. Although the cars were no better protected against corrosion than most others of the day, the build quality is notably high – the best standard ever in a Mercedes-Benz, some feel. However one point for prospective buyers to bear in mind is that some parts are hard to source and expensive.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 2,307cc/4/108bhp - 2,998cc/6/183bhp

Price range £10,000-£40,000

Best model 280CE

Sum up A likeable and affordable pre-electronic age Mercedes-Benz coupe, and still a usable modern classic, especially in lively 280CE form



ABOVE
A shorter wheelbase than the 123 saloon but still a decent boot.



TOP RIGHT
C123s don't yet cost a fortune but good ones like this are now rare.

ABOVE RIGHT
Electric sunroof was a nice factory extra – but it may well leak now!

RIGHT
Pictured here is the 230CE engine, whose performance is...OK.





C124 (1987-1996)

The W124 was one of Mercedes' most successful mid-range saloons, and the C124 two-door derivative one of the most coveted mid-range coupes during its near decade-long production, thanks to understated good looks, super-smooth six-cylinder engines and high build quality. However, it has not yet fulfilled its classic potential, hence remains a bargain collectable, available for under £10,000.

Compared to the saloon and estate ranges, the engine choice was limited. The 124 coupe (like the C123, it used a shortened saloon wheelbase) began life as the four-cylinder 2.3-litre 230CE and the three-litre six-pot 300CE, a 24-valve version of the latter (300CE-24) added in 1989. A revamp over 1992/1993 saw the eight-valve four replaced by a 16-valve 2.2 unit, and the six raised to 3.2 litres which improved its previously weak low down torque. The grille was made slightly smaller and the star badge moved from the grille to the bonnet. At this point the 3.6-litre E36 AMG was added, but only a very small (though undisclosed) number were produced by the Affalterbach Mercedes tuner.

AMG apart, the choice model on driver appeal is the E320, preferably with the optional five-speed automatic gearbox, which sharpens the car's reactions. However, some enthusiasts feel the pre-facelift 'big grille' C124s make the better choice, as they do not suffer the added engine issues the later cars brought with them, and also because they're reckoned to rust less.



ABOVE
'Eight-hole' alloys were fitted for the last four years of 124s.



TOP LEFT
A late-model E320 with five-speed auto is the full C124 treat.

ABOVE LEFT
Broadly, the 4-cylinder cars had cloth trim and the 6-pots full leather.

LEFT
E320's M104 develops more torque than the M103 unit it replaced.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 1.996cc/4/120bhp - 3,604cc/6/268bhp

Price range £7,000-£15,000 (excludes E36 AMG)

Model choice E320

Sum up The elegant, Bruno Sacco styled coupe is terrific value for money, and is still easily modern enough for everyday driving



C126 (1981-1991)

A little short of a decade ago the sleeping giant classic that was the 126-series SEC arose, some trashing auction sale estimates and making prices over £30,000 and even £40,000, signalling that the market had finally recognised the true worth of this glorious luxury pillarless coupe. But what is vital to bear in mind is that these particular cars were the very best around - SECs can still be bought for under £20,000, but these will almost certainly be running projects even if they look tidy.

The SEC, launched in 1981, was V8 only: 3.8- and five-litre until the autumn 1985 facelift, after which the 420SEC replaced the 380SEC, and the 500SEC was joined by the 560SEC. This 5.5-litre car is generally regarded as the choice model, but the 500SEC should not be regarded as the poor cousin, actually being a little smoother than the 560SEC and adequately powerful. However the rare (just 3,680 made), underpowered 420SEC is a model best avoided.

The sweet spot for collectors is the last three or four years of production, these cars tending to be in the best condition and benefiting from minor engine tweaks. But pre-facelift cars, recognisable by their ribbed pattern body side trims and 1970s style 'Mexican hat' alloy wheels, continue to be worth little. The 126 SEC was from the analogue age, but that is not reflected in running costs, which are high, especially for bodywork matters.



ABOVE
Dropping all four windows makes for a fabulous, drive in the summertime.



TOP LEFT
Williams F1 driver Nigel Mansell owned this 560 in the 80s...

ABOVE LEFT
...living in Monaco then, he ordered it in left-hand drive form.

LEFT
The last of the 560s pumped out 297bhp and 336lb ft torque.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 3,839cc/V8/201bhp - 5,547cc/V8/296bhp

Price range £20,000-£50,000

Model choice 560SEC

Sum up Bruno Sacco's masterpiece pillarless shape is handsome from every angle, and driving is a deliciously relaxed experience



C140 SEC/S/CL (1992-1998)

If fans feel the C140 is Mercedes' forgotten luxury coupe. Part of the poorly received 140-series S-Class range, production of just 26,022 during its eight-year run ending in 1998 was little more than a third of that of its 126-series predecessor; fewer than 1,500 were delivered in the UK.

Nonetheless the C140 was, like the W140 S-Class saloon, a work of technical magnificence. One of the first Mercedes with complex on-board electronics, it featured sophisticated engine management systems and

adaptive suspension damping, along with a host of advanced features such as automatic door closing and double-glazed side windows. It also marked the first factory-built V12 coupe, the 600SEC (model designations went from SEC to S in 1993, and to CL in 1996).

And its intimidating appearance disguises what a treat it is to drive, be it in V8 or V12 form. It's smoother, quieter and more comfortable than the C126, and

despite weighing over two tonnes its handling is featherlight and precise. It's also among the most solid feeling Mercedes model lines of the modern era you'll encounter, its bodywork having proved to resist corrosion notably well.

Values have crept up, but for a C140 to command much beyond £10,000 it must be in near pristine condition and with low mileage; examples like this are rare but do occasionally surface. Of the three models, the 500 makes the most sense, peppier than the lacklustre 420 and easier to maintain than the tempting but fearsomely complex V12.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Engines/cyl/power 4, 196/V8/275bhp - 5,987cc/V12/389bhp

Price range £5,000-£20,000

Model choice 500SEC/S500/CL500

Sum up The heavy-handed looks may put you off, but a greatly underrated car, and which will eventually be seen as a classic

TOP
Pictured is the CL420; like the C126 420, it feels on the slow side.

ABOVE
M119 four-valve V8 is the same engine found in earlier R129 SLs.

LEFT
Everything about the C140 interior is big and feels unbreakable.



C208/209 CLK (1997-2002, 2002-2009)

The original CLK was effectively the 1997 successor to the C124. Construction featured a conventional B-post, hence the windows can't all be dropped to achieve the graceful pillarless look. Nonetheless, the first-generation model, factory coded C208, is an elegant design and, for a two-door coupe, is also a particularly practical proposition, with generous rear seat and boot space.

It was offered with a much wider range of engines than the C124 coupe, including two V8s, a 4.3-litre (CLK430) and 5.5-litre (the range topping CLK55 AMG). The C208 was, however, based on the 202-series C-, rather than 210 E-Class saloon platform, despite featuring the distinctive rounded headlamp treatment of the latter. The most dramatically C208 is the CLK55 AMG, its smooth 5.4-litre V8 (M113) revealing a velvet punch thanks to a wall of torque.

The 204-series C-Class based C209, which replaced the C208 in 2002, reverted to a pillarless, and more arresting and adventurous shape. The range boasted a new generation of four-cylinder engines smoother than the previous compressor units, but retained the CLK55 AMG as the flagship, carrying over the same V8. This gave way to the CLK63 AMG with the 6.2-litre M156 V8 that was AMG's first engine built from scratch. The C208 and C209 - especially the AMGs - surely have 'future classic' written all over them.

THE KNOWLEDGE

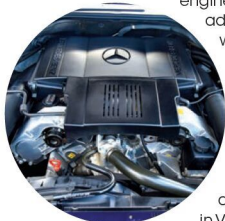
Engines/cyl/power 1,998cc/4/134bhp - 6,208cc/V8/474bhp

Price range £750-£15,000

Model choice C209 CLK55 AMG

Sum up Both C208 and C209 are presently very inexpensive to buy, and the two AMG versions are mighty performers

BELOW
C209 cabin is well designed but lacks the quality feel of old.



AMGs have the most classic appeal, this the CLK55...



...powered by the brilliant 5.4 M113 V8.



In mid-2006 the CLK55 was replaced the CLK63, whose 6.2V8 has more power but less reliability.

**"THIS WAS
THE ERA OF THE
COMMERCIAL
ARTIST AT THE
MEDIA'S FOREFRONT,
AS PHOTOGRAPHIC
REPRODUCTION
QUALITY WAS NOT
YET CONSIDERED
HIGH ENOUGH FOR
ADVERTISING AND
BROCHURES"**

Image makers

Daimler-Benz's post-war vehicle advertising illustrations were created largely by two talented artists, Walter Gotschke and Hans Liska. **David Sutherland** looks at their exquisite work, and at the interesting lives of the two men

IMAGES Daimler AG (vehicle illustrations)/Gerhild Drücker-Gotschke (Walter Gotschke)

The advertising used by the present day car industry is among the cleverest and most sophisticated seen anywhere, sometimes a better watch than the TV programmes it interrupts or the movies it bookends. But arguably some of the most beautiful and evocative advertising and promotional material used by car makers was seen decades before the agency men had access to advanced photography, film and special effects – in the 1950s, when the only materials used were pencil, brush, paint palette and paper.

This was the era of the commercial artist at the media's forefront, as photographic reproduction quality was not yet considered high enough for advertising and brochures, hence to illustrate by hand was the best option. More generally, illustrations were the accepted way of conveying detail, particularly technical aspects, and they also appeared in the editorial sections of newspapers and magazines.

Two of the most outstanding commercial artists in this period of the fast-expanding post-war car industry were employed by Daimler-Benz: Walter Gotschke and later Hans Liska, who between them projected the glamour of Mercedes-Benz road cars and also the intense excitement surrounding Stuttgart's racing cars. Their work in fact extended far beyond motorcars, and both – born just five years apart in Austria-Hungary – were among the most acclaimed artists working in Germany during their lifetimes.

While the presentation of the car, and the background it was set against, was entirely created within the artist's mind, what is particularly striking about the work of Liska and Gotschke seven decades on is that while their illustrations deliver an exquisite portrayal of the Mercedes-Benz model in question, nothing about them is exaggerated. The people are plausibly lifelike and the backgrounds realistic; there's an almost photographic aura about them. Every one used by Mercedes-Benz is a captivating work in its own right.



Walter Gotschke

The illustrations Walter Gotschke produced for Mercedes-Benz for several years were less intense and with a slightly more sketch-like quality than those by Hans Liska, who succeeded him in the job, but the plainer images were no less effective. For example, his crisp rendering of a 170D saloon ferrying a prosperous looking couple along a rainy town thoroughfare at night, for the 1950 sales brochure, is simply a gorgeous work, it being a joy to pick out aspects such as the women's vibrant lipstick and how the street lights highlight her blonde hair. Gotschke also produced a lot of commercial vehicle illustrations, which cleverly projected glamour as well as utility.

The sixth of seven children, he was born on October 14, 1912 in Horní Benešov, in what was then Austrian Silesia, which after World War One became part of the newly formed Czechoslovakia. From childhood he was an obsessive drawer, first the animals he observed in his rural environment, and then from about the age of 11

onwards the motorcars that were then becoming more widespread.

For four years until 1931 he studied architecture in Brno in Czechoslovakia, and while there attended motor races and submitted sketches of them to the local press. His first was published when he was 17, and two years later his poster was used for Grand Prix of Czechoslovakia, held at the Masaryk Circuit, on Brno's outskirts. Thereafter he was granted press access to motor racing events and his sketches were regularly published in newspapers.

On graduation, Gotschke pursued a career as an independent artist rather than in architecture, but in March 1938 he moved to Germany, where there were opportunities as an illustrator in the motor industry, and within three months had begun working at Daimler-Benz in Stuttgart. His primary role was to produce artwork



ABOVE LEFT
Walter Gotschke is seen here in 1939, working on Mercedes' GP posters.

TOP
He managed to make even the most basic motor transport look glamorous.

ABOVE
The people in Gotschke's illustrations are a delight to examine close up.

BELOW LEFT
Germany's growing affluence of the 1950s was seen in his artwork.

for brochures from marine and aircraft engines, but he also worked on racing posters, which Mercedes sent around the world each time the Silver Arrows grand prix cars scored another victory.

At the end of 1939 he married Erika Krolmer, a fellow art student in Brno, and in 1940 a sign of his

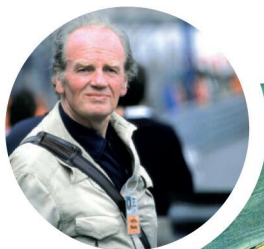
"HE SERVED AS A WAR ARTIST, INCLUDING IN RUSSIA DURING THE BATTLE FOR LENINGRAD IN 1941, FOR WHICH HE RECEIVED A PRIZE FOR THE BEST WAR DRAWING OF 1942"



MERCEDES-BENZ

NOCH WERTVOLLER ALS BISHER

TYP 170 V



Walter Gotschke

Born: October 14, 1912, Horni Benešov, Austrian Silesia
Died: August 28, 2000

Early career: After producing racing posters as a student, joined Daimler-Benz in 1938
World War Two: German army war artist

Career after WW2: Worked as an illustrator for Daimler-Benz, then a wide range of car makers and publishers
High point: Became an internationally renowned automotive artist

Low point: Being dismissed by Daimler-Benz in 1951 for veiled criticism of the firm's styling in a motoring magazine



→ flourishing career with Daimler-Benz was when he won the in-house calendar competition. But advertising activity being curtailed as Daimler-Benz's military involvement escalated, he lost his job and moved back into freelance illustration.

