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**I**n 1954, Mercedes launched the SL – a range which has grown from sportscar to GT, and which has become acknowledged as the archetypal large convertible. Six generations on, the range is still with us – larger, more comfortable, far faster, but no less special than those early cars were. The SL is a landmark model – and we're celebrating it in this 132-page special issue.

On page 16 we put two of the most accessible models against each other in a head to head battle, while elsewhere we chart the origins and the unknowns from within the SL family. With 31 pages of SL content, this bumper issue is one to buy if you like your Benzes to have two seats and blue sky above.

But Mercedes is known for utilitarian service vehicles as much as it is for its sporting tourers. Taxis and ambulances formed a considerable part of the backbone of Mercedes sales, and Sam Mace and Andrew Roberts look at these two strands of Mercedes life within this issue too. So if high miles and high roofs are your thing,

pages 36 and 44 are for you.

As ever – if you have any feedback for us, or if you'd like to see your car featured in these pages, please write to us at the contact address on page 15 – or drop me an email at the address below.



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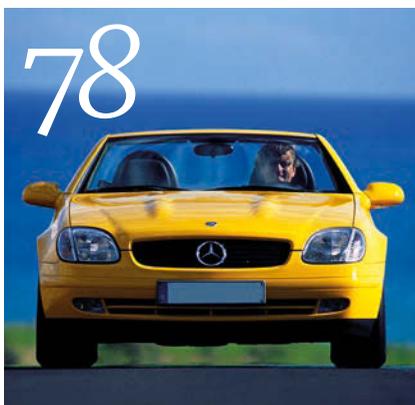
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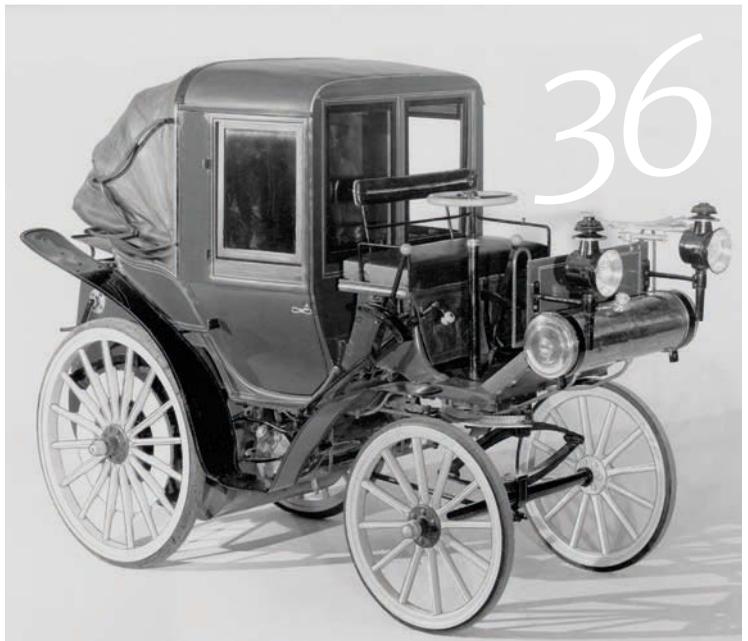
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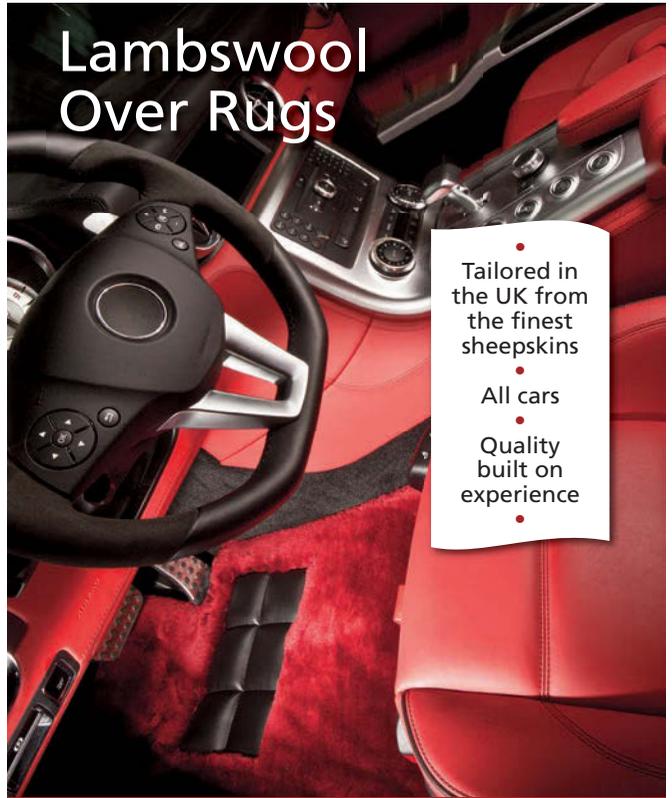


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## MoT Changes – what you need to know

**O**wners of Classic Mercedes models over 40 years old will no longer have to take their cars for an MoT in the biggest shake-up of the annual testing regime for several years.

New MoT rules came in on May 20, under which all cars over 40 years old no longer need an MoT in order to be driven on the road.

However, the rules have seen some backlash, with critics suggesting that older cars still need a thorough annual inspection, not least because they're much more likely to be prone to corrosion and deterioration of parts due to age.

Road safety charity, Brake, was especially critical of the move, saying: "The decision to allow untested vehicles to be driven on UK roads is simply wrong and flies in the face of good road safety practice.

"All vehicles, whether 'historic' or not, should be required to prove their roadworthiness.

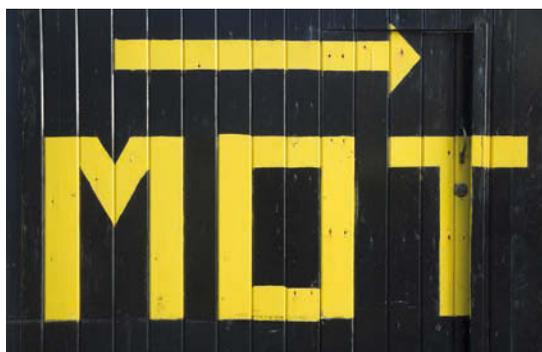
"We urge government to reconsider this decision and put all road users' safety ahead of the desires of a few 'historic vehicle' owners."

But the Department for Transport defended the decision from suggestions it was an unsafe move, by saying owners of older cars usually keep them in the good condition and don't use them regularly enough for an MoT test to be necessary.

However, owners wishing to take advantage of the MoT exemption do have to declare their vehicle as MoT exempt by filling in a form, available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/declaration-of-exemption-from-mot>

If the car isn't declared MoT exempt, then it must still be tested and owners risk a fine of up to £1,000.

When declaring an exemption, you



will be required to confirm that it has not been substantially changed. This process will be applied to pre-1960 registered vehicles, as well as newer vehicles in the historic vehicle tax class, and changes the existing MoT exemption rule by insisting that any vehicle which has received a new engine, chassis or body (such as a kit car or heavily modified car) needs to remain fully MoT'd as per the current

**Above:** You may not need a test – but your car must be roadworthy

rules.

Meanwhile, owners of newer cars may find it tougher for their vehicles to pass the test, with several new items being included in the annual inspection.

These include failures for non-functioning reversing lamps and illuminated engine management lights, which were previously exempt from testing. Other more obscure failure points include uprated high definition headlamps and 'dirty' brake fluid, though as testers aren't allowed to remove any inspection covers, this last one seems particularly difficult to manage...

The current advisory system is also being given a shake-up, with 'Advisories' and 'Fails' being replaced by 'Dangerous', 'Major' and 'Minor' faults. A car with minor faults will still receive a pass certificate, with the other two categories being equivalent to a current MoT failure.

## Classic Mercedes to be Bromley Feature Car

**M**ercedes-Benz UK will be supporting a specially-themed event at this year's Peter James Insurance Bromley Pageant of Motoring, where the brand's own classic 190E will feature as part of a special display to celebrate Father's Day.

The 190E will be part of a 'Fathers and Sons' special feature, alongside a new C-Class C350e. The feature will bring together modern cars and their predecessors to acknowledge a day that celebrates the UK's dads.

The Bromley Pageant of Motoring has long been regarded as the UK's biggest one-day car show, and this year returns to its home at Norman Park, Bromley, for the 37th year.

Over its lifetime, the Pageant has become one of the must-attend event for enthusiasts from all over the UK, Europe and beyond, not just the South-East, and it's easy to see why – with over 3,000 vehicles on display, club stands, the show's famous 'one-make' parking areas, trade stands, autojumble and all-day entertainment, the Pageant is not so much a car show as a classic institution.

Now back in the hands of its original owners, Kelsey Media – which holds by far the biggest portfolio of specialist transport publications in the UK – the event is once again in a position where it is owned and promoted by enthusiasts. And that means that, whatever vehicle you drive and whatever its condition, from crusty to concours, it will be welcomed with open arms.

One of the Pageant's most popular features, One Make Parking, is once again likely to be stacked out, with fans of many of the more popular marques coming together to form



**Above:** This 190E will be loaned to Bromley Pageant by Mercedes-Benz UK

single brand displays, with the Mercedes section always one of the best attended. The One Make Parking is open to cars in production prior to 1998, with a separate modern classics section set aside for cars introduced between 1998 and 2008.

With added attractions, a fantastic autojumble and live bands performing all day, the Peter James Insurance Bromley Pageant of Motoring promises to be a classic day out for all the family.

For more information, go to [www.bromleypageant.co.uk](http://www.bromleypageant.co.uk), or even better, come along to Norman Park on Sunday June 17th and find out for yourself – entry costs just £16 on the gate, or £12.50 if you hurry and buy tickets online at the above address – and kids go free!



## Brabus founder dies

The founder of high-performance Mercedes tuning specialist BRABUS, Bodo Buschmann, has died after a short illness.

Buschmann founded BRABUS in 1977, based in the German town of Bottrop.

In a statement, the company said: "The entire BRABUS family, employees, customers, and friends around the world will miss him forever, mourn the loss of a visionary and man of action, but above all the loss of the man, teammate and friend Bodo Buschmann, who put his mark on the tuning industry like no other."

"However, the model entrepreneur from Bottrop would not have been Bodo Buschmann, had he not set the right course for the future of his company long ago. The next generation of the family has already been taking on important responsibilities in management for some time."

His son, Constantin, who was previously a board member in charge of the company's marketing, will take over as the new CEO.

# NEWS



## Mercedes launches first ever pick-up

The first ever 4x4 pick-up to wear the three-pointed star had made its UK debut.

The new X-Class, which shares much of its architecture with the Nissan Navara and forthcoming Renault Alaskan, is the brand's first entry into the popular lifestyle pick-up sector, and will be sold through the passenger car and Mercedes-Benz Vans networks.

Power comes from a Renault-built 2.3-litre four-cylinder turbo diesel engine with two outputs – the single-turbo 161bhp X220d and the twin-turbo 187bhp X250d. A larger V6 diesel will appear later in the year.

All versions are capable of pulling a 3,500kg braked trailer and come with selectable four-wheel-drive.

The X-Class is priced from £27,310 plus VAT.



## Hip Hop blamed for spate of badge thefts

**O**wners of Mercedes-Benz models with the iconic bonnet-mounted three-pointed star are being warned to remain vigilant after a spate of thefts, which have been compared to the crime spree of the late 1980s inspired by a rap band.

Fans of the Beastie Boys stole Volkswagen badges after rapper Mike D wore one in the 1987 Fight for Your Right to Party video and now it seems that hip hop fans are targeting Mercedes-Benz models, with a huge growth in thefts, particularly in the North-West.

On one street along in the Prestwich suburb of Bury, Lancashire, three Mercedes-Benz models were targeted in a fortnight.

Greater Manchester Police Prestwich tweeted: "Numerous calls from Mercedes owners stating their front badge has been stolen.

**Above:** GMP advise vigilance over missing badges

"The only prevention we know of for this is to park as close to a wall or a car as possible.

"Most calls have come from the Gardner Road area so please be vigilant and report anything suspicious to 101."

Waves of badge thefts have also been reported in South London, Leeds and Birmingham.

The association with hip hop music is thought to be the reason behind the sudden upturn in three-pointed star theft, as the brand is known as the king of the rappers.

In total, Mercedes gets a mention in 1,740 different rap songs, more than Bentley, Ferrari, Porsche and Chevrolet, which were the top five brands according to a survey carried out by price comparison website [www.gocompare.co.uk](http://www.gocompare.co.uk)

"If there were a televised "Hip Hop Olympics," Mercedes-Benz would be the official sponsor," the website added.

## Rare cabriolet raises £53k at auction

A rare 1959 Mercedes 220SE Cabriolet sold for £53,000 at one of the UK's best-attended classic car auctions.

The W128 'Ponton' 220SE, which was imported from Hawaii earlier this year, caused auction fever at the Anglia Car Auctions Classic sale on April 14th, despite being offered for sale as a restoration project.

Finished in maroon over black with

burgundy trim, the car was originally registered in Germany, but was shipped to Hawaii by a collector in the 1970s, where the tropical climate has clearly contributed to its long-term survival. The car was in good running order at the time of sale.

It was among a selection of 24 Mercedes models offered in the sale, of which 22 were sold. For more on this sale, see our coverage on page 86

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# NEWS

## In Brief

China can't get enough of the Maybach brand, with Mercedes selling the S-Class under the luxury brand name to appeal to the nation's super-wealthy. But now it has gone one further with the introduction of the Vision Ultimate Luxury Concept at the Beijing Motor Show. With the silhouette of a luxury saloon built upon an SUV platform, it's a niche that perhaps didn't need inventing – but there's no accounting for taste... Plus, the waiting list for Bentley's Bentaga shows just how much demand there is in China for ultimate luxury SUVs.

A Mercedes-Benz S-Class first owned by Formula One ace Lewis Hamilton has gone on sale at a Yorkshire dealership, priced at £104,990. The S600 has extending footrests, massage seats and built-in TV screens, and comes with a 6.0-litre twin turbocharged engine developing 520bhp. It's being offered for sale by GC Motors, a luxury and supercar dealer in Harrogate.

Replacement panels for the iconic 300SL 'Gullwing' are now available for the first time since the model ceased production in 1957. Thanks to 3D printing technology, engineers at Mercedes were able to replicate moulds using the exact dimensions of the iconic sports car, meaning new wings, sills, bonnets and quarter panels are once again available ex-works, priced from £14,000.



## Last chance to buy a 'proper' G-Class

**T**he final versions of the iconic Mercedes-Benz G-Class have been announced, after the model's successor was unveiled at the 2018 North American Auto Show in Detroit.

The G550, G63 AMG and G65 AMG will be joined by a limited edition G65 Final Edition, of which only 65 will be made.

Priced upwards of £250,000, only a handful of these will come to the UK, powered by a twin-turbo V12 engine developing 630bhp and 1,000Nm of torque.

It's a far cry from the original 1979 G-Wagen, with which the final edition shares its architecture. When it first appeared, the G-Wagen, which was short for Geländewagen, or 'off-roader', was initially developed primarily for military and emergency services use, with civilian versions being aimed at utilitarian purposes. They had vinyl or cloth trim and a crude, sparse cabin.

The G65 AMG Final Edition, by contrast, gets Jacquard leather, with seat side bolsters in a carbon-fibre

**Above:** G65 Final Edition to be priced upwards of £250,000

material with light brown topstitching. It also gets carbon-fibre trim elements with decorative stitching in bronze, Edition lettering hand-engraved into the grab handle and floor mats with leather edging in light brown and black, with an AMG Performance steering wheel in black nappa leather featuring a flattened bottom section.