He was soon called up for military service, and served as a war artist, including a spell in Russia during the battle for Leningrad in 1941, for which he received a prize for the best war drawing of 1942. However, in the chaos of WW2's end, Gotschke was briefly an American prisoner of war, but subsequently rekindled his automotive artistic career in Austria, with a particular interest in drawing American cars.

Gotschke returned to Stuttgart in late 1949, first working on Daimler-Benz advertising material as the company began

its re-emergence into the car industry. At the same time, his artwork was commissioned by Ford and other car makers. However, Gotschke's work would be seen only until 1951.

"In the early 1950s car styling was a big topic, and discussed in magazines," his widow and second wife Gerhild Drücker-Gotschke explained to us several years ago.

"Walter was friends with the managing editor of the magazine *Das Auto* and they often discussed this subject. So in 1951 Walter wrote an article criticising styling, and although factory names were not mentioned, the



ABOVE INSET

Gotschke worked as an artist into older age; seen here at the '83 Monaco GP.

ABOVE

The 300 was M-B's most prestigious 1950s car and was portrayed that way.

RIGHT

Hand-illustrated brochures lasted until photography took over in the later '50s.

"IN 1951, WALTER WROTE AN ARTICLE CRITICISING STYLING, AND ALTHOUGH FACTORY NAMES WERE NOT MENTIONED, HE RECEIVED NO FURTHER COMMISSIONS."





LEFT
Who could have resisted the '50 170S Cabriolet A after seeing the brochure?



LEFT
"Economical commercial vehicle with the driving characteristics of a car."

BELOW LEFT
Gotschke's cover of the 1951 brochure for the 6.6-tonne Type L6600.

RIGHT
As in many of the works of both artists, Hans Liska's people choice fascinates.



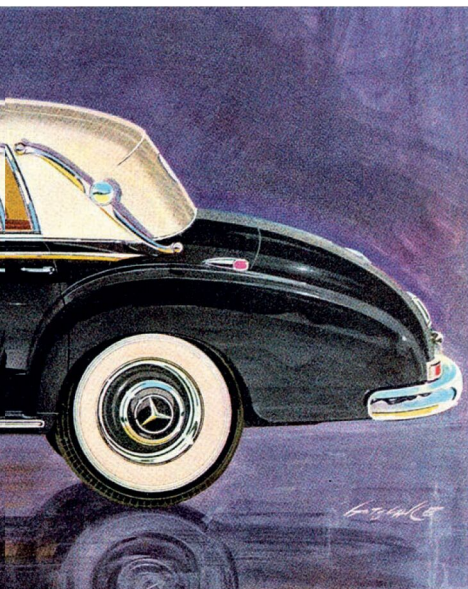
Der große Erfolg

MERCEDES-BENZ

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Daimler Benz AG, Dr Ing Wilhelm Haspel did not like the public criticism, and Gotschke received no further commissions."

Over many years Gotschke produced illustrations for a range of international motoring magazines, such as *Motor Revue*, *Road & Track*, *Quattroroute* and *Auto Motor und Sport*. He was retained on the permanent artists panel of the glossy, hardbound *Automobile Quarterly* magazine until the end of his life.

In 1984, Gotschke – who had been blind in his left eye for some years – lost sight altogether. However, a notable work subsequently appeared, the 1988 Porsche Calendar, comprising illustrations he had completed while still sighted. This artistic genius of international reputation spent his last years in the quiet of the German countryside, passing away in August 28, 2000, two months short of his 88th birthday. Gerhild continues to manage his estate.



Hans Liska

Born in Vienna, Austria in November 1907, Hans Liska was approaching middle age by the time he began working for Daimler-Benz, and the reality and humanity seen in his illustrations surely reflected his broad artistic career, in peace and wartime prior to this. However, it had been his

**"IT WAS HIS
PASSION FOR
EVOKING HUMAN
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HIS MERCEDES-BENZ
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OF THE PRODUCT"**

intention to become an accountant, which he was for a short time after graduating from business school, but he then went to Vienna's University of Applied Arts where he was mentored by the well-known artist Berthold Löffler.

His focus on illustrative work was sharpened when, after being given drawing materials by an American charity, he completed his course and was employed by an advertising agency in St Gallen in Switzerland as the head of its studio. At that point, he took English lessons but the pure artist in Liska took him to art college in Munich, and his dream of

becoming an established artist came true when for its 1932/1933 New Year edition the world famous *Berliner Illustrierte* published one of his drawings. He was also commissioned by the publisher Ullstein Verlag. →



"LISKA ALSO ILLUSTRATED A SERIES OF TRAVEL BOOKS BASED ON HIS MOTORING AROUND GERMANY IN THE 1950s, THE PERIOD OF THAT COUNTRY'S WIRTSCHAFTSWUNDER, OR ECONOMIC MIRACLE"

⇒ During World War Two, Liska served in the German army as an artist like Gotschke, and produced propaganda posters for troops and factory workers – but many of these were far more than simplistic, patriotic and moral-boosting clichés. Liska also powerfully showed the suffering, endurance, destruction and sheer drama that war entails, the intensity of the emotion conveyed by his astonishing attention to detail. A collection of these works was published during World War Two and today is a sought-after collector's item.

Liska's career as a graphic artist carried on into peacetime, and by 1948 he was married and drawing for the influential news magazine *Quick* and the radio programmes listing title *Hörzu*, both recently launched. In 1951 he was hired by Daimler-Benz to fill the position vacated by Walter Gotschke's unexpected departure, producing a wide range of artwork for press use, advertising and promotions. It was his passion for evoking human nature that made his Mercedes-Benz illustrations, either black and white pencil sketches or full vibrant colour, so much more than straightforward representations of the product. The postures and expressions of the people in



ABOVE LEFT
Hans Liska's delightfully whimsical take on the Benz Patent Motor Wagen.

ABOVE
The expensive 300S coupe of 1951 called for a suitably classy image.

RIGHT
In the 1954 Ponton promo Liska implied the freedom the car offered people.

BELOW RIGHT
Axle articulation was in abundant supply on the LA type trucks, Liska shows.

or around the cars are intensely detailed and invite one to create a back story to the vehicle shown.

His body of work includes numerous posters promoting and celebrating Mercedes' return to international motorsport in 1952, the year in which the factory's 300SL sports car racer all but swept the board in endurance racing. But while these posters show the coupe racing to victory,

Liska's sketches probed the unseen recesses of these event, for example re-imagining the moment on the Carrera Panamericana race in Mexico when a vulture crashed through the windshield of the 300SL driven by Karl Kling and Hans Klenk, badly injuring the latter but not preventing the pair winning the event.

Liska also illustrated a series of travel books based on his motoring around Germany in the 1950s, the period of that country's *Wirtschaftswunder*, or economic miracle. He contributed some artwork to other car makers, including Ford, and when by the early 1960s photographic film had replaced pencils water colour and oil paints as the tools of the trade in the creative side of advertising, Liska worked as an artist across a wide range of subjects outside the car industry.

Liska died of a heart attack in December 1983, aged 73. A great number of his illustrations had lain for many years in the Daimler-Benz archive but, following agreement with the Liska estate, in May 2014 Mercedes-Benz Classic mounted an extensive display of his work in Brescia in Italy, to coincide with that year's re-run of the old Mille Miglia 1,000-mile road race. Exhibits included work never seen outside the Daimler archive vaults, and of course his Mille Miglia work. He and Gotschke truly represent a golden era of motorcar advertising. 



Hans Liska

Born: November 19, 1907, Vienna, Austria

Died: December 26, 1983

Early career: Studio head, advertising agency in Switzerland

World War Two: German army war artist

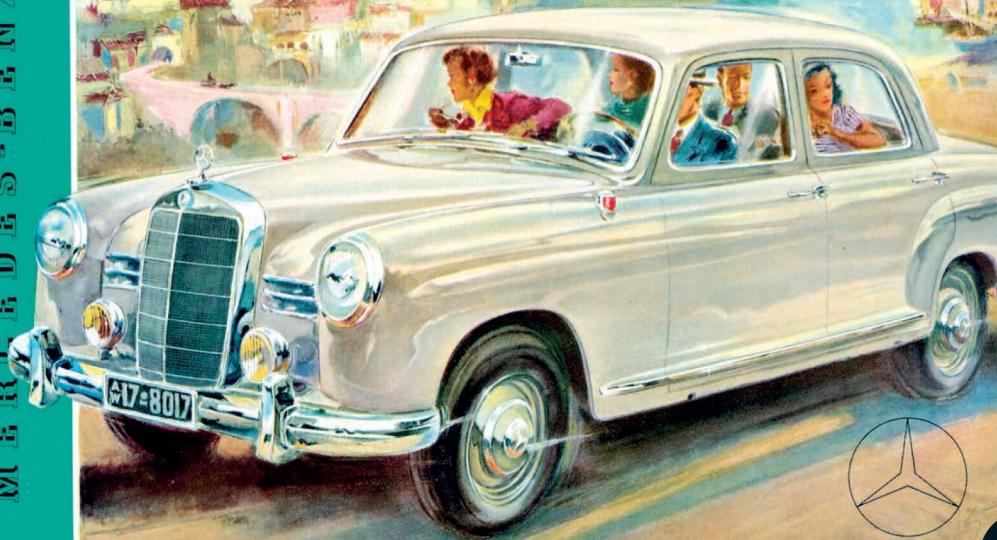
Career after WW2: In early post-war years produced illustrations for German magazines, then worked for Daimler-Benz

High point: His 1950s illustrations for Mercedes-Benz's road vehicles, and for motorsport
Low point: Seeing demand for work from car makers dry up in the early 1960s

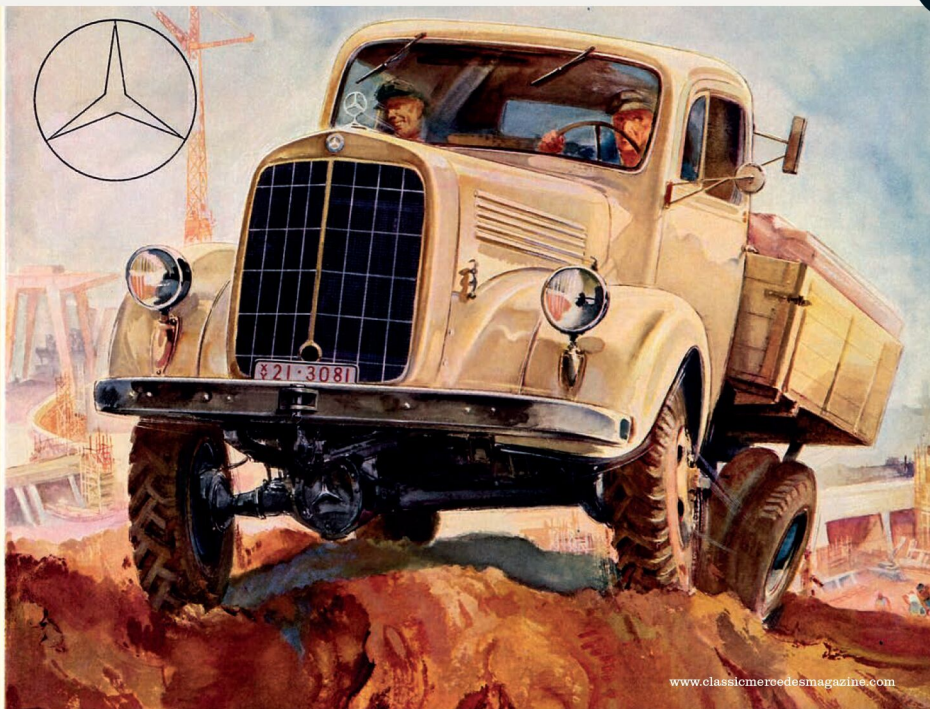
ABOVE LEFT
Liska's backgrounds often draw your eye as much as the vehicle, here a 170D.

LEFT
He imagines the moment a vulture hit a 300SL on the Carrera Panamericana.

MERCEDES-BENZ *1930*



MERCEDES-BENZ TYP
Neue Typenbezeichnung LA 311 · LA 312
LA 3500
LA 4500



UNDER THE HAMMER

Over four years, RM Sotheby's has been selling batches of modern classic Mercedes-Benzes from the vast Youngtimer Collection of 1970s to 2000s cars. December saw possibly the last ones to be offered; we look at them in detail

IMAGES RM SOTHEBY'S

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, USA

Ultimate super coupe

Values of AMG's 126-series 560SEC conversions have soared, and in Miami this sub-15,000-mile, correct-in-every-way example hit its pre-sale estimate out the park

Lot 111 Mercedes-Benz 560SEC AMG 6.0 'Wide-Body'

Founded in 1967 by a pair of former Mercedes-Benz engineers, the engine builder and independent tuning firm AMG quickly became known for shoe-horning large engines into small chassis. Combining the Teutonic quality of Mercedes-Benz products with a no-holds-barred flair for exotic performance and bold aesthetics, by 1986 the company had flourished into a known brand. At approximately the same time, AMG started developing racing engines with Mercedes-Benz, and thus began its slow walk toward the marque's corporate umbrella. Put simply, AMG had achieved marked, worldwide success by following a simple ethos: if your pockets were deep enough, they would build it for you.

This 560SEC 6.0 Widebody is an exemplary representative of one of the ambitious tuner's wildest and most famous creations. The cost of the six-litre V8 engine and widebody packages from AMG – tacked onto the sticker price of a brand-new, flagship 126-series SEC – made this car one of the most expensive roadgoing marvels of the period. These prohibitively high costs assured that only the most well-heeled enthusiasts could enjoy showcasing the pinnacle of the tuning firm's tempting catalogue.

Finished in the archetypical colour combination of blue-black metallic over anthracite leather, this 560SEC

| |
|--|
| Year 1987 |
| Chassis no WDB1260451A 315331 |
| Engine No 11796812026693 |
| Cylinder-head no 2856.085 |
| Auction RM Sotheby's Miami Auction, Miami Beach |
| When December 10, 2022 |
| Pre-sale estimate \$226,000-\$276,000 (£183,500- £224,300) |
| Price achieved \$720,000 (£587,200) |

BELOW
The blue-black paint highlights the SEC's menacing character.



was originally specified as a German market order and delivered new to AMG headquarters in Affalterbach, Germany, where it was subsequently transformed into the revered super coupe presented in 2022. Significantly, this example is accompanied by copies of the original AMG invoices circa July 1987, which indicate the conversion was executed on behalf of one H Herrmann from Berlin, with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of more than \$170,000.

AMG's work consisted of taking a stock 5.5-litre M117 V8 and boring it out to six litres and equipping it with a set of high-performance camshafts housed within of pair of proprietary 16-valve, three-piece, sand-cast cylinder-heads. With a modified throttle body, freer-breathing exhaust, and ported intake manifold, this engine produces a reported 380bhp and provides twice the torque at half the engine speed of the standard configuration. All this new-found power is routed to the rear wheels via an upgraded transmission. It appears that AMG originally outfitted this car with a 2.47:1 rear axle, but a 2.65:1 rear axle is now fitted. A proper set of staggered, colour-matched, three-piece Aero III 17-inch wheels

by OZ wear Bridgestone Potenza tyres.

Both the engine and transmission numbers are of the correct AMG sequences indicating period modification. AMG bodykit numbers are found on the front fenders and front bumper with correct West German production information, and the valve cover stampings identify the six-litre displacement, sequence number, and appropriate employee ID code. Further stampings on the cylinder-heads, exhaust manifolds, and throttle body are similar testaments to this coupe's significant modifications. AMG four-piston front brake calipers are present along with the exclusive and correct 'AMG by Bilstein' shocks and matching springs.

The car's anthracite leather interior is restrained, highlighted with exceedingly attractive burl wood trim on the doors, dashboard, and centre console. Recaro CSE seats with deep side bolsters feature numerous power adjustments and complement a four-spoke, leather-wrapped, AMG-branded M38 steering wheel by Momo.

Since entering the consignor's collection in 2015, this menacing super coupe had travelled fewer than 65km (40 miles), and it indicated just 24,014km (14,913 miles) at time of cataloguing. While many AMG-modified Mercedes-Benzes from this era might have only a few of high-performance or cosmetic attributes, this exceptional Affalterbach 560SEC benefits from all the company's most desirable and expensive upgrades, making it truly exceptional.



"THE COST OF THE SIX-LITRE AND WIDEBODY PACKAGES FROM AMG MADE THIS CAR ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE ROAD-GOING MARVELS OF THE PERIOD"

This rear angle shows off the widened body.



At auction time the AMG had 24,014km.



ABOVE
Six litres and 32 valves equals around 380bhp.

RIGHT
Every which way power adjustment on the front seats.



LEFT
It was decided to keep the stock sound head unit.

BELOW
These magnificent chairs are the Recaro CSE type.



Fronting the AMG labelled instruments is a chunky M38, Momo-made wheel.





"THIS 500SL IS THE FIRST OF EIGHT EXAMPLES EQUIPPED WITH A FIVE-SPEED MANUAL TRANSMISSION REPORTEDLY BUILT BY AMG FOR NORTH AMERICAN CUSTOMERS BETWEEN 1982 AND 1987"

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, USA

78 Super leicht lit up

AMG took the handsome but staid performing R107 and made it a fire breather, and this early example raised much interest at auction

Lot 113 Mercedes-Benz 500SL AMG 5.0

Despite its long tenure and tremendous sales in North America, the Mercedes-Benz SL-Class, chassis code R107, was never offered in North America with a powertrain and running gear to truly excite and engage the sports car enthusiast. Since inception in 1971, it was clear that the R107 series of convertibles was less the exhilarating *super leicht* (super light) performance machine the original SL was, and more a beautifully engineered luxury tourer. Even the V8 models were relatively underpowered, fitted exclusively with automatic transmissions, and riding upon a compliant suspension that emphasised luxurious cruising. In this regard, the independent tuning firm AMG, based in Affalterbach, Germany, saw a massive business opportunity.

For a privileged clientele with unbounded chequebooks, AMG – which remained independent until

| |
|--|
| Year 1982 |
| Chassis no WDB10704 612001676 |
| Engine no 11796212000745 |
| Auction RM Sotheby's Miami Auction, Miami Beach |
| When December 10, 2022 |
| Pre-sale estimate \$150,000-\$200,000 (£122,300- £163,100) |
| Price achieved \$291,000 (£237,300) |

Mercedes-Benz acquired a 50 per cent stake in 1999 and then fully subsumed it in 2005 – would entirely transform the SL into a true sports roadster with greatly improved power, handling, aerodynamics, and a full suite of attention-grabbing cosmetic accoutrements. Each car specified by an AMG customer was bespoke,

replete with à-la-carte options offered from the company's wide-ranging catalogue.

Among the handful of AMG franchisees operating in North America, the most important was Richard Buxbaum's Classic Motors, a dealer on the outskirts of Chicago specialising in automotive accessories and 'grey' market imports. Buxbaum was instrumental in AMG's successful expansion from a small German tuning firm into a global brand, and the 500SL offered here is among the first complete AMG cars that he ordered from Affalterbach.

This 500SL is the first of eight

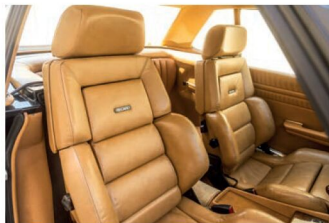
RIGHT
Lowered suspension by Bilstein gives the R107 a more purposeful stance.





THIS PICTURE
AMG's cabin
treatment
relatively calm.

RIGHT
Modified heads
and other tweaks
produced 272bhp.



examples equipped with a five-speed manual transmission reportedly built by AMG for North American customers between 1982 and 1987. Finished in Black over Palomino leather, it was ordered in late 1981 by Jay Levitt of Naples, Florida via Buxbaum and converted to its current specification by AMG in Germany when still new.

A pair of ported and polished cylinder-heads, which house solid mechanical intake valve lifters, and a set of AMG camshafts are the *pieces de résistance* among its desirable AMG-engineered performance upgrades. This top-end power kit is complemented by a modified air intake assembly, and custom exhaust system which altogether help this five-litre engine produce a conservatively rated 272bhp and achieve a top speed above 155mph. Considering that the most powerful SL available to a US buyer in 1982 used a five-litre V8 that produced little more than 200bhp, and had a top speed of 133mph, this 500SL AMG 5.0 is truly a mechanical marvel by comparison.

Power is routed to the rear wheels through a close-ratio five-speed manual transmission from Getrag and a limited-slip differential, which sits upon a unique 3.46:1 rear axle. Close inspection reveals that AMG technicians cleverly repurposed the

ABOVE
Recaro Ideal seats are a massive improvement over the standard items.

ABOVE CENTRE
AMG concentrated on saloons and coupes, so this R107 is very rare.

ABOVE RIGHT
First owner lived in Florida then the quick SL moved to Southern California.

BELOW
A speedometer reading to 300km/h (188mph) was an AMG trademark then.

BELOW CENTRE
V8-engine R107s weren't available as manuals, so AMG built a five-speeder.

BELOW RIGHT
VIN plate shows the SL was imported by Classic Motors, a key AMG dealer.




car's original bellhousing to unite the Getrag transmission with the engine. A full 'Bilstein for AMG' suspension and colour-matched 16-inch BBS alloy wheels wrapped in Kumho tyres provide more agile handling dynamics and a pleasingly aggressive stance.

The interior is actually a rather subtle affair by AMG standards, though a handsome pair of super supportive Recaro Ideal seats helps convey the high performance potential. The shift gaiter and the steering wheel have been similarly upholstered, uniting a pleasant aesthetic highlighted by rich zebrano wood trim and AMG's signature 300km/h (188mph) speedometer.

In an interesting twist, Buxbaum had ordered this 500SL 5.0 incorrectly – having forgotten to specify anti-lock brakes on the donor car. The error was

remedied on April 13, 1983, when Levitt traded this car back to Buxbaum in exchange for a nearly identical replacement five-speed-equipped 500SL 5.0 with anti-lock brakes. Notably, this important 500SL 5.0 AMG has had just three recorded owners since 1995, and was acquired by the consignee in 2017 from the noted pre-merger AMG enthusiast Henric Nieminen based in Los Angeles, California.

A rare and intriguing model with a passionate following, examples are fiercely sought after today for their show stopping looks, wonderful driving dynamics, and equally impressive performance. With pre-merger AMG cars increasing steadily in cachet and collectability, this notable 500SL 5.0 five-speed example is a rare find that will surely command attention wherever it lands next. 

Feel the heat



This Evo II spent time in Japan before returning to Europe, and like most examples is in top shape



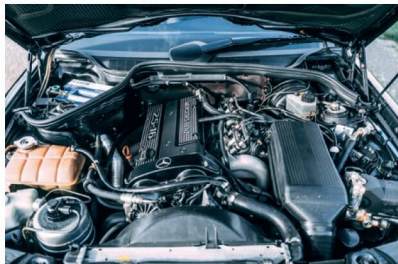
Lot 129 Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II

In the early 1980s, Mercedes-Benz motorsport shifted its focus toward touring car racing. For this, the W201 chassis was beefed up with larger anti-roll bars, firmer bushings, a limited-slip differential, stiffer dampers, and a quicker steering ratio. Additionally, Getrag provided a five-speed 'dog leg' gearbox to ensure fast and easy gear selection. Meanwhile the standard M102 2.3-litre, eight-valve, in-line four-cylinder engine was fitted with a light alloy cylinder-head with dual overhead cams and four valves per cylinder, this engineered by Cosworth. Continuous development led to increasing displacement to 2.5 litres in 1988, with even more changes to come for the Evolution variants.



The initial Evo model overhauled the platform into a thoroughbred racer with a tuned version of the 2.5-litre engine. A higher rev limiter, 3.27:1 axle ratio and larger brakes ensured that the Evolution accelerated and stopped better than any 190E before it. Further

"THE TRUE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVO II FOR MANY MOTORHEADS WAS THE AERO KIT, WITH ITS TOWERING REAR SPOILER, IMPOSING WING FLAIRS, AND AN EVEN MORE AGGRESSIVE FRONT SPLITTER"



| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Year | 1990 |
| Engine/power | 2,436cc/232bhp |
| Chassis no | WDB2 |
| 010361F734672 | |
| Serial no | 229 of 502 |
| Auction RM | Sotheby's Miami Auction, Miami Beach |
| When | December 10, 2022 |
| Pre-sale estimate | \$225,000-\$275,000 (£183,500-£224,300) |
| Price achieved | \$302,000 (£246,300) |

TOP LEFT
At some point the original Mercedes-Benz steering wheel has been replaced.

ABOVE LEFT
The extreme rear wing was part of the aerodynamics needed to win a DTM title.

LEFT
Rear seating, leather trimmed as standard, is split into two chairs.

BELOW
Delivered new in Germany, it went to Japan in 1994 and stayed there 21 years.

BELOW LEFT
Engine has done 50,900 miles – low, but Evo II's tend to have less than that.

enhancements included wider front and rear tracks, a stiffer adjustable suspension, and revised bodywork. Following this iteration, Mercedes-Benz refined the platform even further, creating the Evolution II. Engineers managed to squeeze yet more power, achieving an impressive 232bhp, while also revising the gear ratios, and incorporating an even stiffer adjustable suspension and Brembo four-piston callipers. But the true highlight of the Evo II for many motorheads was the aero kit, with its towering rear spoiler, imposing wing flairs, and an even more aggressive front splitter.