Outside, the Final Edition sports 21inch twin-spoke alloy wheels in bronze, silver brake callipers and AMG Sport trim strips.

Additional highlights are matt bronze details, such as the underside guard, bumper trim and exterior mirrors, along with an Obsidian Black spare wheel carrier.

The radiator grille is bronze with a black mesh insert, with mat black running boards and tailpipes.

The new G-Class, which shares many of its styling features with the existing model but is built upon the very latest Mercedes-Benz chassis architecture, is set to go on sale at the end of 2018 and will mark a significant technological leap forward for the iconic SUV, while retaining its classic character.



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# NEW PRODUCTS



## Impact wrench

**Price:** From £443.94  
**From:** [www.sealey.co.uk](http://www.sealey.co.uk)

Sealey's new CP2612 and CP2634 cordless impact wrenches are powerful, compact and suitable for removing the most stubborn wheel nuts in the workshop or even on the roadside, with no compressor or mains source required. They produce torque of up to 680Nm (500lb.ft) and 816Nm (600lb.ft) respectively, and feature a variable speed switch for added control. Incorporating a forward and reverse control integrated into the housing for ease of use, both wrenches are powered by a 26V 4Ah Lithium battery which retains its charge over long periods of time, so it's always ready to use, and is also supplied with a 90 minute mains charger.

## Clarke Tool Chests

**Price:** From £137.99  
**From:** [www.machinemart.co.uk](http://www.machinemart.co.uk)

This professional quality, heavy duty, lockable CBB209B tool chest and CBB217B cabinet are ideal for use in an automotive or home workshop and perfect for keeping tools secure and tidy. Main features include extra large drawer pulls with protective anti-slip drawer liners, a reinforced base, ball bearing runners for super smooth sliding action and extra double wall steel construction.

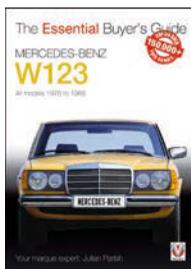
Full-length piano hinge lids aid smooth opening and a set of five-inch industrial chrome wheels feature an easy to use footbrake. Rubber grip side handles and extra large chrome steel side handles for make movement easy and a safety 'push-lock' design prevents drawers accidentally opening when tilted. All the drawers lock simultaneously when top lid is closed and a protective top mat prevents the top chest from moving and provides a non-slip working surface

These tool chests and cabinets are available in a range of colours, including Blue Line, Industrial Black and Gold as well as Clarke Contractor Yellow. The CBB209B nine drawer chest is available for only £137.99 inc. VAT and the CBB217B seven drawer mobile cabinet is available for only £287.98 inc. VAT.



## Mercedes-Benz W123 – All models 1976 to 1986

**Price:** £12.99  
**ISBN:** 978-1-845849-26-9  
**From:** [www.veloce.co.uk](http://www.veloce.co.uk)



If you're looking to buy a W123 don't even think about it before you've read this book – or our Buying Guide in the next issue.

It includes an evaluation section, where you can grade any potential purchase from 1 to 4 in a number of key areas. The higher the score overall, the better the car – and there's a table at the end to advise whether to buy or avoid cars based on their scores. With everything covered, from optional extras to body rot and more, Julian Parish's extensive knowledge of the model means it's hard to go wrong.

## RetroSound stereos

**Price:** £315  
**From:** [www.moss-europe.co.uk](http://www.moss-europe.co.uk)



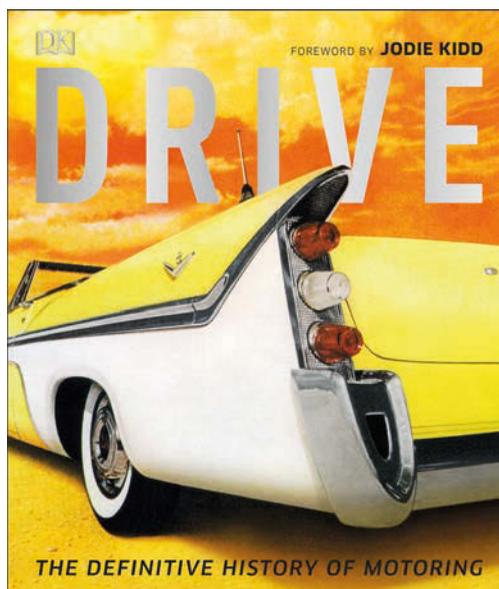
Modern technology offers loads of options for someone wanting to add a modern sound system to a classic but most of them will come in the standard DIN format, meaning

ugly holes need cutting in the dash of older classics designed for the smaller spindle-fit radios.

Moss Europe has solved the problem with its RetroSound units which use the traditional spindle mount and offers DAB radio as well as AM/FM reception, plus a built-in Bluetooth connection, iPod/iPhone compatibility, USB input and aux input sockets.

Prices start at £315 for the San Diego unit in black or chrome, with a DAB aerial adaptor at £18 and a hidden amplified aerial at £27.

Your guide to the best new toys, tools and tomes



## DRIVE: *The Definitive History of Motoring*

**Price:** £25  
**ISBN:** 9780241317662  
**From:** [www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com)

New from DK is Drive – marketed as the definitive history of motoring. While its size, celebrity foreword and bright cover might have you thinking this is a coffee-table car book and not suited to real enthusiasts, the content is genuinely informative on a wide range of motoring topics from the inception of the car to the present day. It's not the most in-depth book out there, but the breadth of topics covered is second to none. Definitely one to buy.

## Smart Box jump starter



**Price:** From £72  
**From:** [www.workshopplus.co.uk](http://www.workshopplus.co.uk)

Gone are the days when a hefty booster pack (essentially a car battery in a box) had to be lugged about to revive non-starting classics, since the Smart

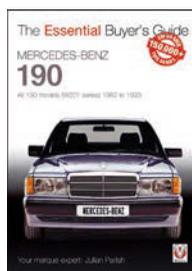
Box uses modern battery technology and is small enough to fit in your back pocket, yet packs enough power to start a 500SEC.

It's hard to see how this little marvel can be improved, but we were recently sent the newly upgraded Smart Box 6S to test which boasts several refinements including a greater starting capacity and higher-capacity 'smart' leads which will make the unit more easily able to start vehicles with heavily discharged batteries.

Like the older Smart Box, the unit comes with a built-in powerful LED torch, plus a USB socket and suitable connectors for charging mobile devices which makes it ideal for camping trips and other outdoor activities. The Smart Box itself can also be charged using the supplied car charger or mains charger.

## Mercedes-Benz 190 – All 190 models (W201 series) 1982 to 1993

**Price:** £12.99  
**ISBN:** 978-1-845849-27-6  
**From:** [www.veloce.co.uk](http://www.veloce.co.uk)



Another excellent guide from Julian Parish, covering every 190 model up to and including the 16v cars. Covering everything from

ideal specifications for resale through to things to check when buying and options to avoid, the book is vital for anyone looking to buy a 190 if they're looking for the best. An excellent read, and at £12.99 there's really no excuse not to buy it. Like the W123 book, there's a comprehensive evaluation and grading system included for those keen to buy. To see what happened when we bought one turn to page 52...

## Ring Xenon150 bulbs

**Price:** £26.99  
**From:** [www.ringautomotive.com](http://www.ringautomotive.com)

Driving at night can be challenging and to improve visibility Ring continues to set the standards in vehicle lighting with its Xenon150 performance halogen bulbs. The filament on these bulbs has been engineered to be shorter, with a tighter wound coil to produce a brighter, whiter light output and an 80m longer beam pattern, allowing other road users to be seen more clearly. At 3700K, the light output is closer to daylight, providing better reflections from road markings and signs.

Xenon150 bulbs are available in popular H4 and H7 references, which are street legal and are a simple upgrade from standard bulbs.



# CHARLES IRONSIDE

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Alton, Hampshire, UK (40 mins from J10 M25)



**190E 1.8 litre Saloon**, 1992J, one owner from new, 4-speed auto, 28,000 miles, fmbsh, signal red grey check cloth, sunroof, ABS, centre armrest, front electric windows, front seat nets. Absolutely in showroom condition..... **£9,950.**



**500 SE**, 1991J, 4-speed auto, 67,000 miles, fmbsh, astral silver metallic, navy leather, aircon, cruise, electric sunroof, electric steering column, electric heated memory seats, otc, headlamp wash/wipe, illuminated vanity mirrors, Blaupunkt radio/cassette. One of the best examples for sale.....**£14,950.**



**E55 AMG (210-series)**, 200X, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 73,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, dual tone leather black & ivory leather, climate control, cruise, electric steering column, electric heated orthopaedic memory seats, Command radio/single CD/SatNav/CD Changer/hands free telephone, anti-dazzle rear view mirror, headlamp washers, 18" AMG 5 spoke single rim alloys. AMG bodystyling, front & side airbags, front & rear parking sensors, birds-eye wood veneer etc. A fabulous machine.....**£12,950.**



**300 SL**, 1988E, 4-speed auto, 4 owners, 80,000 miles, fmbsh, diamond blue metallic, navy cloth, dark blue soft top, hard top, factory aircon, cruise, rear seats, driver's airbag, wind deflector, illuminated vanity mirrors. A stunning example ..... **£34,950.**



**300 SL**, 1990G, 3 owners, 4 speed auto, 86,000 miles, fmbsh, astral silver, grey leather, black soft top, factory fitted hard top, heated seats, cruise control, illuminated vanity mirrors, otc. Show condition ..... **£29,950.**



**300 TD**, 1992K, 3 owners but one driver from new, 4-speed auto, 81,000 miles, fmbsh, barolo red, mushroom cloth, factory aircon, 7 seats, electric sunroof, illuminated vanity mirrors etc. A very nice original example..... **£7,950.**



**190E 1.8 litre LE**, 1993K, 3 owners, 4 speed auto, 53,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver, black check cloth, electric sunroof, driver's airbag. Large history file with original LE certificate ..... **£7,950.**



**SL 500**, 2002/52, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 33,000 miles, fmbsh, brilliant silver metallic, anthracite leather, electric retractable panoramic glass roof, climate, cruise, electric steering column, electric heated memory seats with lumbar support both sides, ESP, ash black veneer, Command with single CD/radio/SatNav/mobile hands free and 10 CD changer, headlamp washers, wind deflector, wood/leather steering wheel, 18" AMG alloys ..... **£13,950.**



**A160 Elegance**, 1999S, one owner from new, 5-speed auto/tiptronic, 23,000 miles, fmbsh, moonlight silver, grey cloth, aircon, front & rear electric windows, full length electric louvered sunroof, ESP, front & side airbags etc. A practical and economical little Merc..... **£3,950.**



**500 SL**, 1986D, 4-speed auto, 59,000 miles, fmbsh, pajett red metallic, mushroom leather, original black soft top, factory fitted hard top, factory aircon, cruise, heated orthopaedic seats, rear seats, otc, headlamp wash/wipe, Blaupunkt radio/cassette. Just serviced and ready to go....**£49,950.**



**E320 Coupe**, 1996N, 4-speed auto, 20,000 miles, fmbsh, azurite blue metallic, mushroom leather, factory aircon, electric sunroof, electric heated seats, sports chassis, otc, headlamp wash/wipe, twin airbags. Out of the Box..... **£24,950.**



**500 SL**, 1980W, 4-speed auto, 10,000 miles, fmbsh, light ivory, dark brown leather, dark brown soft top, factory fitted hard top, factory aircon, cruise, rear seats, headlamp wash/wipe. A very rare find..... **£59,950.**

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## Letters

Write to us at Letters, Mercedes Driver, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG, or email [md.ed@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:md.ed@kelsey.co.uk)



### Shetland surprises

Just a quick note to congratulate you on your fantastic magazine. I have read both issues and really like the content, especially your picture of my Diamond Blue 280CE on page 89 of issue 2!

My Mercedes addiction means I have a few examples of the breed... The 280 CE in your picture won its class at last year's concours (2 previous family owners and 46k miles) and I have a couple of other Mercs in great condition.

It may be worth your while attending the Shetland Classic car show at some point. The long dark northern winter nights in result in lots of shed tinkering time meaning Shetland punches well above its weight in classic cars. Among the regular attendees are the 1978 London motor show 280CE and a one family owner box fresh 1984 230E with just 9k

miles...

Keep up the great work!

Best regards,

David Sinclair, *by email*

### Thanks for the W140.

I just purchased Issue 1 and loved it. I am an aficionado of various makes, two-wheeled and four and enjoy periodicals in equal variety. I have felt that for those of us with a special affection for Mercedes Benz cars, there is definitely room for more. Thank you, indeed, for introducing Mercedes Driver. I do hope the title is indicative of the focus moving forward, with emphasis on owning, maintaining, engineering history and technical analysis, as well as driving and buying. Great stuff!

I was particularly pleased to see the section on the W140 in the first edition. I'd say here, too, in the USA

**Above:** The W140 S-class is loved on both sides of the Atlantic

(where gigantic size is apparently not a factor with literally anything) the appreciation of the W140s incredible construction and ability to cosset is on the rise. Thanks for being bold enough to include this fine chassis at the very start.

Robert Parsons, *via email*

### Expert applause

I've just finished reading the first issue of Mercedes Driver and wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed it. I've been working as a Mercedes Benz tech at the dealership level for 20 years in London, Ontario, Canada and still love seeing the classics come in. Great articles and wonderful photos. Looking forward to many more issues!

Thanks for publishing such a good read!

Dawson Hart, *Ontario*

UPFRONT

# *SL* Shootout

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R107 or R129 – which classic convertible is best?

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**A**rguably the most famous and iconic classic open Mercedes is the SL – and let's be honest, when the weather turns dry (the closest we have to an English summer) we like to put the roof down. And with Pagoda prices strong and strengthening, the enthusiast with perhaps £10000-20000 to spend is more likely to consider the R107 and R129 models instead. This pairing, which saw the SL brand through over three decades of production, span from 2.8-litres to 6.0, six cylinders to twelve, with a healthy number of V8s between. They see the SL through from its last days as a sports car following the sporting Pagoda, through into GT-car aristocracy by the turn of the millennium.

We love both here at Mercedes Driver – but we've been lucky enough to get hold of one of each for the ultimate summer fun photoshoot. With that in mind, if we had the money - which would we take home?







## R107 v R129

Words and Pics: Sam Skelton



# The Classic Choice

**L**aunched in 1971, the R107 had a tough act to follow. The Pagoda had become the darling of the smart set; at home in Chelsea or Monaco and owned by such celebrities as Audrey Hepburn and Sophia Loren. And while it had been launched in 1963 as a sports car; a smooth yet swift followup to the 190SL, the larger engines and automatic gearboxes of later models meant the SL had become a GT by the time of the 280 in 1967. The R107 would build on this; launched with the 3.5-litre V8 of our test example, it was a concerted move upmarket for the drophead Benz.

Our 1979 test car might be from midway through the production run, but mechanically it's just as those early models were. And make no mistake, it's a GT car – not a sports car. Soft, yielding suspension, plenty of lean, a quiet engine and an automatic gearbox leave you in no doubt – it may look dynamic, but in truth it's little different to the contemporary saloons underneath.

The R107's twenty year life saw myriad versions, ranging from a 2.8-

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**1979 350SL**  
– value £30k  
– £81.03  
or £99.03  
with Agreed  
Valuation

\*Quotes based on:  
45 year old male,  
marketing manager,  
access to another  
car, no claims or  
convictions, club  
member, 3000  
miles per year, no  
modifications, living  
in SP2 OHL.

**01480  
587 006**

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**"This is how  
a convertible  
ought to be  
in the 21st  
century."**

litre straight six (later 3.0), through the all-iron 3.5-litre and 4.5-litre V8s of the 1970s, to a pair of all-alloy replacements with the 380 and 500SL models. There was even a 5.6-litre variant using the engine from the W126, for those who wanted the wind in their hair to resemble a gale.

R107 prices have firmed up considerably over the last five years or so. Back then £10,000 might have secured one of the nicest examples in regular use; today a car like that might command nearer to £20,000-25,000. And as Pagoda values continue to rise, R107 values expand to fill the gap. 21

## How does it drive?

This is how a convertible ought to be in the 21st century. With ever-worsening road surfaces, we don't want firm suspension and big wheels. Long travel springs, nice damping and light steering are far more desirable traits – more civilised, more relaxed. Not only does the muted V8 pull well, but it sounds good – and it's coupled to a well-behaved automatic box with well-spaced ratios. And it feels special, in a timeless way despite the very Seventies colour scheme. The soft seats support you in the way that only old Merc seats can, everything is to hand, and while some of the soft touch plastics are alien to those used to modern finishes, they're just what an old Mercedes should have. The R107 might be forty seven years old in design, but it feels more relevant today than it ever did.



## R107 v R129

# Smooth Operator

**L**aunched in 1989, the R129 SL had a tough act to follow. Its predecessor had been on sale for the best part of two decades, and had been adored the world over as a symbol of wealth, good taste and sense. The new car had to retain all these virtues, while bringing the SL brand kicking and screaming into the 1990s. Later models featured more toys, and in the smaller-engined models better weight distribution courtesy of a V6 – but the ones we like best at Mercedes Driver are pure original examples like the 1991 300SL we have here on test.

Despite the fact that – if anything – the ride is even better, the R129 was a more sporting SL than its predecessor. It's less like a two-door saloon with the roof cut off, despite the fact that under its svelte body lies the cut-down platform, essentially, of a W124 300E. Perhaps this shows how far forward saloon car technology had developed in two decades? Regardless, it ensures that the R129 still feels modern in 2018.



**1991 300SL**  
 – value £7k  
 – £88.85 or  
 £106.85  
 with Agreed  
 Valuation

*\*Quotes based on:  
 45 year old male,  
 marketing manager,  
 access to another  
 car, no claims or  
 convictions, club  
 member, 3000  
 miles per year, no  
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**"It's a world apart from the R107 ."**

Through its fourteen year life the R129 was available with 12 and 24 valve straight sixes of 2.8, 3.0 and 3.2 litres, a pair of 2.8-litre and 3.2-litre V6s, a couple of powerful V8s and even Mercedes' glittering V12 in the SL600. Most collectible today is the rare SL60 AMG, with its enlarged V8 this was capable of 0-60 in just 5.6 seconds.

SL60 values, needless to say, outstrip standard models by a considerable margin... R129 values in general are firming up after years seen as the "cheap one", as R107 values rise to meet Pagoda prices, the R129 has become the car for investors to buy now and save for later. As demand becomes greater, inevitably values will rise further. »

## How does it drive?

It's a world apart from the R107 – and you can see how those late R107 buyers in 1989 might have felt a little short-changed had they the chance to experience an R129. There are clear hints of the W140 S class in here, most notably the offset centre vents, complete with miniature storage box atop them. And behind the wheel, again it feels very like its saloon counterparts – yet while the architecture is W124 derived, it doesn't share the 300E's nose-heaviness. This is a far better balanced car than the 300E, and leagues ahead of the R107 in agility. Its wider track means that it can corner flatter, while retaining the smoothness of the older car over bumps. The steering feels slightly sharper too – not to the point of becoming sporting, but just enough to feel as if progress has been made over the earlier car. And while our test car loses two cylinders to the R107's eight, somehow the straight six feels more appropriate in here. It's a smooth operator...







## R107 v R129

# Conclusion

**W**e love both the R107 and R129 here at Mercedes Driver – but if we could only take one of this pair home we'd be taking the R129. It's not that the R107 is a bad car by any means, but it feels its age in this company. It's undeniably a product of the early 1970s, even though it's an excellent example of its era – where the R129 feels decades ahead. The later R129s feel even more up to date, but we prefer the elegant simplicity of this early example – the non airbag steering wheel, the analogue trip and odometer, and numerous other touches just make it feel a little bit more special. And while we might hesitate to use a really nice R107 on a daily basis, even the best R129s are unlikely to suffer too badly from regular use.

**"An R129 SL could be one of the smartest investments of 2018."**

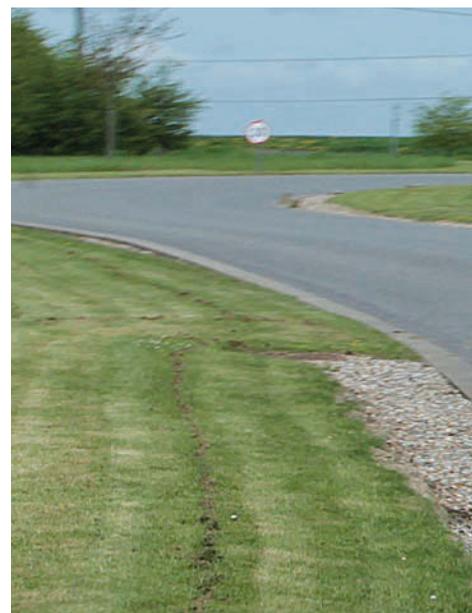
R129s are one of the bargains of the classic Mercedes world right now, too. It's still possible to find an early 12v 300SL, or a high mileage 280/320, for under £5000. Given that all Mercedes SLs appreciate in value (it's barely been five years since £10,000 would have got you a good R107) this could be one of the smartest investments of 2018. »

## Alternative choice

Don't fancy the R107 or the R129? Then there is a third way. The R230 SL, launched in 2002, makes for an intriguing alternative to its predecessors. SBC braking units can fail (as discussed in issue 3), and check for anything amiss with the complex folding roof mechanism. Prices start from as low as £5000, but we'd spend £12,000-15,000 on a good SL350.



THE FACTS	Mercedes R107 350SL	Mercedes R129 300SL
Engine	3499cc, V8, SOHC	2962cc, 6-cyl, SOHC
Power	197bhp @ 5800rpm	188bhp @ 5700rpm
Torque	211bhp @ 4000rpm	192bhp @ 4800rpm
Max Speed	130mph	142mph
0-60	8.8sec	9.0sec







# Buying an R107

**P**re-1985 cars can suffer with quite horrific rust; something rectified by the introduction of a galvanisation process on later models. Check the scuttle panel and the heater box, as these are particularly worrisome areas to find corrosion and are R107 trouble spots. Rust can also form around the ABS pump mountings on the right chassis leg.

Drain holes can clog and turn the drains into water traps; likewise the sills can be afflicted. Otherwise most body issues are likely to be cosmetic; stone



chips can lead to unsightly blemishing around the nose, while dings and dents may have been rectified poorly during the R107's long phase of relative bangerdom. It's only now these cars are appreciating that they are receiving the sort of care they deserve – so ensure your purchase isn't full of filler or coated with poor paintwork.

Suspension bushes wear, and few cars have had replacements. Check the subframe bushes, as these can often be responsible for what feels like a snatching gearbox as you select R or D.

## Thanks

Our thanks to Hilton and Moss for supplying the 350SL and 300SL used in our photographs, and for the buying advice on these pages. Hilton and Moss can be contacted on 01279813907, or via [www.hiltonandmoss.com](http://www.hiltonandmoss.com).



# Buying an R129

**T**he SL is one of the models afflicted by Mercedes' 1990s biodegradable wiring loom issues. Cars built from 1992-1996 can suffer from degraded looms, so it's worth checking that there's a bill in the history file for a replacement. Instrument clusters can also fail leading to dead instruments, but they can be easily repaired by specialists and so shouldn't put you off the right example. Check for rust under the "Sacco panels" on the sides, these plastic cladding panels can act as water and mud traps and rot can fester away behind them unseen for months.

Again, bonnets and front bumpers



can suffer badly from stone chips, so check that the paint here matches the rest of the car. While R129s are still cheap, many suffer the indignity of substandard paintwork and it will cost to have it re-done properly.

R129s are also known for electrical issues, notably in the hood mechanisms. The cars are technological powerhouses, with scores of ECUs and control modules which can fail. Many of these are located behind the front seats, so check here for any signs of water ingress or similar damage which might indicate imminent issues. It goes without saying that you should check that all the electrical kit functions properly.

UPFRONT



# *Replacing the* **190SL**

The 220SL project came too late to reach production

---



"The missing link between the 190SL and the 300SL and one of the great 'what ifs?' in the history of the company."



## Mercedes-Benz 220SL

Words: Andrew Roberts

Pics: Mercedes-Benz  
and Felix Reinerts

**T**he surprise public appearance of a prototype that was long believed to be extinct is almost always the occasion of great excitement – especially if the marque in question is Mercedes-Benz. One of the stars of the 2014 Motorclassica in Melbourne was right-hand drive 220SL – the missing link between the 190SL and the 300SL and one of the great ‘what ifs?’ in the history of the company.

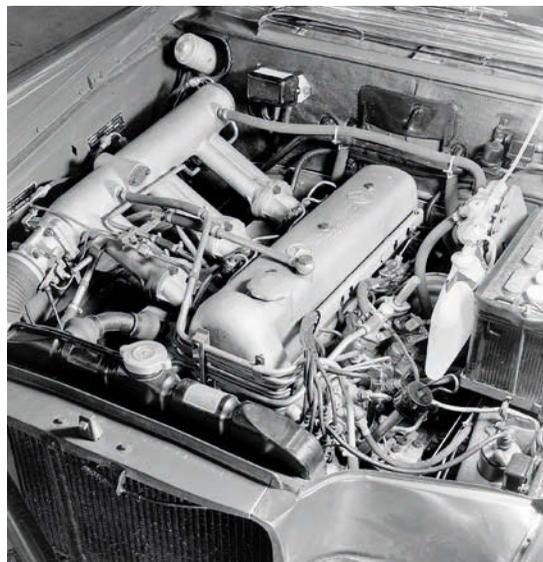
The logical starting point for the narrative was 1951 when the famous car importer Max Hoffman became the US distributor for Mercedes-Benz. Towards the middle of the decade, he suggested to the Board of Daimler-Benz that he needed an open two-seater that was cheaper than the 300SL to offer his American customers an alternative to the likes of the MG TF and the Triumph TR2. Fritz Nallinger, the firm’s Technical Director, proposed using a modified platform of the W120 Series 180 saloon, which would help to reduce costs, even if the original “Ponton” was never renowned for its performance.

**"The 190SL could be reasonably said to embody post-war optimism."**

The response to a prototype at the New York Motor Show in February 1954 evidently demonstrated its commercial potential. Full production of the W121 190SL commenced in May 1955 and, as many an enthusiast will tell you, the W121 had the essential looks and the independent suspension of the 300SL at around half the cost. In its homeland, the 190SL could be reasonably said to embody post-war optimism, appearing in such incredibly jolly comedy films as 1957’s *Die Zwillinge vom Zillertal*, with the W121’s red coachwork contrasting with the mountain scenery. Nearly 40% of production was destined for the USA, and at this time any Mercedes-Benz was seen as almost unattainably exotic to the average American motorist. In the 1950s the most frequently encountered German ‘import automobile’ was the Volkswagen Beetle while a new W121 cost more than a Jaguar XK140. Perhaps the essential difference between the two SLs was that the four-cylinder model was aimed at the up and coming young corporate lawyer while its larger stablemate was weekend transport for the head of the practice.



**Right:** The six-cylinder engine was lifted from the 220 saloon



In the April 1956 edition of *Mechanix Illustrated* the famous motoring writer Tom McCahill stated that ‘fine workmanship and splendid roadability are the top features of this sports rig’. He and concluded that *‘this is a fine little car and one that’ll appeal especially to the connoisseur who likes to get his Zippos in a Tiffany box’*. McCahill also thought that *‘Joe Blow up the block with his Bird will blow you off anytime he catches you loose – but then he can’t say “Mercedes-Benz” when you both reach the corner saloon’*. Not that the average Thunderbird driver would have considered a W121, partially because of the issue of dollars and also because the 190SL was less about conspicuous consumption and Wildroot hair cream than social prestige; a world of country club



CHETTIAR'S TEMPLE

SS 7252



membership and holidays at Lake Tahoe.

The W121's 1,897cc SOHC engine with twin Solex carburetors was capable of 110 mph and, back in Stuttgart, serious consideration was being given to making a more potent 190SL that would enhance those exquisite Karl Wilfert/ Walter Häcker lines. The lightweight 190SLR - the "R" stood Rennsport - was very short-lived - but a W121 with an extensively altered engine that featured a new cross flow cylinder head and a mechanical Bosch fuel injector looked highly promising.

The first of four prototypes were constructed in October 1955 but these modifications provoked to offer little in the way of additional power, and such a version of the W121 would have been too expensive. Further consideration was then given to fitting a modified version of the famous s 3-litre plant in the 190SL's bay and the engineer Kurt Obländer added a cylinder head from the M198. The injection system from the 300SL was rejected on the grounds of cost - which was a common theme of 190SL development plans - and so there were triple Solex carburetors plus a new exhaust system. To ensure this substantial unit fitted in the W121 it had to be canted by 50 degrees.





## Mercedes-Benz 220SL

"Daimler-Benz constructed four prototypes - one RHD and three LHD."



The 3-litre 190SL was evaluated at the 1956 Alpine Rally, but despite its potential, it was never to enter production, a decision that was once again made mainly on the grounds of DM. However, the next W121-derived prototype appeared to be the most promising of all – the W127 220SL. This was a combination of the injected M127 2.2-litre six-cylinder engine that was to be fitted to the 1958 220SE "Ponton" with the familiar 190SL coachwork. Tests revealed some minor issues concerning weight distribution and the front suspension while the more substantial power plant required a redesign of the bulkhead - but the W127 offered the motorist a blend of torque, performance and exceptional road manners. And, as Brian Long notes in his book *Mercedes-Benz SL W113 Series: 1963-1971*, the 220SL was one of the first signs of the 'shoe-horning habits' of (Erich) Waxenburger – the man who would subsequently create the 300 SEL 6.3.

Daimler-Benz constructed four prototypes - one RHD and three LHD – and during 1956 the 220SL was extensively evaluated from the Alps to the Nürburgring. Nalligner planned to have it enter production in the summer of the following year, and at one point Daimler-Benz debated whether the W127 should replace the »





## Mercedes-Benz 220SL

W121 altogether. By April 1957 it was decided to build both models, but the 220SL project was to encounter a number of difficulties. Tooling issues that meant the W127 would not be ready for its proposed launch date and so it would have to make its debut in 1960. Another challenge was that it used the platform of the "Ponton" which by 1959 was on the way out; the six-cylinder W111 entered production in August of that year. The four-cylinder models would continue until 1962, but Daimler-Benz's resources were increasingly absorbed by the manufacturing demands of the new "Fintail".

At one stage consideration was given to fresh styling for the 220SL but this was not economically viable and so, to quote Miles Kornblatt in Mercedes W113: The Complete Story, on the 21st October 1958 Nallinger signed off on a new sports car project. The W111-based W113 was initially to be powered by the M127 engine but by 1961 Daimler-Benz responded to the potential competition from the likes of the new Jaguar E-Type. The displacement was increased from 2,197cc to 2,308cc together with a new cylinder head and a modified camshaft.