This 190E 2.5-16 Evolution II left the Mercedes-Benz factory in Bremen on May 31, 1990, designated number 229 of 502 in the series. Finished in *Blauschwarz* metallic paint over black leather, it was equipped from the factory with a sunroof, an external temperature display, air conditioning, a rear sound box, heated seats and a Technics stereo CD player.

Delivered new to an individual in Germany through a Mercedes-Benz dealership in Frankfurt, documents indicate that the car was exported to Japan in 1994 and show logged mileage of 70,200km (43,620 miles) in 2011 and 81,400km (50,875 miles) in 2013. The Evolution II returned to Europe in 2015 when it was purchased by a Mercedes-Benz dealer in Poland for use in its collection. Within the past year, the car was sold to its current owner. In October 2022, it received a set of new Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tyres and a new battery. The 190E is accompanied by its tool roll and roadside warning triangle, and aforementioned documentation.

Heavy metal

Combining AMG output with Stuttgart luxury, this 126-series made a massive price

Lot 161 Mercedes-Benz 560SEL AMG 6.0


In 1989, the jewel of the AMG catalogue was the engine conversion for the 126-series 560SEC and SEL, at a cost of \$43,500. The six-litre, multi-valve V8 engine offered 380bhp and torque dwarfing that of the original 5.5-litre engine. When including additional modifications such as uprated brakes, aerodynamics, suspension, and limitless cosmetic accoutrements, the final invoice price of a fully-kitted 560SEL 6.0 AMG could easily exceed \$190,000.

This car is a Japanese-market specimen commissioned and assembled

by AMG Japan when new. Finished in the subtle monochrome livery of Anthracite grey metallic over black leather, the well-appointed interior features rich wood trim throughout. Surely among the most luxurious and extravagant super saloons ever offered by AMG, this extreme limousine features rear, fold-out executive tables, pleated leather door cards, contrasting, white-faced AMG gauges, a four-spoke, leather-wrapped AMG steering wheel and an aftermarket Sony stereo system.

The car's correct AMG engine number sequence indicates a period modification, and the signature valve-cover stampings identify the six-litre displacement, sequence

number and appropriate employee ID code. Further stampings on the cylinder-heads, exhaust manifolds, and throttle body similarly testify to this car's significant modifications, while AMG bodykit numbers throughout show correct production information.

This wonderfully menacing example of sublime AMG engineering excess would be a fantastic addition to any collection, especially ones focused on modern classics or 'pre-merger' AMGs. Unquestionably one of the most iconic and recognisable German cars of its era, AMG-modified examples of this vintage offered unparalleled luxury, performance, and German reliability in a visually stunning package. 



Chunky wheel and white dials a 1980s AMG calling card.



The six-litre 560SEL was ordered by a Japanese customer and built up by AMG Japan.



At the time, no other road car engine could match this V8.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Year | 1989 |
| Chassis no | WDB 1260391A497466 |
| Cylinder-head no | 4336.049 |
| Auction RM | Sotheby's Miami Auction, Miami Beach |
| When | December 10, 2022 |
| Pre-sale estimate | \$90,000-\$120,000 (£73,400-£97,900) |
| Price achieved | \$276,600 (£224,800) |

Rare rally weapon

This homologation special was the 'bargain' of the five cars here, at a below-estimate \$39,200

Lot 166 Mercedes-Benz 450SLC 5.0

The 107-series 450SLC 5.0 was a homologation special for grueling long-distance rallies, engineers putting the coupe on a significant weight loss regime, installing an aluminium bonnet, doors, and bootlid. A special engine, the all-aluminium M117 five-litre V8, was also introduced, further reducing the car's heft while simultaneously raising power to 237bhp. A new front air dam and rear spoiler improved aerodynamic stability.

A most unlikely entrant, the luxurious two-door competed against diminutive four-cylinder engined cars from Datsun, Fiat, and Ford. While unable to mount successful challenges in tighter stages, the SLCs showed their true potential over long distances, securing back-to-back victories at the Rallye Côte d'Ivoire in 1979 and 1980.


| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Year | 1981 |
| Engine/power | 4.973cc V8/237bhp |
| Chassis no | 107.026.12.001152 |
| Engine no | 11796012000573 |
| Auction RM | Sotheby's Miami Auction, Miami Beach |
| When | December 10, 2022 |
| Pre-sale estimate | \$40,000-\$50,000 (£32,600-£40,800) |
| Price achieved | \$39,200 (£32,000) |

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
A rare car of a reasonable price; interior is original; oil sump M117V8 is sweet.



Just 2,769 were produced (including the 500SLC it evolved into).

The example offered here is believed to have been delivered new to Amsterdam and had been under the same ownership since 2015, as part of a collection in Switzerland, and then from 2020 in Kuwait. The car appears largely well preserved, with expected patina for its age. Well appointed with many premium features available in the early 1980s, the coupe came equipped from the factory with automatic climate control, an electrically operated sliding sunroof, central locking, cruise control, and a Becker Mexico AM/FM cassette stereo. It rides on correct, 14-inch alloy wheels and Fulda Carat Assuro tyres.

In 2016, it benefited from an annual service, which included replacing the engine and gearbox oil, purging the hydraulic system, and recharging the air conditioning. Among the included manuals and documentation is the factory service book with data card. 

Powerhouse

It was the first truly hot Mercedes E-Class, and has become a fast-appreciating modern classic now that the market has woken up to its investment potential. We bring you the vital information you'll need to make a good choice, as some out there are not in good condition

IMAGES Terry Osborne

At first glance, the 124-series 500E, or E500 as it was later badged, could pass for one of the Mercedes taxis waiting outside a station anywhere in mainland Europe in the 1990s, except that that it isn't in cab-spec yellow. An unremarkable mid-sized saloon – that's anything but.

The 500E, launched in 1991, was

Stuttgart's answer to the BMW M5, which for six years had been the undisputed and definitive high performance saloon. It used five-litre, 32-valve V8 power and was part-built by Porsche, the Zuffenhausen sports car maker also honing its chassis. From late 1990 until April 1995, the Porsche factory would turn out 10,355 of the cars, each one hand-built over 18 days,

ABOVE RIGHT

The late-on Limited model wore 16-inch alloys shod with lower-profile tyres.

RIGHT

Standard cars, the bulk of production, have the same 15s as other 1990s Mercs.

FAIR RIGHT

The same instruments as a regular W124, including the 260km/h speedometer.



"The 500E, launched in 1991, was Stuttgart's answer to the BMW M5, which for six years had been the undisputed and definitive high performance saloon"



Specifications

Mercedes-Benz 500E/E500 (W124)
ENGINE M119 4,973cc V8
POWER 316hp@5,600rpm
TORQUE 347lb ft@3,900rpm
TRANSMISSION 4-speed auto
WEIGHT 1,710kg
0-62MPH 6.1sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION 21.2mpg
YEARS SOLD 1991-1995
All figures from Mercedes-Benz Group; pre-October 1992 cars 322hp, 20.4mpg

LEFT
 Front seats don't look anything special but are in fact bespoke Recaro items.



the peak year being 1992 when 4,416 were assembled.

The retail price on its arrival in Britain in March 1991 was £56,000 (some £10,000 more than the BMW M5), rising to £60,000 by the time imports ceased. The car is one of the rarest Mercedes models in Britain, with only 29 delivered new, although others have been personally imported.

Pristine, low mileage examples sell for £60,000 or more at international auctions, but you can still find average condition examples for around £20,000. So what should you be looking for if considering purchasing this subtle, but oh-so-potent W124?

Design, evolution

Work on the 500E is said to have begun quite soon after the 124-series appeared in 1984, the idea being to lightly modify the then flagship 300E. But during its course the project became ever more ambitious, the end result something that while still looking much like a regular 124 saloon used so many different parts it was almost a new car. For example, of the bodywork panels only the bootlid, roof, front doors and glass remained standard 124-series items, while fastidious attention to detail included installing a larger fuel tank.

The M119 V8 produced its extra torque thanks to revised intake manifolds and Bosch LH- rather than LE-Jetronic fuel-

injection, and there were also detail modifications to the engine block, crankcase and connecting rods. It was a tight fit in the W124. The battery had to be moved out of the engine bay and into the boot (which also helped with weight distribution), while to accommodate the larger, 500SL rear differential the transmission tunnel had to be rearranged.

The engine came with the 500SL's four-speed automatic gearbox, switchable between sport and economy modes; a manual 'box wasn't offered. Mercedes' early-generation traction control hardware of the time, ASR (Acceleration Skid Control), came as standard, as did self-leveling rear suspension.

The larger, 500SL brakes were fitted, and the suspension was lowered 23mm and the front and rear track widened slightly. To accommodate this, plus the 8Jx16-, rather than 7Jx15-inch alloys (a new eight-hole design, and shod with 225/55 tyres), the wheelarches were extended – among the few visual →



ABOVE
 Rear seat had to be split to accommodate the larger V8 transmission tunnel.

LEFT
 In four-and-a-half years 10,479 were made, a high number going to the USA.

RIGHT
 Porsche's Zuffenhausen factory where the 500E and E500 were part built.



! What goes wrong

Engine

The most likely problem with the M119 V8, which is a super tough unit, is a failed wiring loom, this from an era when they were made from biodegradable material. "At this age they will have all but biodegraded, and so are likely to need replacement," says Jay Manek of independent Mercedes specialist Mercland in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. "The symptoms are non starting, poor running, and misfires. The issue is easy to spot by looking closely at the wires where they plug into

sensors or components – the inner insulation will be cracking. There is an upper and lower wiring harness, and both should be replaced." Timing chains are duplex and rarely fail – but do not last for ever. "At over 150,000 miles, it would be good preventative maintenance to replace the chain, tensioner and guides," Jay advises. "It's not a cheap job, but this will ensure the continued smooth running of the engine. If you hear any rattle on start up, the chain should be replaced immediately."

Bonnet & grille

Some owners 'facelifted' early cars with the bonnet and bootlid from later models. Original, pre-1993 cars should have the larger chrome grille and recessed number plate panel on the boot lid, while later models have the chrome

grille inset into the bonnet and a flush number plate panel on the rear. Pre- and post-facelift cars show a number of other subtle differences including colour coded bumpers, different headlamps, rear tail lamps and indicators.

Cooling system

The vehicle temperature should never approach the red area. An efficient cooling system will keep the temperature well under the 100C mark even on the hottest day, and most of the time it

should stay at around 85C. Viscous fan couplings, radiators and water pumps are common issues, and Jay recommends using only genuine parts if replacing these essential items.

Front suspension

Front lower suspension arm ball joints should be checked for excess play. If worn out, replacement of the complete suspension arm is required, and this needs to be carried out in pairs. Jay strongly advises.

Bodywork

Front wings are made from heavy gauge steel and even if they exhibit some point bubbles, the rust can normally be ground back and repaired.

New wings are now nearly £1,000 from Mercedes and therefore well worth restoring if possible. Rust around the wheelarches is

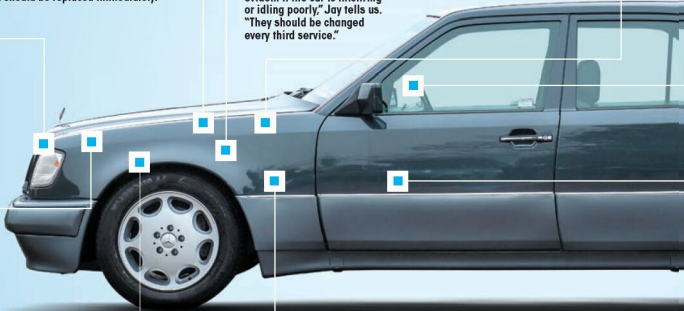
common; again, a good body shop should be able to repair any affected areas. It is important to examine the car thoroughly for rust on the underside.

Mass air flow sensor

The electronic throttle actuator and mass air flow sensor are two common failures, the former also suffering crumbling wiring and resulting in a lack of performance. The distributor caps and rotor arms, there being two of each, also fail regularly. "This will be evident if the car is misfiring or idling poorly," Jay tells us. "They should be changed every third service."

Air conditioning

Due to age, leaks in the system, especially from the condenser, are common, and electricals such as the fan switch components can fail. Weak or non functioning air con might be revived with a simple re-gas, but not usually.



"For the body re-engineering necessary for the 500E, Mercedes contracted Porsche to carry out the work and install the engine at its factory in nearby Zuffenhausen"



⇒ clues that this was a special W124.

The other identifiers were the more aggressive looking front spoiler, with halogen fog lamps, the slightly more pronounced side skirts necessary to marry up to the flared wheel arches, and of course the quietly impressive bootlid badge.