The Mercedes-Benz 230SL debuted in June 1963, by

**Below:** Here a 190SL – how special might this have been with six cylinders?

"The W127 joined the ranks of fascinating 'might-have-beens'."

which time the W127 had joined the ranks of fascinating 'might-have-beens'. Had development of the 220SL commenced at an earlier stage and the launch date taken place in 1956, it might well have stood a chance of appealing to well-heeled motorists, luring Vittorio Gassman-style drivers from their Lancia Aurelia B24s or appearing in a Technicolor film production alongside Audrey Hepburn. In the UK its price would inevitably have been astronomical, but a W127 might well have found favour with a go-ahead member of the gentry looking for an alternative to the Bristol 404 Drophead – or even a Mayfair gadabout from the Laurence Harvey School of Fashion. And in any case, the Mercedes-Benz 220SL would have been utterly magnificent. 





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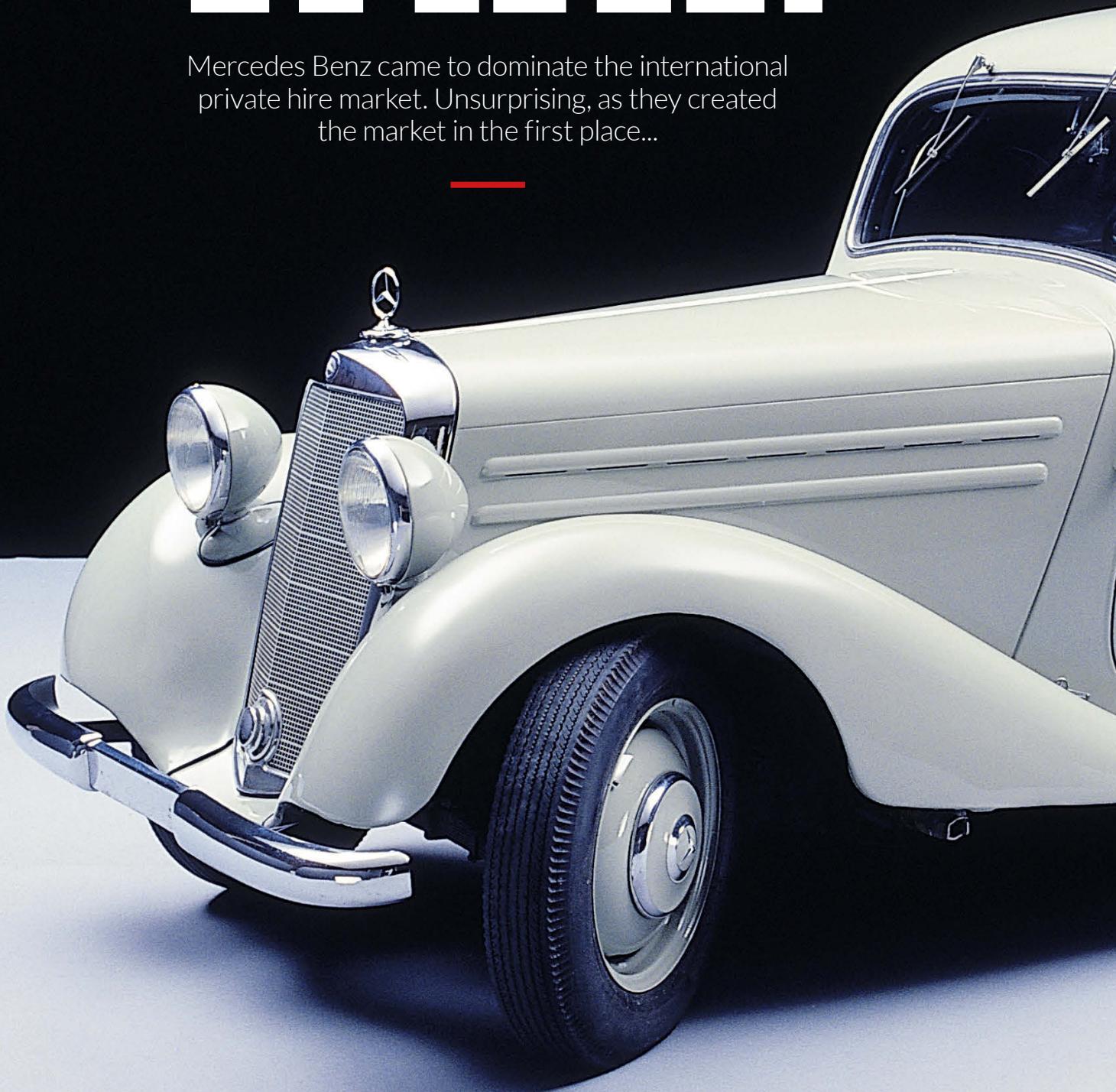
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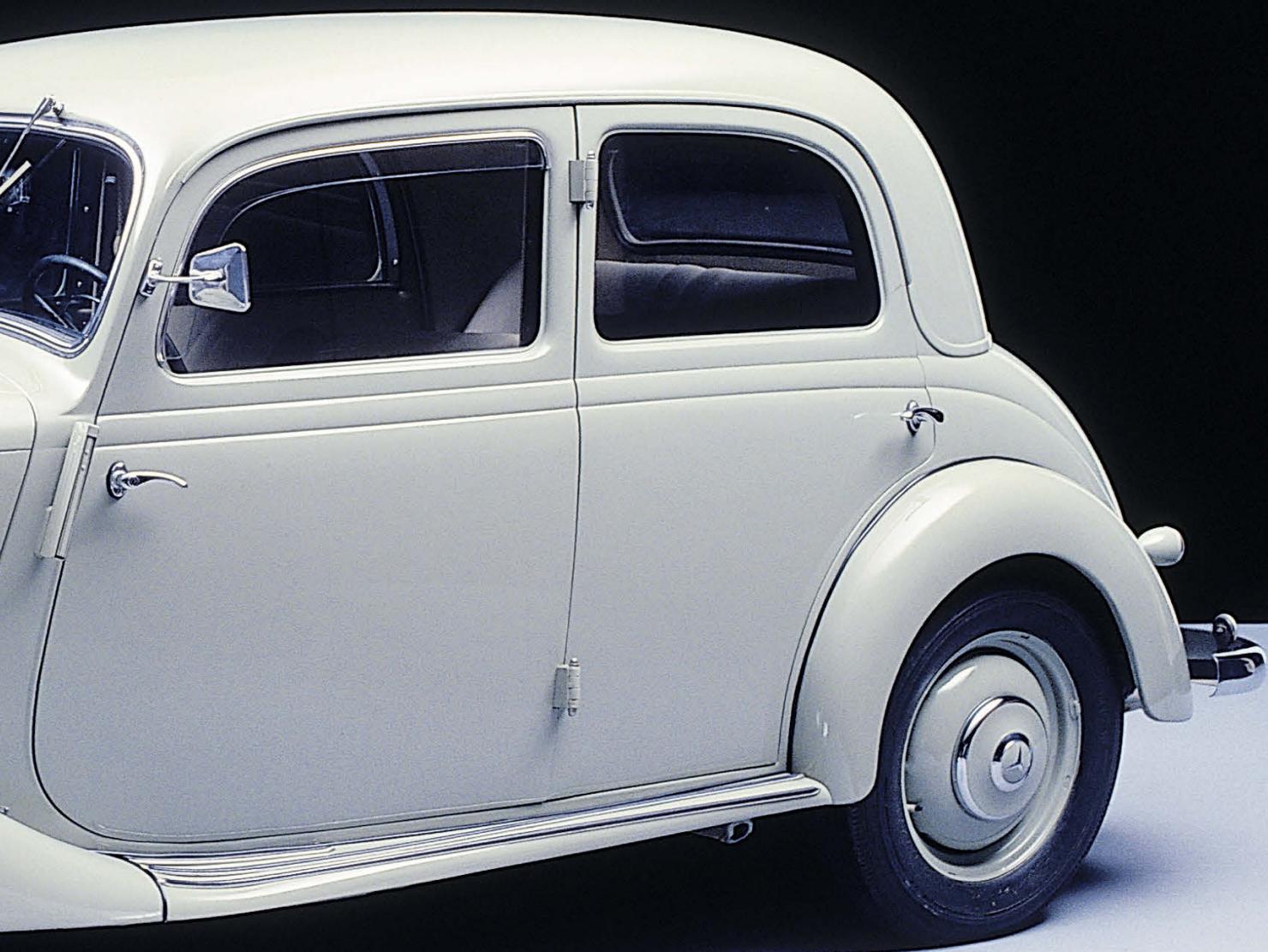
UPFRONT

# TAXI!

Mercedes Benz came to dominate the international private hire market. Unsurprising, as they created the market in the first place...

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**Above:** The 170V was Germany's most popular taxi in the immediate post-war period.



## Mercedes Taxis

Words: Sam Mace

**G**o to any major city, anywhere in the world, and you won't get very far without seeing a Mercedes taxi. Even before the establishment of the Mercedes-Benz brand, Daimler and Benz made themselves synonymous with the private hire sector.

In 1896 Daimler sold a Viktoria motorised carriage to a Stuttgart businessman named Friedrich Greiner. Greiner's business interests included a carriage hire company, and he wanted to put the Viktoria to work as an alternative to the traditional horse drawn carriage.

Others had tried and failed. As the Industrial Revolution rumbled into life in the 19th century, a few intrepid engineers made attempts at running primitive taxis in the form of steam powered stagecoaches. Punitive toll rates were imposed against them, combined with negative reactions from the public who didn't like them hissing and chuffing their way into their towns, stymieing the early pioneers.

But the commercial potential of the car could only be held back for so long. Daimler saw large-volume sales as being the ticket to serious financial success. There were only so many rich people with an interest in replacing their horses that Gottlieb Daimler could sell cars to. The answer was to market the car as an alternative to the established horse and cart to carriage hire companies.

Daimler, with Greiner's business savvy, was the first company who are recorded as making a success of the motorised carriage. By 1899 Greiner had a fleet of seven Daimlers, even changing the name of his own firm to the "Daimler Motorised Cab Company". Other rival taxi companies sprung up after Greiner's success – including one run by Gottlieb Daimler's son. Benz, too, was making products that were popular with taxi operators.

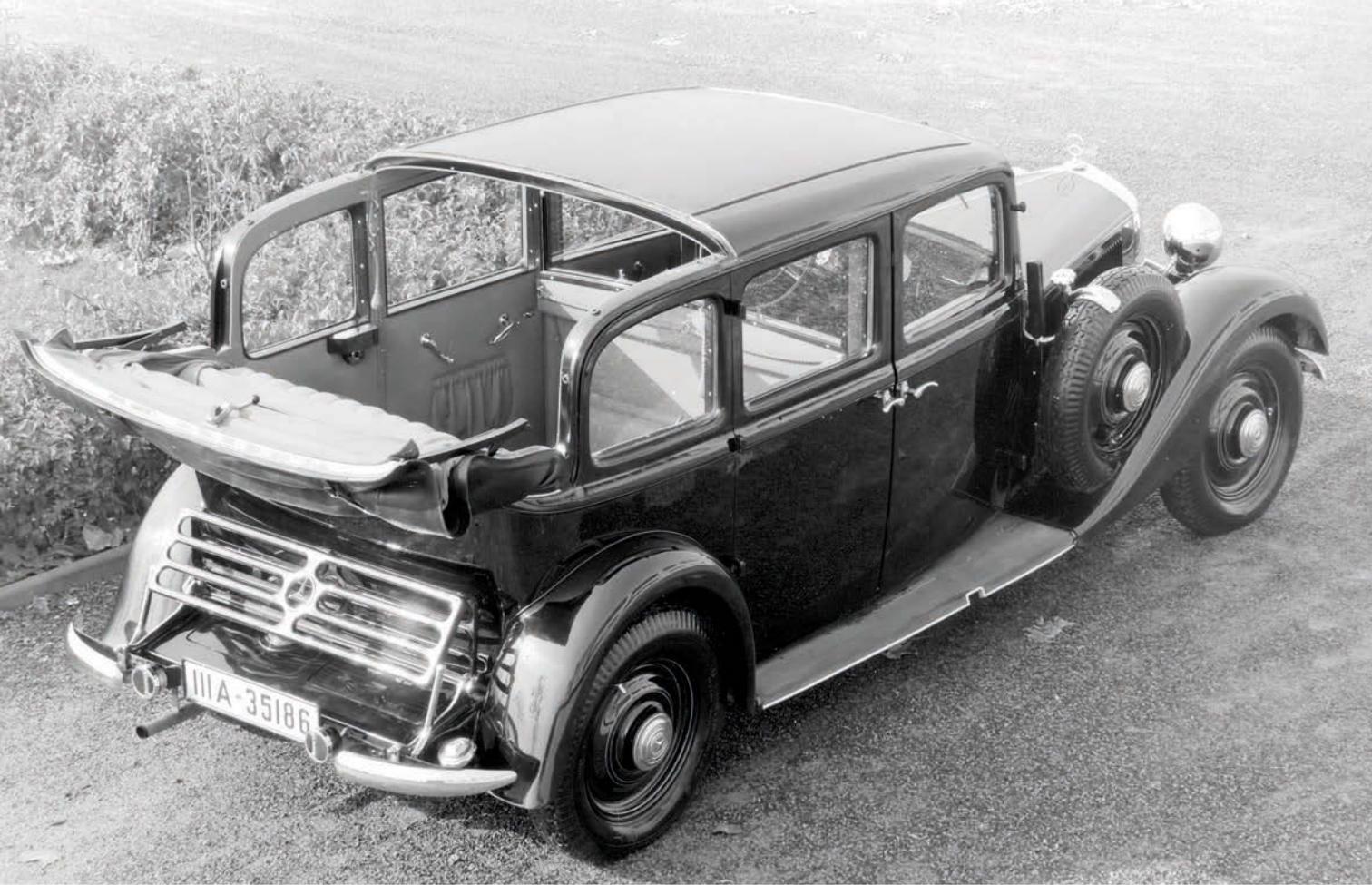


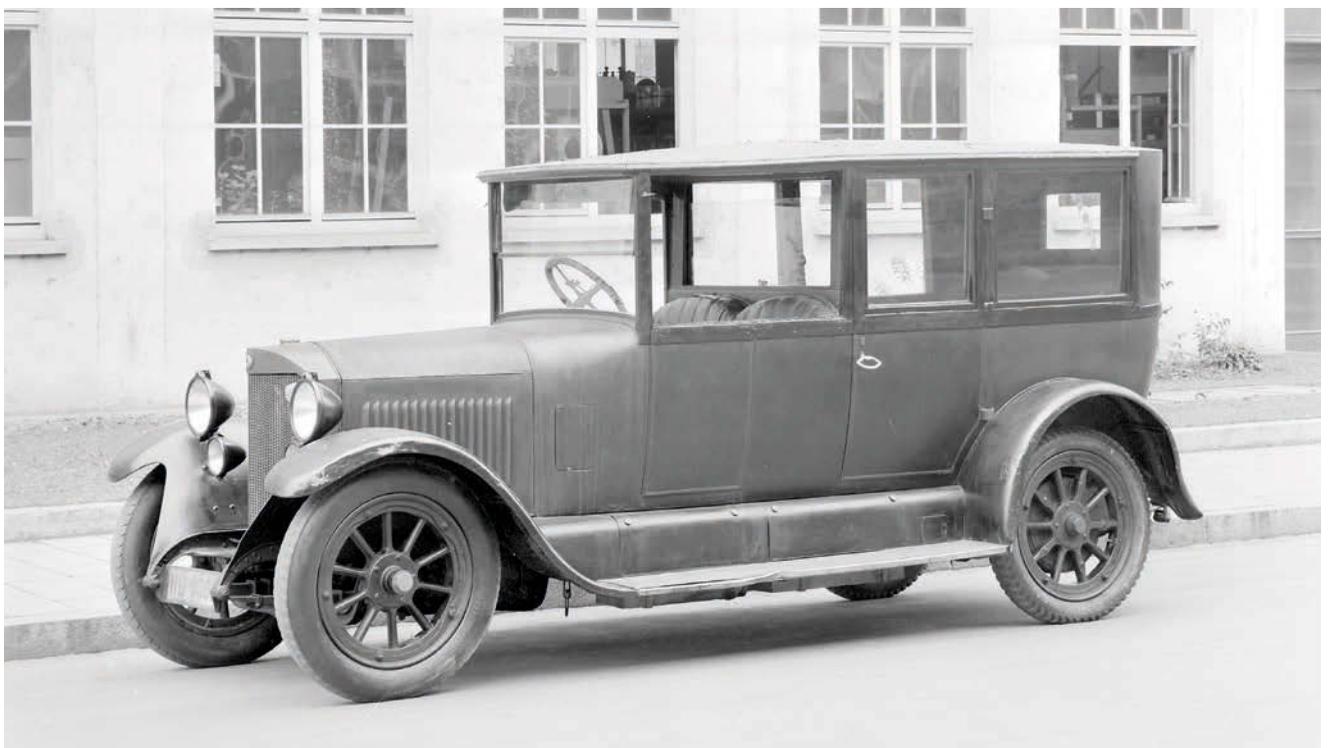
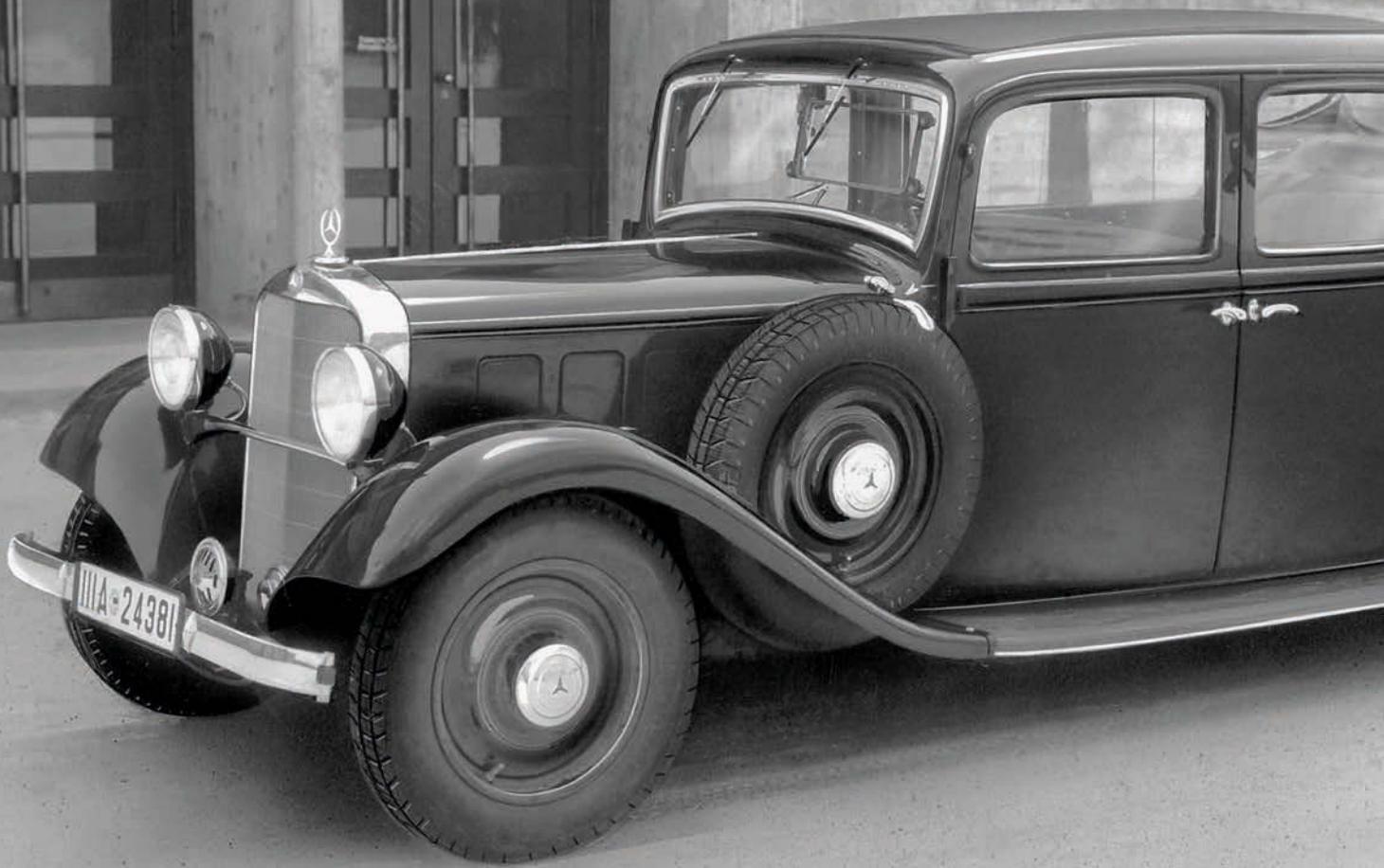
"The commercial potential of the car could only be held back for so long."

**Right:** Pontons were often used as taxis. Here, a line of 180s shown in Hong Kong, 1958

Daimler and Benz; later to merge as Daimler-Benz, didn't have the market to themselves for long. Adler and Brennabor posed the greatest threats. Brennabor had become Germany's second biggest car manufacturer behind Opel in the mid '20s. But it was Adler which looked to be the next up-and-coming car manufacturer. It launched two medium sized cars in the same year, which were used as German taxicabs: the Primus and its FWD brother, the unfortunately-named Trumf.

If Mercedes was worried by this, it needn't have been. 1936 was the year that saw Mercedes gain their







## Mercedes Taxis

lasting dominance of the taxi market, when it found itself in the spotlight at the Berlin Auto Show. It was also the year that saw Mercedes-Benz mark its 50th year, a milestone that the then-Nazi government didn't let the public forget. It inherited a country with an automotive industry that was suffering in the aftermath of the Weimar era. In 1932, Germany made just 44,000 cars. The Nazis claimed to have turned Germany's car industry around, after 215,000 cars left German auto factories in 1935. Proud of Mercedes-Benz and its achievements, it used the Autoshow to put the brand on a pedestal.

The perfect time then, for Mercedes to introduce their new 170V (W136) and 260D models (W138) to the public.

Strikingly modern for their day, both found favour with taxi operators, but the 260D was especially important.

**Left:** The 260D revolutionised the taxi market

**"Up until the time of the 260D's birth, diesel was reserved for trucks and heavy vehicles."**

It was the result of almost a decade of development, a process which had begun soon after the Daimler/Benz merger.

Up until the time of the 260D's birth, diesel was reserved for trucks and heavy vehicles, as it was considered too rough and noisy for passenger cars - not to mention the extra weight of the engine itself. Diesel engines were still heavier than their petrol counterparts. But the potential for fuel savings were too great to ignore.

The result of almost ten years of trial and error was the OM138 engine. As the 260D model name would suggest, the OM138 had a capacity of 2.6 litres and it managed an acceptable 45 bhp. It wasn't the only diesel car at the Autoshow, though. The 260D had to share the limelight with the Hanomag Rekord, but it beat the Rekord to production.

Despite the long development process, Mercedes-Benz awaited the 260D debut with trepidation. From an engineer's standpoint the 260D may well have been acceptable, but would the public take to it? After all, diesel was for trucks. Mercedes made getting the OM 138 as close as possible in its running characteristics to petrol engines a priority. Still louder and coarser, it was nonetheless a good effort.

Thankfully for Mercedes,





## Mercedes Taxis

the 260D quickly won praise from motoring journalists, none more so than David Scott-Moncreiff of Speed magazine.

After driving the new 260D, he reported: "To my utter hornswogglement the thing proceeded to tick over like a bloodhound lapping soup. The thing that really amazed me was the way in which the diesel engine accelerated away from a corner in a manner that would put many petrol engines to shame."

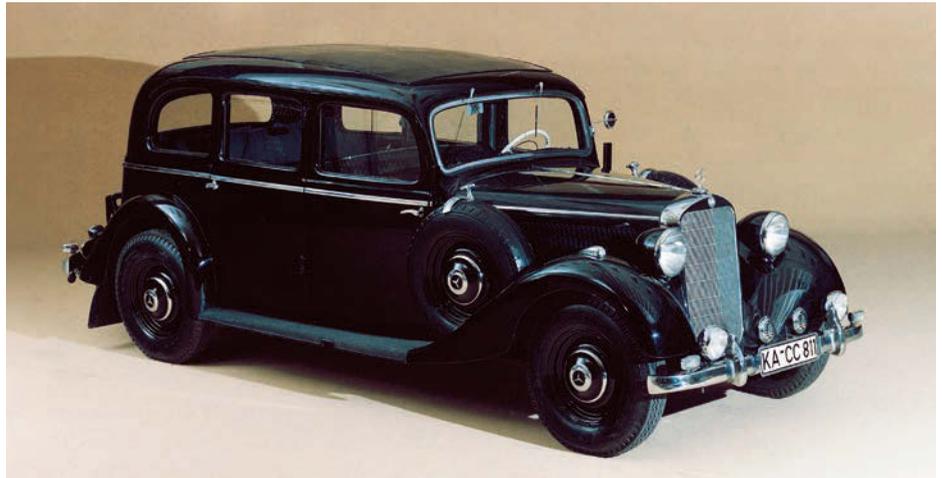
Autocar was impressed too. According to them the OM 138 was "quiet and smooth, and practically impossible to distinguish from a good petrol unit."

Mercedes may have sold a relatively modest 2000 units, but in doing so the 260D became Germany's most popular taxicab. It was here that it created its loyal taxi fanbase.

Unsurprisingly, the 260D had been developed with the taxi market in mind. Mercedes correctly predicted that the majority of 260D owners would be taxi drivers, and it's not hard to see why. By Mercedes's own calculations the 260D would be around 50% cheaper to run than its petrol contemporaries.

In pre-war Germany, taxi operators running diesel cars would be at a considerable advantage. A tank of diesel in a 260D could manage up to 310 miles - a very useful asset at a time when Germany's filling station network was comparatively sparse. Further dividends were paid when the time finally came to fill up. In 1936 a litre of diesel cost 24 pfennigs (a pfennig being a one hundredth of a mark), against 39 pfennigs for a litre of petrol. To further sweeten the deal, taxi drivers could already buy fuel at a reduced rate, cutting the cost again to 19 pfennigs a litre.

Never one to rest on its laurels, Mercedes gave the 260D a



revamp in 1937. After only a year of production, the W138 chassis was replaced with the new W143 chassis, which the 260D would share with the petrol-powered 230 model. The new chassis brought new possibilities for taxi firms, making the 260D available in Landaulet form or as a fully open car. Taxi operators wanting to give their customers something more lavish to ride in could even order the 260D as a Pullman limousine.

The outbreak of World War II cut the 260D's production life short, and production wound up in 1940 - with the 170V going the same way two years later.

### The Post-War era

The first all new, post-war Mercedes didn't surface until 1953 - but it was worth the wait. The 120 series "Ponton" was a Mercedes first, bringing the company into the modern age with a self-supporting, three box body. In 1954 it was offered with a diesel variant, dubbed the 180D. Like its forebears, it found great success in the taxi trade.

But there was more than economy to endear the Ponton to taxi operators and owners. The three box body gave a higher degree of practicality than

what had come before, and according to Mercedes, there was twenty two percent more interior space than the 170S/DS. The large boot benefitted from a low loading sill, - a big selling point for the 1950s taxi driver.

The Ponton was also a big hit with taxi operators outside of Europe. It was exported to India, the Middle East and even as far as Asia. But it wasn't always private enterprises making the orders.

It was common for Middle Eastern governments to buy stocks of vehicles from whichever manufacturer they liked the look of at the time (Peugeot later became a popular choice for desert despots who wished to mobilise the masses, for example) and sell them back to the public.

In countries such as Syria and Lebanon, there was no open market for new cars, and as a result, vehicles became prized assets, getting passed down from one generation to the next.

It was in situations such as these, where Mercedes cemented its reputation for legendary durability.

The Ponton proved itself to be capable of lasting for decades, with examples being seen working for a living as taxis in Lebanon as late as 2008, and Aleppo were known to still have fleets of Pontons up until 2002. 📍

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**300SL Roadster 1986C**

Signal Red, matching hardtop, dark brown soft top, Saffron sport check interior, auto gearbox, electric windows, rear seats, original alloy wheels, FSH, 51,000m . . . . **£34,950**



**230TE Estate 1989G**

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# Ring Bells

Andrew Roberts charts the history of the  
Mercedes-Benz ambulances





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## Mercedes Ambulance

Words:  
Andrew Roberts

**T**he name of Mercedes-Benz has long been associated with Krankewagens and to tell their complete story would encompass several volumes. There is also the aspect that in their homeland, the tri-star badged ambulance has been a familiar sight for generations whereas in the UK they had an exotic and even menacing air, one associated with sinister rain-coated figures in 1960s Cold War Films; one immediately thinks of the W110 190D "Fintail" in *The Ipcress File*. It should also be mentioned that only a vehicle of the calibre of a W123 T estate decked out with emergency lights could make the 1983 Cannon & Ball film *The Boys in Blue* at all watchable. Just.

And so, we will be mainly concentrating on the changing aspect of the Mercedes-Benz ambulance in the post-years with the advent of unitary-construction. In May 1946 Sindelfingen had resumed the small-scale manufacture of vehicles and the W136 was initially available only in commercial form; the saloon would not be re-introduced until July of the following year. An ambulance conversion appeared that autumn, and in late 1948 its design was further refined under the auspices of Fahrzeugwerke Lueg. The Bochum company had been formed in 1868 and had constructed its first car body, based on the Mercedes-Simplex 28/32, in 1904. After the Second World War Daimler-Benz would officially distribute their ambulances and by the end of the 1940s, another 681 chassis had been despatched to the Lueg works.

From December 1950 onwards the conversions were also offered on 170 D and by 1952 Lueg had made a further 485 ambulance based on both the petrol and diesel engine W136s - but the debut of the W120 in 1953 would anticipate

"In the UK they had an exotic and even menacing air."

a new form of emergency vehicles. Anyone trading in their 170S for the latest W120-series 180 would have almost instantly noticed how there was less noise, enhanced rigidity - and how mounting the running gear, front suspension and steering on a detachable subframe made for ease of maintenance. From January 1955 onwards the Ponton - so named for its formidable box-section side-members - was also offered in a partially-built form. The 180-AM and 180D-AM (AM = "Auswärtsmontage" or external build) were devoid of a roof or a body to the rear of the B-pillars, and they also lacked a paint finish.

One high-profile conversion was the pick-ups, which was primarily aimed at the South African "Bakkie" market and another was the Kombi estate cars. These last-named were typically made by either Binz of Lorch near Stuttgart or Miesen of Bonn as their wagons had official factory approval, a state of affairs that lasted until 1965. The former was recognisable via its distinctive rear side doors while the latter was more of a modified saloon; both conveyed an idiosyncratic sense of elegance. The Binz Lorch & Co Coachbuilding Company had been founded by Michael Binz in 1936. Since the end of the Second World War, they had created a variety





## Mercedes Ambulance

of taxi-cab and commercial vehicle bodies for a number of clients, such lorry cabs for Krupp and Steyr-Puch. Miesen had been established in 1870 and had been closely associated with emergency vehicle bodies for over eight decades.