Inside, the most noticeable interior differences between the 500E and regular W124s are the seats. The front and rear seats have bigger side bolsters than the standard items, but aren't the normal Sportline sports seats; a sticker on their underside reveals them to have been made by Recaro. At the rear you see individual

Telltale signs of trouble

Biodegradable engine wiring loom may be crumbling

Faulty electronic throttle actuator and/or mass air flow sensor will cause an engine misfire

Worn distributor caps and rotor arms result in poor starting and running

Ensure the automatic transmission changes gear smoothly

Suspension lower ball joints at the front and rear wear out and become noisy

Front and rear wings are prone to becoming rusty if the air conditioning doesn't blow cold, the system's condenser probably needs replacing

ABOUT RIGHT
The M119 5.0 V8 feels and sounds beautiful and is quite reliable with it.

seats with a walnut capped stowage compartment between them, rather than the usual one-piece bench seat, an arrangement made necessary by the 500E's larger transmission tunnel. Fabric/half leather seats were standard equipment, with full leather an option, as were walnut consoles between the front and rear seats.

Some carpeting is thicker in the 500E. For the body re-engineering necessary for the 500E, Mercedes contracted Porsche to carry out the work and install the engine at its factory in nearby Zuffenhausen. The cars were then brought back to Mercedes for painting, after which they returned to Porsche for final assembly, before arriving back at Mercedes for checking and despatch.

Steering

The traditional Mercedes recirculating ball steering, though geared for a quick, three turns lock-to-lock, isn't communicative. But it should not have play at the straight ahead position, and shouldn't groan when lock is applied.

Wheel bearings

These should be checked for excess play. Front bearings can be adjusted, but rear bearings can't be adjusted and replacement is a labour-intensive job.

Rear suspension

The relatively complex rear suspension requires close examination, the pipework for the hydraulic self leveling likely to be corroded and possibly leaking. "Fitting some of the lines around the rear axle takes time and patience," Jay warns. Rear suspension spindles commonly need replaced, the symptom a bouncy and uncomfortable ride. The rear lower ball joints are also prone to failing, causing a knocking noise. "It's actually worth replacing the five-link rear suspension if it has not had any attention, as all the arms and links are available and not too pricey individually," Jay tells us.

Brakes

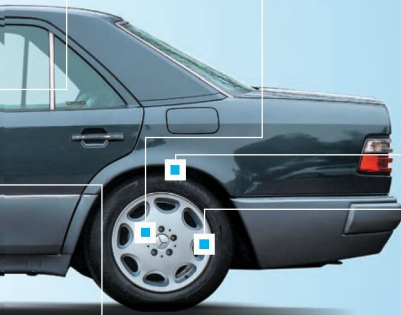
The 500E uses the brakes from the R129 SL. Early 500E's have 300mm front brake discs. Many owners complained of poor braking performance with this setup,

Jay reports, hence the factory's 1993 switch to 320mm front and 300mm rear discs, which improved matters. A fairly common upgrade among owners is to install the bigger brakes from the late R129 Silver Arrows model.

Transmission

The transmission is very strong, but over the years the gears and clutches can wear. Any potential buyer should check that the gear

changes are silky smooth, and that there are no harsh clunks when selecting gear. A fluid and filter change is advised every 40,000 miles.



ABOVE RIGHT

Customers were offered one gearbox, the R129 500SL's five-speed auto.

RIGHT

The front seats of course have Mercedes' multi-way electric memory adjuster.



ABOVE LEFT

Flared wings give a more purposeful stance, but are very expensive to replace.

ABOVE

This example is the E500, with the facelift nose and star moved to the bonnet.

Only minor mechanical changes were applied during production. In October 1992, after the V8's full throttle enrichment was taken out, power dropped 6bhp to 316bhp and torque 7lb ft to 34.7lb ft. As from February 1993 the front brake discs were increased in diameter from 300mm to 320mm, and the rear ones from 278mm to 300mm.

Along with all other 124s, the 500E

received a facelift in mid-1993, including a new bonnet and grille, with the three-pointed star now located on the bonnet instead of on top of the grille. The front and rear lamp clusters no longer had orange indicator lenses. This point also marked the badge changeover, the 'E' becoming a prefix rather than a suffix, from '500E' to 'E500'. A late batch of 500 cars, the E500 Limited, were built,

but none officially came to the UK.

These came in special silver paint and ran 17inch DTM-style alloy wheels with lower-profile, 245/40 tyres.

As an aside, during 1993 and 1994 a dozen of the top-spec E500 Limiteds found their way into AMG's hands, where the V8 was given an extra litre in capacity, the cylinder bore and stroke increased, while the cylinder-head ports and inlet manifolds were →

Milestones

October 1990 500E is unveiled at the Paris motor show as Mercedes' answer to the BMW M5

March 1991 The 500E goes on sale at £56,000, production for all markets to be left-hand drive only

October 1992 Engine is retuned, output now slightly lower at 316bhp/347lb ft, and mpg up slightly

February 1993 Front brake discs are increased in diameter to 320mm for added braking capability

June 1993 124 range facelift, star badge moved from the grille to the bonnet and car rebadged 'E500'

April 1995 Production ends, 10,479 produced



What a 500E/E500 will cost to buy

In the mid-2000s a 500E/E500 could be bought for £6,000 to £7,000, it being pretty much a 'forgotten' Mercedes. These days are long gone, below average to average cars now starting at £20,000, up to at least £5,000 on three years ago. Twenty-five thousand pounds is the threshold for a property usable example, but if you want a good if not perfect car that will give reliable service without first needing work, then from £30,000 will have to be the budget. The E500 Limited is the most sought-after model, and commands extra. In the last five years the stronger values of the best cars has resulted in more appearances at international classic auctions, such as those hosted by Bonhams, Gooding & Company and RM Sotheby's, and here a few cars have approached £80,000.

In view of their scarcity, it's hardly worth the effort searching for an official UK car. They differ only from European cars in having an mph speedometer and side repeater indicators. You'll see Japanese market cars that have been imported; they tend to be in good condition and with low mileage, but usually don't come with a service history or much if any paperwork.

Price range

£20,000-£25,000 Rough condition, 100,000 miles plus, with body rust and mechanical issues likely

£25,000-£30,000 Starting point for a 500E/E500 in reasonable condition offered by private sellers

£30,000-£40,000 Good if not perfect body/engine condition, for sale at a classic car dealer

£40,000-£50,000 Below 100,000 miles and in very good shape in every respect, preferably a Limited

£50,000-£80,000 Pristine low-mileage fully historic cars, usually sold at international auction

Typical servicing/maintenance costs

(Including labour, VAT)

Oil service **£235**

Major service **£425**

Gearbox service **£300**

Front brake discs and pads **£450**

Engine mounts **£800**

Distributor caps/rotor arms **£650**

Air conditioning condenser **£900**

Front suspension ball joints (both sides) **£800**

Four premium brand tyres (225/55ZR16) **£360**

Servicing and parts prices from Mercedes



"It's still just affordable, and reasonable value considering its pedigree and compared to what the more traditional Mercedes classics make"

⇒ polished to optimise gas flow. A reprogrammed ECU and sports exhaust were the final touches on a package that gave 375bhp and 428lb ft torque. The brakes were also upgraded. Mercedes-Benz quoted a 5.4-second 0-62mph time (0.6sec quicker than an E500), and the same electronically governed 155mph maximum speed.

It's thought more than 100 other cars were converted by AMG, and specifications no doubt varied. It's known that some five-litre cars have been converted independently, so can't be called a 'proper' E60. The 1995 E60 AMG pictured below, which is the genuine article, sold at an RM Sotheby's auction in London several years ago for £138,000.

Driving the 500E/E500

The 'Super Cab' feels as subtle to drive as it is to look at. The engine hums quietly, like any other Mercedes V8, giving no indication of just how fast it will propel the 1,700kg car; indeed, at low revs the 32-valve unit doesn't seem particularly responsive. But as the revs rise past 3,500rpm so does the urgency of the engine note, and the Benz takes on a whole new character, providing effortless power and torque for easy

overtaking, even without the gearbox being kicked down.

Mercedes wanted to give the 500E handling to match its performance, but at the same time avoid subjecting occupants to a rock hard ride. The chassis is firmer and less compliant than, say a 300E's, but roll is better controlled, and for all its bulk the 500E is agile. But it nonetheless feels luxurious and cossetting, and getting comfortable behind the wheel is easy, thanks to the electrically adjusted seats' extra support plus the better pedal positioning of left-hand drive.

Verdict

If you want a low-key hot rod with a star badge the 500E/E500 has it all: massive performance, silken refinement, comfort and space, and fuel consumption apart, moderate running costs. And it's still just affordable, and reasonable value considering its pedigree and compared to what the more traditional Mercedes classics make.

However, care must be taken when looking, as even the youngest cars are now nearly three decades old, with

the potential issues that sheer age throws up, rust and engine electrics waiting to catch out the unwary. But was there ever a more wonderful Mercedes-Benz saloon?

BELOW RIGHT
From early 1993, bigger brake discs were fitted to boost stopping power.

BELOW
One of the small number of E500s AMG converted to the six-litre E60 AMG.





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ALL THE CLASSICS

Need a quick, convenient summary and a guide to the value of the classic Mercedes-Benz model you are considering buying, or just want to find out the full picture of what models Mercedes has manufactured down the years? Over the next four pages we review every Mercedes road car offered from the late 1940s until the end of the 'young classic' era in the late 1990s, listing cars' key specification details and a likely top and bottom price

Values

The values given are based on asking prices in the UK and internationally, and also achieved prices at local UK and major international classic auctions. The lower figure in each price range is for a car that is complete and running, and excludes dismantled cars. The higher value is for one in exceptional original or restored condition, and includes the buyer's premium paid at auction



W136 170 (1946-1955)

The pre-war, 'suicide'-doored W136 saloon and cabriolet got Mercedes-Benz back in business after World War Two. The 170V saloon resumed in 1947, using a four-cylinder 1.7-litre engine, and was replaced by the 170S in 1949, with more power and a more spacious body. The last-of-the-line model was the 1953-1955 170S-V. W136s date from a time when German cars of any kind were extremely rare outside Germany.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,697cc/4/38bhp - 1,767cc/4/44bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Values** £15,000-£30,000/**\$20,000-\$40,000** **Article** Winter 2014



W186/189 300 (1951-1962)

Called the 'Adenauer' because German Chancellor Conrad Adenauer used them while in office throughout the 1950s, the 300 marked Mercedes' return to limousines of some pre-war grandeur. All models used a straight-six three-litre engine, which gained fuel-injection when the big four-door, also available as a cabriolet, was revamped in 1957 with an elegant, pillarless body, as seen here. Values are rising significantly.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,996cc/6/113-158bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 11,413 **Values** £20,000-£80,000/**\$25,000-\$120,000** **Article** Autumn 2017



W187 220 (1951-1955)

Part of the effort to increase the Mercedes-Benz model line in a short time, in order to boost factory production, the 220 introduced in 1951 was a six-cylinder car based on the 170V. Besides the four-door saloon which was the prime seller, it was offered in two-door coupe, convertible Cabriolet A and Cabriolet B form, and also as a four-door 'open tourer' model. Later cars had a more powerful 2.2-litre engine.

Engine/cyl/power 2,195cc/6/79-84bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 18,467 **Values** £20,000-£40,000/**\$25,000-\$50,000** **Article** Winter 2018



W188 300S/Sc (1951-1958)

This model began the Mercedes tradition of offering a two-door based on the top Stuttgart saloon, in this case the 300 'Adenauer'. Hand-built by specially selected craftsman, the 300S was super luxurious and correspondingly expensive, and was offered as the Coupe, the Cabriolet A or Roadster with a simpler hood arrangement. In 1955 it became the 300Sc, gaining fuel-injection for the three-litre engine.

Engine/cyl/power 2,996cc/6/148-173bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 760 **Values** £350,000-£750,000/**\$472,500-\$1.01m** **Article** Autumn 2015



W120/W121 Ponton (1953-1962)

Nicknamed 'Ponton' after the clever, easily removable engine and subframe assembly, these four-cylinder models were a technical milestone thanks to the 'three-box' design and integrated body and chassis offering much increased crash safety. It was built in 1.8-litre petrol and diesel form (180, 180D), later graduating to 1.9-litre units, and became Mercedes' first big volume model in the 1950s.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,767cc/4/40bhp - 1,897cc/4/74bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 442,963 **Values** £10,000-£30,000/**\$15,000-\$40,000** **Article** Spring 2014



W180/W105/W128 Ponton (1954-1959)

A year after the four-cylinder Ponton made its debut, the six-cylinder models followed, using the same front subframe and suspension, but with a new and more sophisticated rear axle, and distinguished by their longer nose and added exterior chrome trim. All used the same freshly engineered 2.2-litre overhead camshaft engine, the 220, 219 and 220S with a single carburettor, the 220SE using fuel-injection.

Engine/cyl/power 2,195cc/6/84-113bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 111,035 **Values** £15,000-£40,000/**\$20,000-\$50,000** **Article** n/a



W198 300SL (1954-1957)

The world's first supercar, featuring a fuel-injected engine and a lightweight spaceframe chassis, and the model that re-established Mercedes' engineering credentials after World War Two. Gullwings have long been the ultimate Mercedes classic of the post-war years, especially the 29 alloy-bodied examples built for racing customers, and it's authoritatively

estimated that 95 per cent of the 1,400 made survive. They have become so valuable – even in poor condition they are likely to fetch £1m or close to it – that their owners now rarely drive them other than at exclusive classic car events.

Engine/cyl/power 2,996cc/6/212bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 1,400 **Values** £1m-£3m (alloy bodied)/**\$1.35m-\$4m** **Article** Issue 1



W121 190SL Roadster (1955-1963)

While the 300SL Gullwing was Mercedes' 'halo' car, the similarly styled but smaller bodied 190SL launched a year later was intended as a far less expensive, volume model, and thus did without the spaceframe, instead borrowing the humble four-cylinder Ponton saloon underpinnings. Performance from the 1.9-litre, four-cylinder engine was thought modest even at the time, but the compact Mercedes roadster was nonetheless a comfortable and stylish tourer.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,897cc/6/104bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 25,881 **Values** £70,000-£200,000/\$95,000-\$270,000 **Article** Summer 2014



W198 300SL Roadster (1957-1963)

Introduced as a more 'civilised' replacement for the Gullwing, the 300SL Roadster of 1957 used conventional side-hinged doors and ran with modified rear suspension that was less nervous on the limit. The interior had a more luxurious feel, too. For many years Roadster values lagged behind those of Gullwings, but there is now evidence from intentional auctions that it is catching up on price on its coupe stablemate.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,996cc/6/237bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 1,858 **Values** £700,000-£1.5m/\$1m-\$2m **Article** Issue 4



W111/112 Coupe/Cabriolet (1961-1971)

The W111 two-door, built on the Fintail platform and unveiled in February 1961, offered Americans a near American-sized pillarless luxury coupe. It, and the cabriolet, started out with the staple Benz 2.2-litre six-cylinder engine which gave the 220SEb modest performance. But the W111 progressed through 2.5-, 3.0- and then 2.8-litre incarnations, culminating in 280SE 3.5 V8 guise, the model which, especially as a cabriolet, has risen in value above the rest.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,195cc/6/118bhp - 3,499cc/V8/197bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 35,931 **Values** \$50,000-\$300,000/\$70,000-\$400,000 **Article** Sum '17



W120 Ponton Bakkie (1955-1958)

The Ponton pick-up was built for one specific reason: to sidestep import duty on cars imported to South Africa, where Mercedes-Benz had a significant presence by the mid 1950s. Partially built-up Ponton chassis were delivered to various contractors there, who assembled and sold the Bakkie (meaning pickup), which qualified as locally manufactured. All vehicles were 1.7-litre petrol, although a number of them were later converted to use a diesel engine.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,767cc/4/51bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 400 (estimated) **Values** £20,000-£30,000/\$25,000-\$40,000 **Article** Summer 2017



W111/112 Fintail (1959-1968)

For the first two years, the Fintail was offered only in six-cylinder form, and the sole engine was a 2.2-litre, the best model being the fuel-injected 220SEb. This was displaced as the flagship by the three-litre 300SE of 1961 boasting a high specification including air suspension, and its own W112 designation. Six-cylinder models are recognisable from the fours by the vertical front lights, longer nose, and added brightwork.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,195cc/6/94bhp - 2,996cc/6/168bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 344,751 **Values** £20,000-£90,000/\$27,000-\$125,000 **Article** Spring '17



W113 SL Pagoda (1963-1971)

Made in 230SL, 250SL (1967) and final 280SL form (1968), the W113 SL is regarded as one of the prettiest of Mercedes' post-war roadsters. It's also still a surprisingly modern drive - provided the complex fuel-injection linkage is set up properly, and the suspension springs and dampers are in good order. A few 250SLs were built up in 'coupe' format, with no canvas roof and with a slightly extended rear cabin. The 280SL is the most sought after of the W113s.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,306cc/6/148bhp - 2,778cc/6/168bhp **Transmission** 4/5-speed **Number** 48,912 **Values** £40,000-£200,000/\$50,000-\$270,000 **Article** Spring '21



W180/128 Ponton (1956-1960)

Although they were derived from the six-cylinder Ponton saloon launched two years earlier, the elegant coupe and cabriolet models oozed extra style, and found much favour with affluent US customers. Built on a 120mm shortened chassis, the first models were the 220S Coupe and 220S Cabriolet using the Ponton's regular carburettored 2.2-litre engine, this giving way to the same unit with fuel-injection and more power in 1958, these cars badged 220SE.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,195cc/6/105-118bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 5,371 **Values** £70,000-£150,000/\$90,000-\$200,000 **Article** Summer 2018



W110 Fintail (1961-1968)

The Fintail in four-cylinder form defined the German car industry of the 1960s and was a vehicle with wide appeal, its spacious body just as suitable for family transport as it was for taxi work. Coming two years after the six-cylinder Fintail, the production life of these shorter-nosed saloons was divided into two phases: cars built until mid-1965 were the petrol 190c and diesel 190Dc, and thereafter the 200 and 200D.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,896cc/4/79bhp - 1,988cc/4/94bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 622,453 **Values** £10,000-£30,000/\$15,000-\$40,000 **Article** Autumn '17



W100 600 (1963-1981)

The 600's aero-engineered hydraulics, new V8 and perfect, Paul Bracc styling saw Mercedes-Benz displace Rolls-Royce as the maker of the 'best car in the world'. The biggest seller was the SWB 600, but LWB Pullmans and open-topped landaulets were available, too, and the bespoke nature of the car ensured that no two examples shared exactly the same interior specification. Prices have risen fast of late, especially of those cars with a famous/infamous former owner.

Engine/cyl/power range 6,332cc/V8/247bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 2,677 **Values** £70,000-\$400,000/\$90,000-\$540,000 **Article** Autumn 2013



W108/109 (1965-1972)

The W108 was launched to replace the six-cylinder, W111/W112 Fintail, which was felt not to be sufficiently distanced from the four-cylinder models to fully exploit the luxury market. It began modestly as the 2.5-litre twin-carburettor/fuel-injected 250S/250SE and three-litre 300SE, but the most memorable model was the W109 300SEL 6.3 of 1968, the world's first 'super saloon'. More V8 models followed to give added appeal in the US.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,496cc/6/128bhp - 6,332cc/V8/247bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 383,100 **Values** \$15,000-£90,000/\$20,000-£120,000 **Article** Autumn '21



W114 'Stroke 8' coupe (1968-1976)

The 'Stroke 8' coupe that was introduced almost a year after the saloon was slightly lower, but had the same wheelbase and overall length, leaving it with a very long boot. At the time some thought this did not look right, but it is now part of the car's charm. The two-door was built only as a six-cylinder, but in that respect shared the saloon's engines, the M110-engined 280CE introduced in 1972 usually the favourite model.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,496cc/6/128bhp - 2746cc/6/182bhp **Transmission** 4/5-speed **Number** 56,521 **Values** \$10,000-£30,000/\$13,000-£40,000 **Article** Spring 2015



W116 S-Class (1972-1980)

The W116 SE and stretched W116 SEL models brought with them the title 'S-Class', and defined that model's role as the default director-level car. The 350SE/SEL and 450SEL 3.5- and 4.5-litre V8s were the most delivered models, but the range was topped and tailed by the extraordinary 450SEL 6.9 and the six-cylinder 280SE/SEL and there was even a turbodiesel specially engineered for North America. The 116-series is increasingly attracting collectors.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,746cc/6/154bhp - 6,834cc/V8/282bhp **Trans** 3/4/5-speed **Number** 473,035 **Values** \$15,000-£70,000/\$20,000-£95,000 **Article** Spring 2017



W110/111 Universal (1965-1968)

Prior to manufacturing its own estate cars, Mercedes farmed the assembly work out to specialist firms, IMA in Belgium commissioned to produce Stuttgart's first 'proper' wagon, the Fintail-based Universal. This could be purchased in four-cylinder, short-nose W110 form as the 200 petrol and 190D/200D diesel, but, confusingly, also as the short-nose, round headlamp W110 230 (seen here) or the long nosed, vertical lamped W111 230S, both with six-cylinder power.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,988cc/4/54bhp - 2,306cc/6/118bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 2,750 **Values** \$15,000-£40,000/\$20,000-£50,000 **Article** Winter 2015



R107 SL (1971-1989)

Able to claim by far the longest production run of any SL generation, the elegant R107, with its lazy V8s and comfortably sprung suspension, was designed for North American tastes. The six-cylinder 280SL was introduced as an 'economy' model in 1974, and, at the other end of the spectrum, the 5.5-litre 560SL arrived at the 1985 facelift, but the 1971-1980 450SL achieved the highest worldwide sales tally, nearly 66,300.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,746cc/6/175bhp - 5,547cc/V8/227bhp **Trans** 3/4/5-speed **Number** 237,287 **Values** \$10,000-£100,000/\$13,500-£135,000 **Article** Sum 2019



W/S123 saloon/estate (1976-1985)

It is said that the 123-series was Mercedes' most thoroughly engineered model to date when it appeared in early 1976, and the level of attention to detail and build quality supports that view. The saloon came first, offered with a variety of petrol and diesel engines, while the estate model that followed a year later was almost a model in its own right, featuring a space-saving rear (self-levelling) suspension, and a tailgate that was part of the safety cell.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,988cc/4/54bhp - 2,746cc/6/182bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** built 2,588,657 **Values** \$10,000-£40,000/\$13,000-£50,000 **Article** Winter 2018



W114/W115 'Stroke 8' (1968-1976)

To replace the by then dated W110 Fintail, for 1968 Mercedes conceived the 'New Generation' or 'Stroke 8' W115 (four-cylinder) and W114 (six-cylinder) saloons featuring a much plainer body. A multiplicity of engines saw service, but the best one, many believe, was the free-revving, 2.7-litre, twin-cam M110, installed just before the 1973 facelift. At the facelift the front quarter windows disappeared, and a padded 'safety' steering wheel was fitted.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,988cc/4/54bhp - 2,746cc/6/182bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** 1,843,328 **Values** \$5,000-£25,000/\$7,000-£35,000 **Article** Winter 2017



C107 SLC (1971-1981)

Mercedes-Benz did not replace the W111 coupe/cabriolet with another S-Class-based design, instead building the next generation flagship two-door on the R107 SL, stretching the wheelbase 360mm but using the same interior and engines, 2.8-litre six-cylinder up to a five-litre V8. Recently collectors' interest in C107s has picked up, the homologation 450SLC 5.0 and 500SL built from 1978 to 1981 the most coveted.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,746cc/6/175bhp - 4,973cc/V8/237bhp **Trans** 3/4/5-speed **Number** 62,888 **Values** \$10,000-£50,000/\$13,500-£70,000 **Article** Spring 2018



C123 (1977-1985)

Unlike the preceding W114 coupe, the C123 used a shorter wheelbase and overall length than the saloon, lending a more balanced appearance. Pre-1980, the entry model was the carb fed 2.3-litre 230C, replaced by the more satisfactory fuel-injected 230CE, while the top model was the 280CE with its 2.8-litre M110 six with 183bhp. Two diesels were built for North America only, the 1977-1982 naturally aspirated 300CD and 1981-1985 300CD Turbodiesel.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,307cc/4/108bhp - 2,998cc/6/123bhp **Transmission** 4/5-speed **Number** 99,884 **Values** \$10,000-£40,000/\$13,000-£50,000 **Article** Winter 2018



W126 S-Class (1979-1992)

With its discreet lines and impressive technical and safety innovations, the 126-series consolidated the S-Class as the luxury car of choice, beating the BMW 7-Series on prestige, and the Jaguar XJ6 on build quality and reliability. The choice model is the 1985-on 560SEL, while the North America only turbodiesel 300SDL and 350SDL have a cult following. There are few signs of values picking up, so SE and SEL 126s are still big bargains.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,746cc/6/154bhp - 5,547cc/V8/296bhp **Transmission** 4-speed **Number** 818,036 **Values** £10,000-£30,000/\$13,000-\$40,000 **Article** Autumn '19



190E 2.3-16/Evolution/Evo II (1984-93)

Mercedes-Benz launched the BMW M3 chasing 190E 2.3-16, a homologation model, to legalise the W201 in motorsport. It began in 2.3-litre form with a Cosworth-designed 16-valve cylinder-head, and in 1988 at the W201 facelift became the 2.5-litre 190E 2.5-16. As DTM competition mounted, in 1989 it was developed into the Evolution, and the following year the Evolution II, this ultimate model now making huge prices.

Engine/cyl/power 2,229cc/4/175bhp - 2,463cc/4/232bhp **Values** £15,000-£40,000/\$20,000-\$50,000, Evo/II £60,000-£250,000/\$80,000-\$340,000 **Article** Sum '22



W124 500E/E500/E60 (1991-1995)

When Mercedes-Benz instructed Porsche to install the SL's five-litre V8 in the W124, an all-time great 'Q-car' emerged. Looking like any other W124 apart from wider wheelarches, the 500E (badged E500 from 1993) delivered a velvet punch while cossetting its occupants. It wasn't built in right-hand drive form, but it was sold in the UK nonetheless, and of late has gained in collectability, especially the E500 Limited, introduced towards the end of production.