**"The idea of providing emergency care at the location of an RTA would not take hold until the 1960s."**

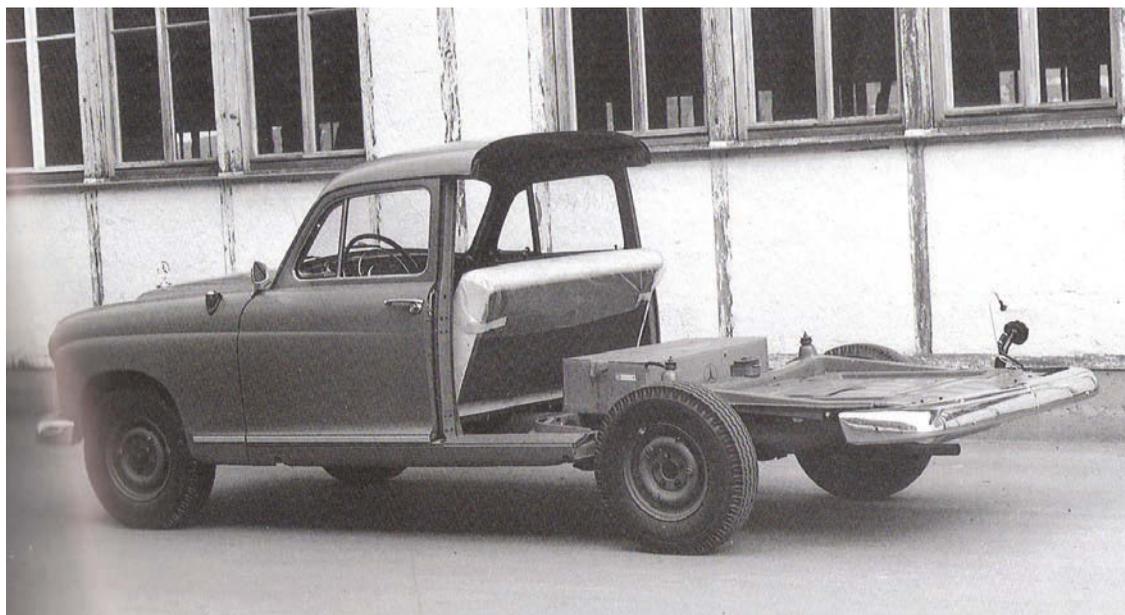
Binz's English langue brochure tempted affluent US motorists with their 'racy elegant station car' adaptation of the W120 and it was indeed a sporting machine in comparison with a mock-timbered Buick or Chrysler. In Germany, the idea of a luxury station wagon would not really take hold until the 1970s, and the five-door Ponton conversions would be far more associated with ambulances. March 1955 saw the unveiling of a prototype Krankenwagen design that would become a familiar sight on German roads before the end of the decade. At that time the idea of an all-steel ambulance was indeed a radical one, especially if it took the form of an elegant, even comparatively sleek-looking, five-door station wagon.

However, it was not that the appearance of the Ponton ambulances was more in keeping with the general ethos of post-war Germany as that would be an utterly facile argument; crews and

especially patients seldom have strong aesthetic opinions in the midst of a life-or-death situation. The W120 conversions were ideal for a rapidly changing landscape including traffic conditions which reflected the impact of the "Economic Miracle". In the immediate post-war era, the fire station of a town or city would often operate the ambulances, with coverage of rural areas falling to the Red Cross but the 1950s progressed, the road accident rate inevitably grew. The country did not experience mass-motoring on a US-scale – as recently as 1961 fewer than one in five households would own a car – but this was a time when the average worker could genuinely aspire to drive a new Auto Union or Volkswagen. Meanwhile, the growth of suburban housing during that decade was a further incentive to investing in an Opel Rekord.

The idea of providing emergency care at the location of an RTA would not take hold until the 1960s, and the Pontons featured little in the way of specialised equipment







## Mercedes Ambulance

by modern standards. German ambulances would start to be more elaborately fitted from 1957 onwards, but their essential role was to transport patients to the hospital with the minimum of delay. This meant that they would have to be as suited to roads in a newly-constructed housing development as it was to the autobahn and a significant reason for favouring the W120 conversion over the older 170 or a contemporary commercial vehicle such as the Opel Blitz was the ride qualities. In the late 1940s, a W136 was regarded as a reliable and smooth form of patient transport, but the Ponton was a genuine step forward regarding handling and cornering.

The Binz conversions featured an extended chassis, but they often retained much the same appearance as their Kombis, but when the

**"The Ponton was a genuine step forward regarding handling and cornering."**

Miesen-bodied 190s appeared in 1956 they did not follow the same format as their station wagons and instead adopted a higher roofline. Neither exclusively built Mercedes-Benzes – for example, in 1961 Binz created a BMW 2600 “Baroque Angel” ambulance while Miesen adaptation of the Opel Kapitän P1 resulted in a splendidly US style machine. They even devised a



genuinely formidable W189, one of the most stunning vehicles to ever carry a stretcher. But it was their Pontons that arguably became their most famous products during the late 1950s, and we shall encounter their W110, W114/5 and W123 successors in later editions.

For now, our main observation is how the photos of the Binz and Miesen ambulances serve as a virtual counterbalance to the publicity that automatically surrounds the W186,

**Above:** Mercedes ambulances have remained popular – as documented by these W123 and W124 conversions

the 300 SL Gullwing, the 600, the W113 “Pagoda” or the 300 SEL 6.3. These are all crucial aspects of the history of Mercedes-Benz, but the post-war emergency service conversions are equally vital to the marque’s story. They are prime examples of how the famous badge is as much associated with public service as it is with racing victories, heads of state or film stars. Or, to put matters somewhat more succinctly, with saving people’s lives. 



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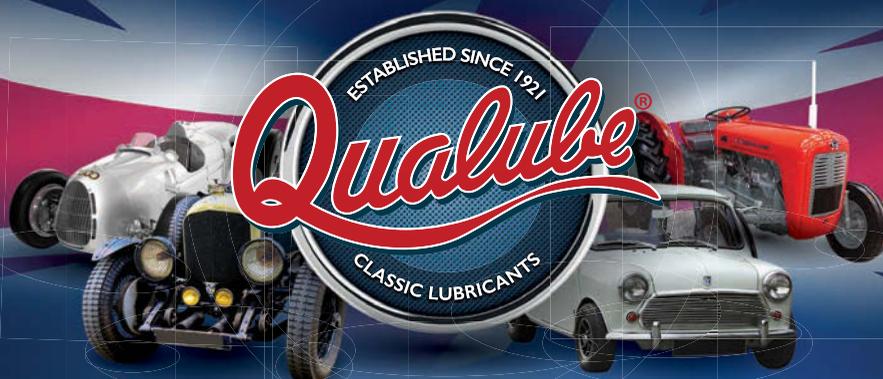


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UPFRONT



# *Project* **Mercedes** *pt1*

We've bought ourselves a cheap Mercedes.  
How well will it go?









## Project Mercedes

Words: Sam Skelton

Pics: Sam Skelton/  
Matthew Bell

**B**ack in issue 2, we discussed how to buy your first Mercedes. We chose a range of budget points, decided upon the best models to view, and then gave some generic words of wisdom for buying at any budget. This gave our publisher an idea. Why not, he suggested, buy one of our own? Running a magazine project over the coming months would give us chance to highlight some of the pitfalls of owning and enjoying your first Mercedes. The car will be driven and maintained by Matthew Bell, staff writer on our sister title *Classic Car Buyer*, and he will write a number of features about what it's like to live with an inexpensive Mercedes. We were allocated a £3000 budget, and tasked with finding a suitable car for the job.

The first stage was working out where to look. Obviously internet auction sites, classic car sale sites and auctions were popular places for us to start, but we needed to work out what we wanted to boot. £3000 would not, after all, get us an E55 AMG – and with several of our writers owning W124s, we felt this was an ideal opportunity to highlight a model which we don't own personally. We narrowed our search down to three models – the 1980s W126 S-Class, the W123 range, and the 190. Theoretically, our £3000 budget ought to allow for a usable example of either of the first two, and a nice example of the latter.

Some thought was given to sensibilities. After all, purchase is one thing – but if our new motor were to cost a king's ransom to maintain it would defeat the point of the feature. So we ruled out any V8 W126s – we were looking at 4 and 6 cylinder cars.

Our first consideration was a 1976 280E being sold by dealer Kim Cairns. A nice enough looking car in Mimosa yellow, and known to our editor from previous work. It had a nice history file, and while it was slightly out of our budget it seemed like the sort of car

**Left:** Our 190E looks rather good... but is it?

"I was bored one night, so began to sift through the advertisements on Facebook Marketplace."

which we could stretch the budget to accommodate. It drove well, looked good and was distinctive – sounded ideal? Alas not.

Clubs Editor Jack O'Brien drew our attention to the rust below the rear pillar trim finisher. "If a W123 has started to rust there, there is a risk that it will have spread below the rear window and into the parcel shelf. Stripping that back could reveal all manner of rust, and it won't be a cheap thing to rectify if it does. It's a good car, but I'm concerned by that."

Time to move on then – and to an unexpected source of gold. I was bored one night, so began to sift through the advertisements on Facebook Marketplace. And there was a rather nice looking 190E 2.6 for relatively little money – £1800.

It looked good. And it looked better in the metal – no visible rust on top, and the seller was all too happy to let me underneath it in a pit at his place of work. There are a couple of patches underneath but nothing that looks frilly, and nothing underneath objected when tapped with hammers. Solid, mechanically happy, a good body and a good interior – we had landed upon something really rather special. Negotiated down to £1550, I took Matt Bell to collect it 2 weeks later.

All was well for the first portion »



## Project Mercedes

of the journey back from Thetford to Peterborough, where the Mercedes Driver office is located. But as Matt hit traffic outside Cambridge, the temperature gauge rose. Once traffic cleared the car cooled from 100 to 80 degrees, but this wasn't the end of our troubles. 20 miles up the road I had a call from Matt – the temperature gauge had risen to 120 degrees, he had turned the heater on to counteract it and after a time the heater had started blowing cold. I advised him to get off the road as soon as possible – the next junction, 5 miles away, was our only hope.

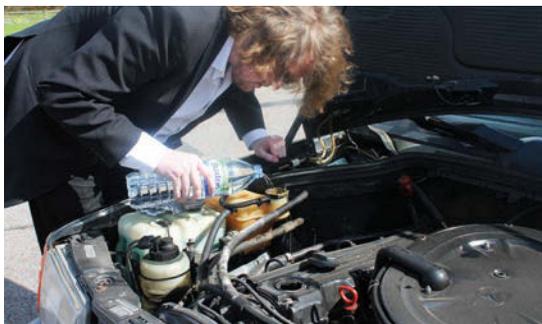
As we left the slip road, the 190 expired in a cloud of steam. We just got it across the roundabout to safety before it declared no more. Bonnet up, rad cap off, and there was no coolant to be seen. We had obviously overheated and blown the head gasket. A top-up with spare water got us running again – but the 190 wasn't

**Right:** Editor Skelton refills the cooling system on our 190E

**"As we left the slip road, the 190 expired in a cloud of steam."**

happy. Four cylinders if we were lucky, hesitant under 2000rpm and virtually undrivable. Rather than head for the office, we decided to head to my home which was about half the distance – I gave Matt my car keys and took over in the now very poorly sounding 190E.

And I saw what Matt meant. This car wasn't happy – though there was a glimmer of hope when it briefly picked up before each upward change. Using the gearbox as a manual through D, 







**Left:** Bits of lead had melted onto the plugs





## Project Mercedes

3, and 2 gave me enough momentum to be able to get the car home safely, which is where the diagnostic fun could begin.

The following morning I went to start it for another listen – and it ran better at cold. No water had been lost, no oiliness, no emulsification in the oil – I started wondering if we had in fact cooked the gasket at all. As a precaution I ordered a new set of HT leads, just in case the fault was ignition related. Once fitted, it ran far better – and removing the old leads had shown me why. As the temperature rose we had fried them, in some cases baking them onto the plugs which were themselves still perfectly okay. While still a little hesitant from a cold start – I suspect injector cleaner may help here as the tank had been low – we were back on six, idling happily, and driving well.



**Left:** Plugs checked and new leads fitted, the car ran better – but not right.

So what on earth had happened to cause this? I suspected a radiator cap in poor condition had vented the coolant under pressure in traffic, then as Matt got going again the engine warmed up with no means of cooling. I tried the brand new cap from my E220 Coupe, and the 190 seemed fine. I then put the 190 cap on my car and watched steam emanate. No pressure when the cap was removed to top up. We had our cause – and amazingly the effects appear to have been minor. Think of that next time anyone questions Mercedes longevity.

We've booked it into our local garage for a second opinion though, just in case anything else has been fried. They're going to be giving it a full going over – including a service and a compression test. Then it's off to Matt Bell, who's going to be running it, and keeping us updated as to its progress. 📸

## How you can save money on your classic insurance

Five suggestions on behalf of Andrew Evanson  
Senior Operations Manager for Lancaster Insurance

- 1** Rather than visiting price comparison websites, go direct to a specialist classic broker who understands the market and who you can trust. They should be able to find a tailored policy for your classic which will ensure you've got the correct cover and that you're paying the correct amount.
- 2** On a policy, your premium is likely to increase as the number of miles you drive increases, so when speaking to a broker, be careful not to overestimate annual mileage and be as accurate as you can.
- 3** Car clubs bring together people from all walks of life to share a common passion for classic cars and is a great way of meeting fellow enthusiasts. If you're a member be sure to tell your insurer as they might be able to give you a discount on your policy.
- 4** If you have an unusual, rare or modified classic, it's best to talk to your broker over the phone. They'll be able to talk in detail about your vehicle and help find ways of reducing the cost, whilst still ensuring you have the right, bespoke policy for needs.
- 5** Try to ensure that you do not let your cover expire after 12 months. This will ensure that the price you have been quoted is valid, as it may contain a continuous cover discount.



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UPFRONT

A blue Mercedes-Benz SL is shown from a low-angle, front-quarter perspective, driving on a dark road that stretches into the distance. The background is a vast, arid desert landscape with rolling sand dunes and scattered red rock formations under a clear, bright blue sky. The car's front end, including the headlight and grille, is visible on the right side of the frame. The overall scene conveys a sense of motion and freedom.

*The*  
**BIRTH**  
*of the* **BREED**

Mercedes never intended for the SL to exist. This famous dynasty came about almost entirely due to a combination of chance, circumstance and one visionary sales agent

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## SL Origins

In the challenging environment of post-war West Germany, former Mercedes racing department head Rudolf Uhlenhaut (who had designed the famous 'Silver Arrow' racing cars of the 1930s) returned to his ex-employer in the same role in 1948.

With limited resources entry to the single-seater racing series was simply not on the cards, so Uhlenhaut settled for returning Mercedes to sports car racing. There could be no bespoke engines. The only vaguely suitable power unit was the three-litre M186 straight-six from the W186 300 'Adenauer' luxury saloon. Forced by necessity to use a large and heavy engine, Uhlenhaut decided that his new racer's success would be built on a trifecta of minimal weight, maximum reliability and a hitherto-unknown focus on driver comfort. Together this would produce a car which could sustain high speeds for the hours needed to win at endurance racing.

Constraints on both budget and weight led to Uhlenhaut's brainwave to give the car a space frame instead of a chassis. Consisting of aluminium tubes welded into intersecting triangles, the bare frame weighed just 50kg. It also bestowed unheard of rigidity. Meanwhile aerodynamics led to the development of a streamlined coupé body from thin panels of aluminium-magnesium alloy with perspex windows. Although Uhlenhaut's team lacked access to a wind tunnel their final product had a drag co-efficient of 0.36, or roughly the same as a modern computer-designed hatchback.