Engine/cyl/power 4,973cc/V8/316-322bhp **Transmission** 4-speed automatic **Number** 10,479 **Values** £20,000-£70,000/\$25,000-\$95,000 **Article date** Spring 2019



C126 SEC (1981-1991)

After the C107, the S-Class-based SEC saw Stuttgart back in the luxury coupe market proper. Its glorious pillarless body and all the refinement of the 116 saloon made it very popular despite high purchase prices. Mercedes didn't bother with a six-cylinder version, the base model initially the 380SEC with its 3.8-litre V8. The most popular model was the five-litre 500SEC, but the one that collectors like most is the 1985 launched 5.5-litre 560SEC.

Engine/cyl/power range 3,839cc/V8/201bhp - 5,547cc/V8/296bhp **Trans** 4-speed **Number** 74,060 **Values** £20,000-£60,000/\$25,000-\$80,000 **Article** Autumn '21



124 saloon/estate/coupe/cabriolet (1984-97)

The 124-series kicked off in 1984 with the W124 saloon, the S124 estate following in 1985, and the pillarless C124 coupe brought glamour in 1987 in 200CE, 230CE and 300CE form. The two-door format was further exploited with the A124 cabriolet launched in 1991, Mercedes' first full four-seat drophead for 20 years. Some prefer the pre-1992/1993 cars, with their two-valve engines, and the star badge on the grille top.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,996cc/4/120bhp - 3,199cc/6/217bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** 2,729,120 **Values** £4,000-£1,600/\$5,000-\$20,000 **Article** Summer 2018



W/S202 C36/C43 AMG (1993-2000)

The original 'hot' C-Class sold by Mercedes-Benz used the M104 four-valve engine, enlarged from 3.2 to 3.6 litres and with bigger valves, while the chassis was updated. The C36 feels like a traditional tuned car with more harshness and less ride comfort. The C43 AMG that replaced it in 1997 added much refinement, its 4.2-litre V8 as smooth as it was powerful. The C36 was only ever a saloon, but the C43 was a wagon too. Both models are on the cusp of classic status.

Engine/cyl/power range 3,606cc/6/276bhp - 4,266cc/V8/302bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** 5,221/3,857 **Values** £7,000-£15,000/\$9,000-\$20,000 **Article** Winter 2018



W201 190E (1982-1993)

Returning to the 'small' car market to compete with the BMW 3-Series and Audi 80 proved a good move for Mercedes-Benz, considerably increasing Stuttgart's annual output. Initially there were two-litre carburettored and fuel-injected models (190, 190E), but diesels and a 2.6-litre petrol six-cylinder followed. Solidly built and without complex electronics, the W201 is DIY-friendly and inexpensive to maintain. This is now a Mercedes young classic rising in value.

Engine/cyl/power range 1,997cc/4/104bhp - 2,599cc/6/164bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** 1,879,629 **Values** £3,000-£15,000/\$4,000-\$20,000 **Article** Autumn 2018



R129 SL (1989-2001)

This SL model is regarded as the last of the 'young timer' generation, with traditional Benz styling and build quality. It was offered with a wide range of engines, from a 2.8-litre six (SL280) to a 7.3-litre V12 (SL73), but popular choices were the 500SL/SL500 and SL320. Lacking the R107's sweet looks, the R129 is only now appealing to collectors, the six-litre SL60 AMG (1993-1998) particularly sought after.

Engine/cyl/power range 2,799cc/6/190bhp - 7,291cc/V12/518bhp **Trans** 4/5-speed **Number** 204,940 **Values** £8,000-£50,000/\$11,000-\$70,000 **Article** Winter 2013



C/A/W/S124 E36 AMG (1993-1996)

The 124-series in its four body forms was among the first wave of 'official' AMG sold through Mercedes-Benz showrooms from 1993 and 1994. All used the 3.6-litre AMG tuned engine seen in the C36 AMG, while springs and dampers were similarly updated and a bodykit was optional. Production numbers were never released, but we do know the UK sales: 24 coupes, 14 cabriolets, 12 saloons, and seven estates. They command higher prices than regular 124s.

Engine/cyl/power 3,606cc/6/2276bhp **Transmission** 4-speed automatic **Number** undisclosed **Values** £20,000-£40,000/\$25,500-£50,000 **Article date** Issue 2

Classic classifieds



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W115 320.4, 33,000 miles, absolutely original concurs award winning car recently approved by SLShop, grey blue/blue Tex, manual, Blaupunkt radio, original service book, extensive history, spare unused, £24,500. Tel: 07818 420620. Goodwood **[EFW8]**



E240 Avantgarde 2002, 118,000 miles, two owners, silver, recent MOT, new shock absorbers, serviced regularly, smooth runner, glass tinted roof and sunroof, personalised number plate, £2,950 ONO. Tel: 07970 128889. Maidenhead **[EFW2]**



E320 1995, 121,000 miles, saloon, Sportline chassis, with original owners pack, MOT, good condition, wonderful car, £POA. Tel: 07733 218261. Romsey **[EFW4]**



500SEL 1986, 62,352 miles, very good condition, runs and drives, not being used, rust on underside of bonnet, light rust to bottom of doors, small hole in rear windscreen frame, £5,000. Tel: 07979 611071. Reading **[EFW6]**



C32 AMG Estate 2002, 98,000 miles, private reg MY 02 AMG, full service history, two previous owners, mine for 10 years, MOT, all AMG extras and all handbooks, only selling because of a move abroad, £7,999.00 OVNO. Tel: 07595 303215. Surrey **[CM41-22]**



R170 SLK230 2002, 53,000 mostly dry miles, brilliant condition, always garaged, good service history, long MOT, silver, everything works and no rust, complete with fitted luggage, owned by me since 2008, £3,995. Tel: 07808 829386. East Yorkshire **[CM41-24]**



S500 L AMG designo 2004, 98,000 miles, FSH, super high spec, rare, designo beige interior, DVDs, F&R heated/cooling seats, rear recliners, cool box, Bose, Comand, AMG kit, UV reflect glass, xenons, and much more, alloys and calipers refurbished, £8,950. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicester **[CM41-26]**



W116 280SE 1976, totally original, two owners from new, RHD with full leather interior, assembled and owned in South Africa, no rust, £10,990. Tel: 07808 528752. Northampton **[FGW7]**



190E 2.5-16 Cosworth 1990, 160,000 miles, 'H' registration, MOT to May 2023, full black leather interior, AMG rear window spoiler, MOMO steering wheel, Getrag 'dog leg' gearbox, AMG 18-inch alloys, Brands Hatch 2017 'Deutschefest' award winner, £27,500. Tel: 07771 511433. Cophthorne **[BCW12]**



E320 CDI 2003, 231,000 miles, MOT January 2023, generally good condition with a few scuffs, recently had boot lid and rear bumper replaced with slam bar due to reversing into wall, full M-B retail history with repairs through M-B as well, requires front driver side wish bone and ball joint, requires new space saver tyre, heat varies not entering the blower, consistently needs heater core flushing, car is 20 years old but has potential, all sensible offers considered, £POA. Tel: 07492 441709. UK **[BCW10]**



C140 CL600 V12, 1998, 90,000 miles, very rare, silver metallic, two-tone grey nappa leather, fully loaded spec, FSH, £££ spent over the past three years to bring this magnificent car to immaculate condition, drives perfectly, MOT to August 2023, £20,000 ONO. Tel: 07714 471014. Dorking **[BCW13]**



280SL 1985, Signal Red, Cream leather, excellent hardtop, 'Mexican Hat' alloys, this car is a project hence the price, £3,250. Tel: 01483 282830. Surrey [BC16]



SL350 AMG 2014, 39,500 miles, white with ebony leather piped in white, FSH, beautiful car in as-new condition, air con, sat nav, panoramic roof, always garaged with everything working perfectly, full AMG body and wheels, the perfect car to show and enjoy this spring, £27,950. Tel: 07860 487082. London [BC15]



190E 2.6 1990, full Cosworth bodykit, automatic, air conditioning (fitted by Mercedes Benz), full Cream leather, electric tilt/slide sunroof, front central arm rest, electric windows, service history, MOT until 8th March 2023, £POA. Tel: 01889 502630. Stafford [BCW14]



280SE 1972, 22,000 miles, four-door saloon, four-speed manual gearbox, ex-South African car, totally rust-free, original paintwork, unrestored example, beautiful car, MOT until May 2023 or will test now if required, £27,750. Tel: 07592 543631. North Yorkshire [BC17]



Unimog U1000 Turbo 1983, agri spec, three-way tipper, CAT2 linkage, rear PTO, air brakes, pickup hitch, engine rebuilt, new turbo, rams rebuilt, brakes overhauled, cab tips, £15,000 ONO. Tel: 07545 265075. Andover [FGW4]



SLK230 K 1999, 108,300 miles, recent oil and filter service, new MOT until July 2023, four excellent Continental tyres, designo blue/black interior with heated leather seats, original M-B audio 10 radio/CD can be provided if required, £3,300. Tel: 07730 437219. Horsham [FGW5]



R107 300SL 1987, 39,000 miles, absolutely original concours car sold by the SLShop, Nautic Blue/cream MB-Tex, original service book, extensive history, spare unused, £75,000. Tel: 07818 420620. Goodwood [FGW6]



E200 Kompressor 2004, 51,465 miles, my sister and I have owned this car from new, reluctant sale, FSH, gearbox service, good condition, registration not with car, £5,000 ONO. Tel: 07973 399578. Manchester [FGW8]



SL350 78,000 miles, black metallic, full panoramic roof, usual extras, mostly motorway miles as I used this for my daily commute (120-mile round trip), drives superbly, with FSH carried out by either M-B main dealer or M-B independent specialist, very good condition, £POA. Tel: 07903 027850. Oxfordshire [FGW1]

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W202 C200 AMG 2000, 128,000 miles, one owner, grey leather seats and interior all in excellent condition, bodywork very good, full servicing records held, MOT until March 2023, all in good running order, viewing available at any time, £4,000. Tel: 07974 381315. Abergavenny [FGW2]



W123 300D 1984, 55,000 miles, automatic, immaculate interior, ex South Africa via Portugal, outstanding paintwork thanks to repair work around rear window, the engine is perfect commensurate with mileage, £16,500. Tel: 07415 129117. Surrey [FGW3]



E300 TD Estate 1999, 234,000 miles, automatic, one owner from new, silver/grey leather, seven seats, ESR, towbar, used daily, now need garage space, £1,100 ONO. Tel: 07836 232969. Worcester [EFW9]

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CLK230 Kompressor Avantgarde 2002, Tiptronic, silver, only two owners in 20 years, FSH, Merc specialist last 10 years, MOT March 2023, no advisories, AMG alloys, two-tone leather, potential classic, sensible price, £1,490. Tel: 07710 198665. Halifax [EFW16]



CLK320 Avantgarde 114,000 miles, convertible, five-speed auto, FSH, MOT until April 2023, drives beautifully, roof works perfectly, great condition inside and out, £2,200. Tel: 07563 670417. Southampton [EFW17]



C240 Elegance 34,000 miles, 2.6-litre V6 auto, very low mileage, owned by a Mercedes enthusiast for 16 years, garaged and SORN for last 12 years, recent MOT and service, FSH, usual Elegance refinements including full leather, parking sensors, memory seats, £POA. Tel: 07463 983834. Buckinghamshire [EFW15]



2003 CDI Elegance 2003, 34,000 miles, MOT June 2023, FSH, in very good condition, £3,750 ONO. Tel: 07707 509448. Aberdeen [EFW28]



E220 1995, 96,000 miles, auto, convertible, two owners, all original booklets and stamped service book (8 stamps), low mileage and been cared for, drives very well and great condition too, heated beige seats, centre walnut storage box, latest Bluetooth stereo, airbags, electric mirror and remote central locking alarm, great value for a future classic with low miles, £9,995. Tel: 07961 808069. Wimbledon [EFW17]



C180 SE 2003, 56,000 miles, classic auto, two owners, service history, drives well, nice clean example with electric windows, cruise, alloys, electric mirror, air con, long MOT, bargain for low mile car, £2,495. Tel: 07961 808069. Wimbledon [EFW18]



S124 300TE 1990, 95,000 miles, three owners, Astral Silver with blue leather and walnut trim, extensive mechanical and bodywork restoration since 2017, massive history file, stunning condition inside and out, fitted with period three-spoke Brabus monoblock 17-inch alloys, £10,495. Tel: 07970 275792. Chichester [EFW19]

C240 1998/V reg in original condition regularly serviced, 80,000 miles from new with MOTs and all bills, in fair condition, new tyres, alloys, starts first time every time, sensible offers accepted. Tel: 07504 729127. Croydon [DE]



SL500 1998, 44,600 miles, black, grey leather, light wood, electric heated memory seats, xenon lights, panoramic hardtop, SH, MOT Nov 2022, £34,500. Tel: 01692 630441. Norfolk [EFW21]



350SL Sport 1980, 95,000 miles, automatic, owned for the last 28 years, Thistle Green, new soft top and original hardtop, well maintained both mechanically and bodywork, stainless steel exhaust, drives beautifully, £19,500. Tel: 01977 515575. Leeds [EFW24]



280SL 1983, 138,000 miles, Forest Green bodywork, parchment interior, MOT May 2023, hard and soft tops, history, super bodywork, recovered seats, beautiful chrome, steering overhauled, new brakes/calipers as needed, beautiful looking car and drives great, ready to be used, enjoyed and loved, £19,995. Tel: 07932 666491. West Midlands [EFW25]



E220 Cabriolet 1995, 179,000 miles, Tourmaline, FSH, last owner 22 years, £7,500. Tel: 01202 897938. Dorset [FGW31]



123-series 230CE 1985, 134,000 miles, MOT, drives well, lots of history, good tyres, stainless steel exhaust, needs work, £3,900 ONO. Tel: 07836 769915. Surrey [EFW26]



W140 S280 1998, five-speed automatic, fantastic condition, in Brilliant Silver with black leather interior and walnut trim, FSH 3x M-B main dealer, 2x M-B specialists, 2x other, three owners, kept off road in heated garage over winter, £14,950. Tel: 07887 777147. Lincoln [EFW27]



124 320CE Cabriolet 1993, 131,000 miles, very rare 5 speed manual, beautiful example of this classic in Midnight Blue, mushroom leather with blue piping, dry use only for last 14 years, regularly undersealed, new clutch and exhaust recently fitted, £12,500. Tel: 01348 874495. Pembrokeshire [FGW32]

E320 2002, AMG spec, FSH, 177,000 miles, white leather interior walnut dashboard, alloys, AMG extras, sale due to lack of use as working from home, 11 months MOT, private plate not included, suit Mercedes devotee, £2,350 ONO. Tel: 07523 195247. Porthcawl [DE]



W202 C280 Sport, 155,000 miles, v6 auto, FSH, 2 previous owners, great condition, drives beautifully, unmarked leather interior, new tyres all round, fantastically reliable tourer, nothing needs doing to it, ready to drive anywhere, £2,150. Tel: 07563 670417. Southampton [FGW34]



220E 1994, reg M988AG0, convertible, silver with black soft top, heated front seats, air conditioning £8,500. ONO. Tel: 01268 725128. Basildon [DEW12]



E320 CDI Elegance 2001, 94,943 miles, 3.2-litre diesel, five-speed automatic Tiptronic, two previous owners, MOT expired October 2018, not driven since, silver, black leather interior, £2,000. Tel: 07778 405300. St Neots [CDW5]



300SE 1965, automatic, RHD, in two-tone maroon and white top with a beautiful beige interior and wooden dashboard to compliment the ride, car starts and runs, air suspension in running condition, minimal rust, car can be shipped to the UK, £85,000. ONO. Tel: +65 8118 4948. Singapore [EFW3]



E-Class Cabriolet Sportline 1993, I have owned the car for 10 years, in storage for past three, FSH with plenty of bills, £POA. Tel: 07565 006735. Cambridge [DEW6]



W126 300SE 1988, immaculate, white with blue velour interior, 174,000 miles with a great history portfolio, recent mechanic overhaul including major service, brakes, seals and all works as required, long MOT, no expense spared, low owners and HPI clear, drives like a dream, only £5,450. Tel: 07870 963662. Leicester [CDW3]



230SL 1964, 144,000 miles, dark Bordeaux (573), Crema Tex, all necessary restoration work during my 12 years ownership noting Build Card, £74,000. Tel: (00) 353 872 401 819. Dublin [EFW12]

E320 AMG 2003, 177,000 miles, FSH, fully maintained and full running order, white leather interior, walnut dashboard, alloys, all AMG extras, sale due to working from home only 100 miles in last 12 months, MOT, many offers considered, £POA. Tel: 07523 195247. Porthcawl [FGW37]



320CE 1993, black, available with FSH (Automer in recent years) in SE10 (London) available, drove 10,000 miles on European ventures in year before lockdown (including down to Greece and back), but it has been serviced annually since, I bought K59MMM in May 2012 from CCB, £POA. Tel: 07711 761232. Greenwich [DEW10]

INTERNATIONAL MERCEDES



230E 1990, 21,338 miles, fully undersealed, new condition, original tires, toolkit, first aid kit, concurs apart from stereo, one UK owner, three previous in Jersey, Champagne metallic, unmarked wood and cloth, lifetime garaged, service, MOT on sale, stamped history, £14,995. Tel: 07824 476564. Thornton-Cleveleys [DEW1]



260E 1991, straight-six 2.6, legendary Mercedes engineering, MOT until November, bodywork needs attention, arches mainly, roadworthy UK example, recent service including both fuel pumps, needs a good home, £3,500 offers considered. Tel: 07521 227883. Nottingham [DEW21]



SL60 AMG 1998, 24,800 miles, very rare RHD, second owner, complete history, £POA. Tel: 0049 173 951 4613. Germany [CM41-21]



W201 190E 2.3-16 1983, unique, unit number 10 built, driven by two grand prix drivers - John Watson (in the Race of Champions, won by Ayrton Senna) and Manfred Winkelhock (the first owner after Mercedes Germany). This is one of 20 RoC cars and only four are known to still exist (Lauda, Senna, Schurti and Watson). POA. Tel: +34699 249085. Barcelona [CDW22]



560SL 1989, 96,500 miles, PS, PB, electric windows and door locks, 2 USB ports, new soft top, hardtop, very good condition, all new carpeting, \$30,000. Tel: +1 1714 299 9264. California [EFW1]

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Classic classifieds



190SL Coupe 1960, 115 200 engine upgrade and Weber carbs conversion, was in storage for 18 years, body and engine professional nut and bolt restoration done in 2010, driven 1000km since completed, Fire Engine Red (DB534), black leather interior, 1.6 million SA Rand (about £78,000). Tel: +27 (0) 83 235 1101. South Africa. [FGW40]



Breaking Mercedes C43 AMG W202, any part enquiry, £POA. Tel: 07908 624459. Manchester [BCW7]



Genuine 18-inch AMG alloys Fitted with Goodyear Eagle F1 tyres, staggered fit from 220-series S55 or 215-series CL55 but will fit other models, £999 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirck [BCW4]



190C 1964, four-door saloon, 1,897cc four-cylinder engine with 79bhp/113lb ft torque, four-speed manual gearbox, 0-62mph in 15.9 seconds. £POA. Tel: 00201222300041. Egypt [DEW4]

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M-B sales literature 1970s - 80s - 90s, all ranges, price lists etc., original brochures for any M-B car, email your requirements to 300slr004722@gmail.com or Tel: 01288 361022. Cornwall [BCW2]

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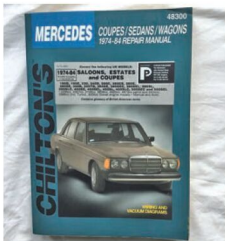
Genuine Mercedes W221 alloys Fitted with Bridgestone Potenza tyres, £500 ONO. Tel: 07850 187400. Ormskirck [BCW5]



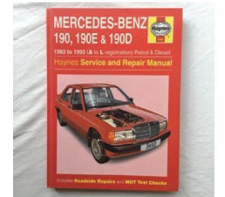
Full set of Mercedes Enthusiast magazines In binders, from day one starting from December 2001 to present, £POA. Tel: 07949 792278. Leeds [BCW6]



Front bumper for W201 Complete, plus front grille and right-hand headlamp, in excellent condition, buyer must collect, £200 ONO. Tel: 07901 567961. Dereham [CM41-16]



Chiltons repair manual For Mercedes-Benz Coupes/Sedans/Wagons, unwrapped, unused, unmarked, superb condition, rare book in UK, £25. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [BCW11]



Haynes workshop manual for W201 190 1983 to 1993, petrol and diesel models, unwrapped, unused, unmarked, superb, brand new condition, £18.75. Tel: 07399 359072. Canterbury [CM41-17]

1994 S124 seats and door cards Full set of five, in good condition, all are unmarked in blue fabric (362) with some wear on the driver's offside squab, collection from west Wales or buyer pays for courier, £300 ONO. Tel: 01239 820390. Pembrokehire [BC]



Cream cloth interior For 124-series CE Coupe, complete, from 1995 model, very good condition with all door cards and headrests, photo of driver's seat, no marks or tears anywhere, £150. Tel: 07752 532516. Chichester [CM41-19]

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MER 5L Personal plate, currently on Retention Certificate, ready to transfer, open to offers, £POA. Tel: 07778 333444. London [BC]

J55 CLK

J55 CLK Personal plate, dateless and a great numberplate for CLK enthusiasts, particularly the CLK 55 AMG, available on retention, £1,750 ONO. Tel: 07885 156001. Essex [EF]

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190 diesel or 2.5 190D Manual or auto, high or low mileage, with or without MOT, enthusiast private buyer, will travel anywhere in the UK, call any time and ask for Eric. Tel: 01516 390149. UK [BC]

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Dash for style

Mercedes-Benz instrumentation has evolved from the cathedral-esque '50s look to reflect tastes and function. Tim French looks at the classic designs

IMAGES James Lipman/Mercedes-Benz Group AG/Craig Pusey/RM Sotheby's

There are a number of easily recognisable aspects of a classic Mercedes-Benz that owners and aspiring owners love so dearly. The view down the bonnet to Stuttgart's tri-star, the large, thin (and sometimes with a chrome ring horn push) steering wheel, the tough but high quality seat trim, be it leather, cloth or MB-Tex vinyl, and switches and stalks that still operate crisply after decades of use.

And one of the most defining elements of a Mercedes interior is surely the instrumentation. It changes every decade or so, but has always been the perfect combination of great style and clarity. It had to look good, but also be easy to look at.

For Mercedes-Benz, the 1950s was the era of the horizontal strip instrument panel, then a modern styling feature. Models at the low and high end used it with a circular speedometer in the middle, the Ponton's presented in a neat and modest form, the 300S/SC's with copious chrome trim. In 1959, the Fintail saloon arrived with the instrument strip layout turned vertical, enthusiasts affectionately christening this novel thinking the 'thermometer', while the Pagoda unveiled four years later used an attractive combination of this and a large round speedometer and rev counter.

Possibly the design that we presently most readily associate with Stuttgart is the recessed black panel with orange markings, which by the early 1980s was uniformly seen on the W201, 123-series and 126-series. This took instrument precision and readability to a new level. BMW the only other car maker offering instruments so easy to assimilate. That format held sway until the early 2000s, when a move towards electronic information began. This was also the end of the oil pressure gauge as we knew it, previously always included on a Mercedes.

At the dawn of motoring, instruments were not fitted nor needed. Steam locomotive trains had smashed the 100km/h (62mph) barrier decades before Carl Benz's Patent Motorwagen took to the road in 1886, but with his new device maxing out at 16km/h (10mph), statutory speed limits were still for the future so monitoring pace wasn't thought necessary. But in 1909, with speeds increasing, a 15km/h (9mph) was imposed in German cities, and while only the pace of a trotting horse, marked the end of cars unable to measure their velocity.



There's no shortage of chrome on the 300S fascio.



Horizontal strip speedos prevailed in 1950s cars.



In 1959 the Fintail brought us the 'thermometer'.



Pagoda's chrome on painted metal works very well.



M-B's 1970/80s dash took clarity to a new level.




11,000rpm and 300km/h dials for the 300SLR.

"IN 1959 THE FINTAIL ARRIVED WITH THE INSTRUMENT STRIP LAYOUT TURNED VERTICAL"

Incidentally, the German for speedometer, 'tachometer', is derived from the ancient Greek terms 'tachys', denoting 'fast', and 'metron', meaning 'dimension'.

The speedometer had initially not been positioned in the driver's field of vision, only moving there during the early 1950s. The change made sense, because while motorists had been prosecuted for speeding since the late 1900s, the post World War Two period saw the arrival of the 'speed trap'. Speedometers in European market cars have, by law, under-reading speeds, for a 'safety' margin.

Speedometers did not become part of the racing car dashboard. For racing drivers, engine speed is more important than road speed, hence a rev counter is prominently placed. A speedometer would simply be a small amount of unnecessary extra weight, although experienced drivers able to multi-task can easily calculate how fast they're going by applying the road speed per 1,000rpm in each gear to the rev counter reading.

Perhaps the most famously used speedometer on a Mercedes-Benz is that fitted to the 300SLR Coupe of 1956 that Stuttgart's legendary car design boss Rudolf Uhlenhaut used. The car was effectively Mercedes' stillborn sports racing car evolved from the 1955 300SLR driven by Stirling Moss, and in becoming road legal in gained a 300km/h (188mph) speedometer to match the 11,000rpm rev counter. The needles in both instruments appear to have spent much time at north/south as the great engineer – also a tidy race car driver – went about his business, especially on one occasion when, late for a meeting, covered the 125-mile Stuttgart-Munich run in one hour. 

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