With a fixed roof and the very high sill created by the space frame, there was no easy way of incorporating the doors, which had to be present and practical to comply with racing regulations. When it occurred to the design

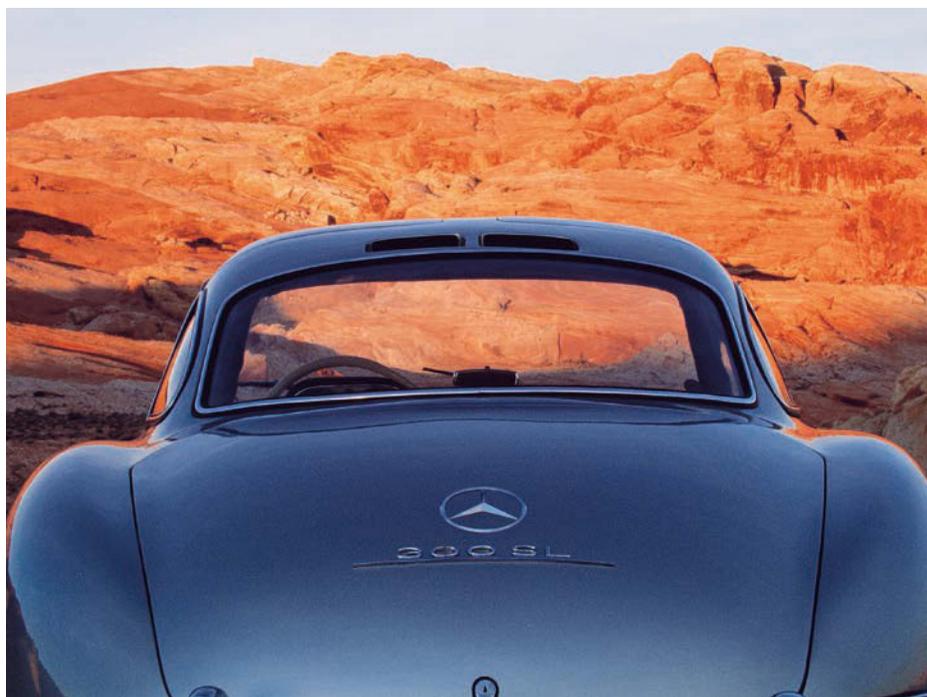


"There was no easy way of incorporating the doors, which had to be present to comply with racing regulations."

team that the rules said nothing about what orientation the doors had to be in, the result was the soon-to-be-famous set of top-hinged 'gullwing' doors – the most distinctive feature of what was named the W194.

After its conversion to a racing engine the M186 engine produced 175bhp, courtesy of triple twin-barrel Solex carburettors, a higher compression ratio and an uprated camshaft. The engine also had to be canted over by 50 degrees and fitted with a dry sump lubrication system to fit under the W194's low-set nose. The rest of the running gear also borrowed heavily from the W186 Adenauer but was adapted for the track. The use of the E186's coil springs and telescopic dampers on all four corners not only provided fully independent suspension but allowed the W194's ride to be far more cossetting and stable than many of its contemporaries. Rather

**Words:** Jack Grover



than experiment with untried disc brakes the W194 used big drum brakes – 11.5 inches across (as on the Adenauer) but now 3.5 inches deep.

The W194 led Mercedes' return to post-war motorsport in dramatic form with two works cars coming second and fourth in their debut event, the gruelling 1600-km 1952 Mille Miglia. That the W194s had completed this marathon without a single mechanical defect only further proved Uhlenhaut's vision. The victories soon began to pile up as the car's combination of speed, minimal weight, roadholding and refinement came into play. At the 1952 Le Mans 24 Hour, the W194 claimed first and second place and were over 200kg lighter than the third-placed car. A matter of weeks later four W194s took the top spots in the Jubilee Grand Prix sprint event at the Nürburgring before completing the type's debut year with another one-two finish in the 2000-mile Mexican Carrera Panamericana. In just a few months the W194 had turned Mercedes back into a marque with enviable racing pedigree able to rank with the other great sporting manufacturers of Europe.

Where it really made an impact was in the booming North American market. Austrian-born import agent Max Hoffman's ambition was to sell Americans the new mid-size Mercedes saloon, the W120 'Ponton' introduced in 1953. The understated quality of the Stuttgart product was a tough sell against cheaper, bigger, faster and more glitzy American products and he struggled to shift his stock. The sporting success of the W194 seemed to be the answer and Hoffman petitioned Mercedes to build a road-going version of the car. After being continually turned down Hoffman raised the stakes by not requesting a car, but ordering »



## SL Origins

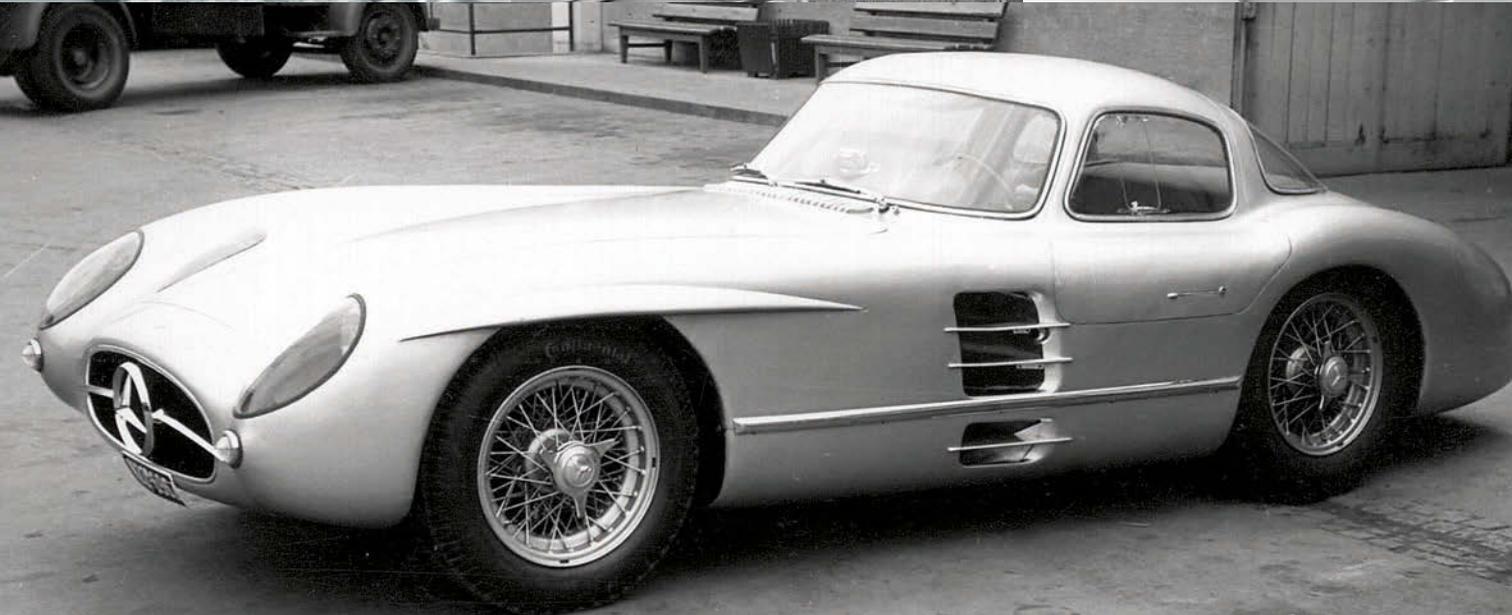
1000 of them. Now the financial risk was on his books rather than Daimler's development work proceeded swiftly.

The result was the Mercedes-Benz W198 300SL – its name coming from its three-litre engine (still a development of the Adenauer's 2996cc engine) and the initials for 'Sportlich Leicht' or 'Sports Lightweight'. Longer in wheelbase and slightly narrower in track than the W194, the 300SL was still built around an aluminium tubular spaceframe, was still a fixed-head streamlined coupé and still had the unique 'gullwing' doors. But despite its initials the W198 was significantly heavier than the W194. For production reasons the 300SL's body was in steel with aluminium-alloy doors, bonnet and boot lid and standard glass windows. Meanwhile the interior became fully trimmed and padded, also boasting a big ivory-plastic steering wheel which hinged flat in an attempt to improve access over the notoriously high sill.

To cope with its added weight the 300SL also had more power. In place of triple carbs, which were maintenance-intensive and unpleasant to drive in road conditions, there was Bosch mechanical indirect petrol injection – a world first. The cylinder head had larger valves for better torque and there was a conventional sump, so even though the engine was still canted over the W198 had a more square-set appearance due to its taller engine. The new power unit made 215hp and gave a top speed of 160mph, making the 300SL both the most powerful and the fastest product road car of the time.

Tellingly, the 300SL was launched at the 1954 New York Motor Show rather than the traditional arena of Frankfurt or Geneva. It caused a sensation – rarely had such a directly race-bred car been offered to the general public, and with







## SL Origins

such unique and striking style. Its performance and technology was so far ahead of anything else that it has a strong claim to being the first true 'supercar.' Although intended purely to improve the car's potential in endurance racing, Uhlenhaut's insistence on a high level of mechanical refinement and rider comfort meant that the W194 transitioned to the road in the shape of the W198 with remarkable ease.

The W198 300SL was aimed at both at the wealthy 'jet set' and professional racing outfits. Buyers could, at extra cost, order their 300SL (base price 29,000 DM or \$11,000) with any combination of race-spec camshaft (taking power to 240bhp), stiffer and lower springs, race tyres on wider rims or, for the true enthusiast with money to burn, an alloy-built body. This final option put an extra 5000 DM or \$2000 on the cost, also making the 300SL one of the most expensive cars of its time.

As a crucial part of Hoffman's marketing strategy, alongside the 300SL at New York was what appeared, even at a close glance, to be just a roadster version of the gullwinged coupé. In fact it was a totally different car, placing the W120 Ponton monocoque platform under steel body panels replicating all the essential features of the 300SL. Suspension and steering were also closely derived from the mighty W198 but under the bonnet was a lightly-tuned 104bhp version of the Ponton's 1.9-litre four-cylinder M121 engine. This open-top car, still capable of spirited performance by any normal standard, cost only a third as much as the full-bore version but carried a lot of its cachet and glamour. Here was the 190SL, car for the many who wanted a Mercedes SL but could not afford a Gullwing.

The 190SL would not reach



full production until the spring of 1955, so until then the 300SL had the world to itself. Hoffman's gamble quickly paid off, with his 1000 orders being filled within weeks. Of those only 29 cars were built with alloy bodies. World demand for 300SLs was such that Stuttgart built another 400 on top of Hoffman's original order, but in any case 80 per cent of the total were sold in the USA. A similar proportion of 190SLs, sales of which exceeded 25,000, were also sold Stateside, absolutely vindicating Hoffman's idea and providing the boost to Mercedes' image and reputation which saw the growth of steady and valuable saloon car sales.

The final piece of the puzzle came in 1957 when the gullwing 300SL was replaced by a convertible version. This, by necessity, had traditional front-

**Above:** The 300SL begat the whole SL family

hinged doors which in turn meant redesigning a large part of the space frame structure. With redesigned headlamps, greater luggage space and a much-improved design of rear swing axle suspension to cure the 300SL's infamous 'jacking' behaviour, the new 300SL roadster was slightly cheaper than the original. While arguably prettier and certainly more practical in roadster form, the loss of the gullwing doors did rob the car of some of its unique aura. Development continued, with an optional hardtop being offered from 1958 and the 300SL became the first Mercedes to mount four-wheel disc brakes in 1961. W198 production ended in 1963 with the introduction of the W113 'Pagoda' SL. The basic features and character of an automotive dynasty which continues to this day had been established.

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# Making a Slash

Koenig's work was arguably the ultimate in 80s excess

**1** 980s tuners often chose Mercedes-Benz as the target for their excesses. Not only is Mercedes-Benz one of the best brands in the business, but the reliability of its 80s models was second to none. Favoured transport by the chairmen and Arab sheikhs alike, it's no surprise that they became the chosen basis for more personal displays of wealth.

One of the more overt modified Mercs of the 1980s was the Koenig SL. Founded by racing driver Willy Koenig, the company began by offering performance and cosmetic modifications to the Ferrari Berlinetta Boxer. Koenig had been unimpressed with his

"Side strakes transformed the shape into something almost more akin to a Ferrari Testarossa."

car, and set out to return it to the halcyon days of the sporting brand. The brand diversified in the early 1980s into modifying other brands including Jaguar, Lamborghini, and Mercedes.

Starting life as a standard SL500, the Koenig cars were dispatched to the workshop for remodelling. The rear was widened significantly, with side strakes transforming the shape into something almost more akin to a Ferrari Testarossa. Approximately six inches of additional width were added to each side of the car, topped not only by a spoiler on the tail edge of the bootlid but by an alarming wing atop the rear deck. The side vents, however dramatic they may have »



## *Modded Mercs*

**Words:** Sam Skelton  
**Images:** Koenig





## Modded Mercs

looked, were blanks. They served no purpose except to increase wind turbulence and drag, reducing the overall aerodynamic capability of the package.

This would have been to the car's overall detriment in terms of performance except for just one thing. Koenig offered a performance upgrade to match the dramatic new bodywork. The 5.0 V8 wasn't enough any more – Koenig added a supercharger which boosted overall power by a third: from 240bhp to a staggering 320bhp. This was transmitted through 15" BBS alloys – a staggering 13 inches wide on the back, necessitating 345/35 tyres.

Inside, the cars looked nothing like the originals – TVs, Recaro seats and Clarion stereos dominated. Many cars were trimmed in button-back leather; a Koenig trademark,

**Right:** Koenig also worked its magic on the SEC coupe

"It must have been one of the most expensive and opulent padded cells available to man."

and one which highlights the tastes of the era better than little else. Ruched and padded door cards completed the package, which must have been one of the most expensive and opulent padded cells available to man. »







## Modded Mercs

But Koenig didn't stop there. W126 S-Class, SECs and R129 SLs also came under the tuner's knife – most visibly in the form of convertible conversions to the SEC coupe. Again, these featured side slashes in the style of the Ferrari Testarossa. Unlike the R107 though, the SEC conversions also featured dramatically widened front wheelarches in the style of Audi's Quattro. 500SEC conversions – and 560SEC conversions – were usually supercharged. In the case of the convertible, the performance usefully offset the extra weight of the roof mechanism and body strengthening.

"Everything is still available – even the bodykits."

Excess was less favourable during the 1990s – so while Koenig offered conversions to the subsequent SL and SEC models few were produced. By the mid 1990s the tuner conversions were gone, though Koenig Specials still exists as a supplier of performance modification parts. Everything is still available – even the bodykits, which for the SEC cost in the region of €9000, and €9500 for the R129 SL. Sadly the R107 SL is not listed on its website, [www.koenig-specials.com](http://www.koenig-specials.com).

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**Andrew Roberts** Contributor

**Benz On Film:**  
1970 280SL

# THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

Shand's SL escaped his sticky end... but stole the show.

**W**hat are the cars that you mainly associate with *The Long Good Friday*?

There was Harold Shand's Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow S1, Inspector Parky's Princess "Wedge" 1700 HL Series 2 and that Jaguar XJ6L 4.2 S2 containing a very young Pierce Brosnan. We could also mention that black Ford Granada GL Mk.I, a first generation Renault 5 the Ford Torino and various 1 ½ litre BMC "Farinas" of the banger circuit plus two notable examples of the Mercedes-Benz; a 1973 230 W115 hearse and, of course the 1970 W113 280SL driven by Helen Mirren.

When *The Long Good Friday* entered production, in 1979 the Pagoda had been out of production for eight years but it still exuded an effortless sense of glamour and – that almost inevitable word – 'class'. Bob Hoskins' Harold Shand delights in his Rolls-Royce, his tailored suits, his ability to command and bribe at will, for these are all outward signs of how far he has come since he was a minor spiv selling black market goods on a bombsite. Once, it would be fair to assume, Harold worked with a set of London's own brothers grim, but now he is



a businessman of vision, one plans to convert the city's moribund docklands into a thriving concern, including a casino. Victoria, his girlfriend, even has a public school background and the Mercedes-Benz to match.

The W113's screen time is comparatively limited but its appearances symbolise Harold's dreams of the future, ones that are far removed from the quite remarkably bleak capital city of over four decades ago. A budget of under a million pounds was low even by the standards of the day and so the director John Mackenzie made extensive use of

**Above:** Shand's Jag gets most screen time, but the SL is an iconic part of the film

St. Katharine's and Royal Albert Docks, Wapping High Street and other locations that captured a city on the verge of a seismic change.

*The Long Good Friday* is a picture that is often bracketed with the two Sweeney films and *The Squeeze* in its depiction of a sad, violence and grim urban landscape. The 280SL sequences may provide a brief respite from the bleak mood but this is no Guy Ritchie style barrel full of mockney actors - just the tale of a brutal man coming to realise his limitations. And to think that there was once a serious plan to have Hoskins overdubbed by the (Staffordshire-born!) David Daker... 📺





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# 1962 Mercedes-Benz 190SL

Not the cheapest – but almost certainly the best in the UK

**W**hen a classic car restoration specialist admits that it doesn't mind whether a car sells because it's being used to showcase its work, you know you're dealing with something special. And that's precisely what this 190SL is. We defy anyone to find a single ding, a tiny scuff, or anything, anywhere on this car. Every carefully created compound curve is perfect – and it doesn't look as if a single corner has been cut here. The wheels and tyres are good, with virginal hubcaps as you'd expect from a car which has done just 188 miles since its restoration in 2016. The hood frame has been thoroughly restored and the material replaced – not that you'll need it, as it would be a crying shame

**"We defy anyone to find a single ding, a tiny scuff, or anything, anywhere on this car."**

to let this example see the rain.

If we were to criticise the interior, it would only be that the slight matt finish to the leather belies its newness.

There's a lot of charm in aged, shiny, smooth leather that has been lost here in the pursuit of perfection – but this is unlikely to worry the kind of person who might want a 190SL as perfect as this one. Even the sideways third seat in the rear has been retrimmed – and neither the dash nor the switchgear show up what is a very comprehensive interior restoration. The ivory plastic steering wheel and gearknob are as new – this feels like a 1962 190SL would have felt in 1962, in the showroom.

And it runs like a new car too – a good idle on and off choke, with nothing to worry about on any of the gauges and a virginal underbonnet view – forget leaks, even a little accidentally spilled oil on top-up would look out of place here. The gearbox

£ *One to buy*

Mileage: 88,681 miles  
Price: £197,500



won't be hurried but is smooth enough, and while the car's not the last word in performance it's got more than enough to satisfy the kind of use a car like this is ever likely to get.

Originally a German car, when the family moved to England the car came with them, and until it was bought for restoration it had been a one-family car from new. The restoration involved almost every nut and bolt – there was a full engine and gearbox stripdown and rebuild, the loom was scrapped and replaced in its entirety, the chrome has been refinished, the interior retrimmed – the whole car has been finished to concours standard. And this explains the asking price which some might find ambitious for a 190SL – this really is as good as you're going to get, and it would be futile to try to find better.

## Conclusion

If you expect perfection you'll find it here. If you expect a bargain, you won't – though it would certainly take at least the asking price to restore another to this standard. This is the kind of car that will only appeal to a select few, but if you're in the market for a concours 1960s Mercedes then you may as well stop searching now.

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MARKET NEWS

*Buying a  
First-Generation*

SLK



Mercedes' first small roadster in more than a generation was a huge success but had its own share of troubles. If this enticing blend of compact style, luxury and performance is tempting you, then here's a rundown of the pitfalls you should be aware of





# R170 Buying guide

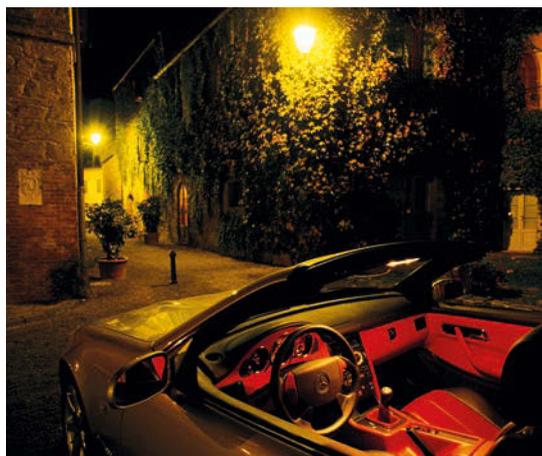
Words: Jack Grover

**T**he 1990s was a period of great change for Mercedes-Benz, with an emphasis on broadening the marque's appeal by introducing new and higher-volume model lines. The bold A-Class supermini and the M Class sports utility vehicle took the three-pointed star into new market segments with new customer bases. This was the spirit behind the SLK sports car, which debuted at the Turin Motor Show in 1996.

The R170 SLK introduced a smooth-edged, rounded shape that carried on the new design language of the W210 E Class introduced the previous year and which marked a clear break with the straight-cut lines of the older SL models. The party piece was the 'Vario Roof', a folding steel roof which folded away at the press of the button. The standard engine was a supercharged 2.3-litre M111 four-cylinder engine delivering 190 horsepower, thus the model was badged as the SLK230 Kompressor. The other option was the SLK200 with a naturally-aspirated and smaller-capacity M111 of 136bhp.

Despite its initials standing for 'Sportlich, Leicht und Kurz' or 'Sporty, Light and Short' the SLK's ride and handling were little changed from the W202 C Class with which it shared a platform and its clever roof and well-appointed cockpit meant it was relatively heavy. But it was a good-looking, comfortable, practical and prestigious convertible at an attainable price. Sales significantly outstripped predictions with 55,000 SLKs being sold in the first year. Considered a 'poseur's car' by many commentators and pub bores due to its lack of poise and emphasis on style, the SLK was a resounding success by any other measure.

In 2000 the SLK received a facelift, distinguished by new front and rear bumpers with round front fog lights and body-coloured sills instead of the original black amongst other detail changes. The SLK200 model was



**Above:** Colour coded interiors divided opinion

replaced by the SLK200 Kompressor with 161 horsepower, the SLK230 Kompressor gained an extra four horses and the new SLK320 with a 3.2-litre M112 V6 of 215hp was introduced. In 2001 the SLK32 AMG was launched with a supercharged version of the V6 engine, 'SpeedShift' transmission, uprated brakes and cosmetic enhancements. The AMG had 349 horsepower, a top speed of 174mph and a sub-five-second 0-60mph time. Only 4333 examples were made in three years, of which 263 were UK spec.

SLK production ended in April 2004 when the R171 version took its place. A total of 383,200 R170s had been built. Of those the most popular had been facelifted SLK200 Kompressors (113,500 examples), followed by pre- and post-facelift versions of the SLK230 Kompressor (102,750). There was an almost perfect 50/50 split between manual and automatic SLKs.

## BODYWORK

Unfortunately one of Daimler's other strategies for Mercedes in the mid-'90s was to sacrifice some of the material quality and longevity which was such a hallmark of the name. In particular this took the form of lower-quality steel in the bodies and a new painting process which experienced

a lot of problems in production. This combination left Mercedes of the time prone to corrosion and the R170 was no exception. By now it is the case that most SLKs will have had repair work so it is important to check that any fixes have been done to a good standard. Check for signs of a quick 'rub down and blow over' spray job. A full respray to a good standard will cost between £2000 and £5000 and a well-cared for car should have good evidence of the work being done in its history file.

In terms of areas to check, start with the wheel arches, inside and out. On pre-facelift cars unclipping the front indicator lamp units allows you to see the state of the inner wing joint, which can often be very heavily corroded. New panels are about £200 each, plus painting and fitting. Stone chips on the bonnet frequently start rust spots, as do fittings such as door locks and handles. The rear subframe can cause problems come MoT time but it can usually be patched without too much expense. The level of fit and finish remained excellent so any uneven shut lines indicate either accident damage or poor-quality work replacing rusted panels, especially front wings. Post-facelift cars are somewhat better in terms of rust-resistance but are still far from immune.

## ENGINES

None of the engines used in the first SLK have any real problems. Issues usually arise from a lack of servicing, which can catch out owners of low-value examples when a service costs between £500 and £800 and a V6 has 12 spark plugs which cost £15 each.

It is the peripheral parts which suffer, such as dirty or defective air-flow meters. These can be replaced on the driveway (new meters are around £50) but a diagnostic computer may be needed to find and clear any fault codes. On supercharged models listen for continuous whines or shrieks from the blower which indicate it needs



**LANCASTER INSURANCE**

**1998 SLK230 Kompressor**  
 - value £2k  
 - £134.99  
 or £152.99  
 with Agreed Valuation

*\*Quotes based on: 45 year old male, marketing manager, access to another car, no claims or convictions, club member, 3000 miles per year, no modifications, living in SP2 OHL.*



replacing (not to be confused with the noise made by a healthy supercharger at high speeds). A decent secondhand unit can be bought and fitted for £500 or so.

The four-cylinder engines are prone to oil leaking into the engine wiring loom which can cause misfires and then irrevocably damage the ECU if the oil reaches it. Check the cam timing adjustment unit on the front face of the cylinder head for signs of oil leaks and check that the plug that goes into the unit is free from oil inside and out. If there is a leak, a new unit and a revised loom section cures the problem for £100 or so.

The V6 engines are essentially trouble-free provided the electronics are fully functional, although be aware that the four catalytic converters can cost over £500 to replace, so

you really want to be sure that the engine management system is working correctly.

#### TRANSMISSION & SUSPENSION

The standard transmission was a manual built by Getrag, originally with five speeds and then six following the 2000 facelift. Mercedes' own five-speed 5G-Tronic automatic was available as an option on all models throughout production. The AMG was only available with the 5G-Tronic with the addition of 'SpeedShift' manual control.

The manual units are not especially pleasant to use but last a long time, especially in the lower-power models. The 5G-Tronic needs fluid changes every 35,000 miles and repairs can easily outweigh the value of the car so be sure the oil is in good condition and

**Above:** Check the hood mechanism thoroughly

that the gearbox operates as it should. Many problems with the automatic transmission failing to select or hold on to gears actually lie with failed speed sensors or corroded electrical connectors in the engine bay, but it is not worth taking the risk – just find another SLK without such problems.

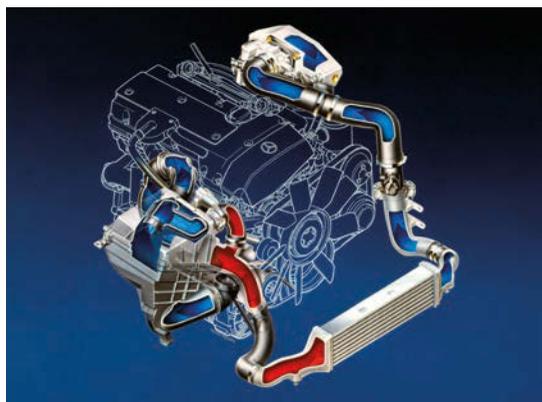
The SLK's suspension is shared with the W202 C-Class and the only specific problem to look for are the lower steering ball joints, which wear out in about 60,000 miles or so, leading to knocks and clonks when travelling over bumps. They can be fixed for about £80 in parts plus a couple of hours' labour. The rear springs can snap at the bottom coil, which is indicated by banging from the rear underside. Otherwise just listen and watch for worn bushes, tired dampers and noisy wheel bearings. »

# £ R170 Buying guide

## INTERIOR

The SLK's groundbreaking folding roof can be reliable but needs to be used regularly. It works via hydraulic rams powered by an electric pump. The fluid should be changed every couple of years. With the engine running, cycle the roof up and down a few times. Listen for unusual noises. The roof should take 25 seconds to fold or unfold, so if it's significantly slower than that the fluid may need changing or the pump is getting weak – a new one is over £800. The windows should go up and down with the roof. Any groans from stiff hinges or seals can be fixed with some spray-on white grease. Other issues can be caused by failed switches in the boot lid and roof latches which control the operation. With so many SLKs out there, and diagnosing and repairing roof problems so expensive, it is best to walk away from any cars with problems in this area.

The interior trim is not up to the usual Mercedes standards, with both the plastics and the fabrics tending to wear quickly, especially the soft-touch outer covering of the dashboard and centre console. This is a purely cosmetic issue and can be repaired with a bit of DIY. Similarly replacement seats and door cards can be sourced from breakers so tatty trim makes a good bargaining point on car that is structurally and mechanically sound.



**Above:** Supercharged engine was based on the M111

## VALUES

High-mileage 230Ks, 200Ks and 200s start at £1750 or so. Many of these will be very scruffy but there may be some diamonds in the rough. A £2500-£4000 budget opens up a broader variety of lower-mileage and better-condition 230Ks and maybe some good 320s if they're in undesirable colours or have more than average mileage. Between £4000 and £5000 will give you a very wide range of cars ranging from sound 320s and late 230Ks to excellent 200Ks and pre-facelift 230Ks. The very best late-model, low-mileage R170s go for up to £6000. The exception is for the SLK32 AMG, which is rare, desirable and a genuine high-performance sports car rather than a comfortable cruiser. Values go up to £10,000 or a little more for a UK-spec car.

## Verdict – what to buy

There is a lot to like about the R170 SLK, with its combination of open-top cruising, refined and reliable engines, comfortable manners and weatherproof metal top. At the moment it offers one of the cheapest ways into convertible Mercedes ownership and so long as you put a little bit of care into choosing the right car it should be free from major headaches. As to what that car should be, the SLK230 Kompressor is still the one that ticks the most boxes, offering a good balance of performance, handling and running costs. There are so many examples out there that you won't feel pressured into buying one just because it's available now, which means that you stand the best chance of getting a car you'll enjoy.

## Technical Information

### SLK200

**Engine** 1998cc/4-cyl/DOHC  
**Power** 134bhp @ 5500rpm  
**Torque** 140 lb-ft @ 3700rpm  
**Gearbox** 5-spd manual/5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 9.7 sec  
**Top Speed** 129mph  
**MPG** 31.7mpg

### SLK200 Kompressor

**Engine** 1998cc/4-cyl/DOHC  
**Power** 161bhp @ 5300rpm  
**Torque** 169 lb-ft @ 2500rpm  
**Gearbox** 6-spd manual/5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 8.2 sec  
**Top Speed** 139mph  
**MPG** 29.8mpg

### SLK230 Kompressor

**Engine** 2295cc/4-cyl/DOHC  
**Power** 190bhp @ 5300rpm  
**Torque** 206 lb-ft @ 2500rpm  
**Gearbox** 5-spd manual/5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 7.6 sec  
**Top Speed** 144mph  
**MPG** 30.3mpg

### SLK230 Kompressor

**Engine** 2295cc/4-cyl/DOHC  
**Power** 194bhp @ 5300rpm  
**Torque** 206 lb-ft @ 2500rpm  
**Gearbox** 6-spd manual/5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 7.2 sec  
**Top Speed** 149mph  
**MPG** 29.4mpg

### SLK320

**Engine** 3199cc/6-cyl/SOHC  
**Power** 215bhp @ 5700rpm  
**Torque** 228 lb-ft @ 3000rpm  
**Gearbox** 6-spd manual/5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 6.9 sec  
**Top Speed** 152mph  
**MPG** 25.1mpg

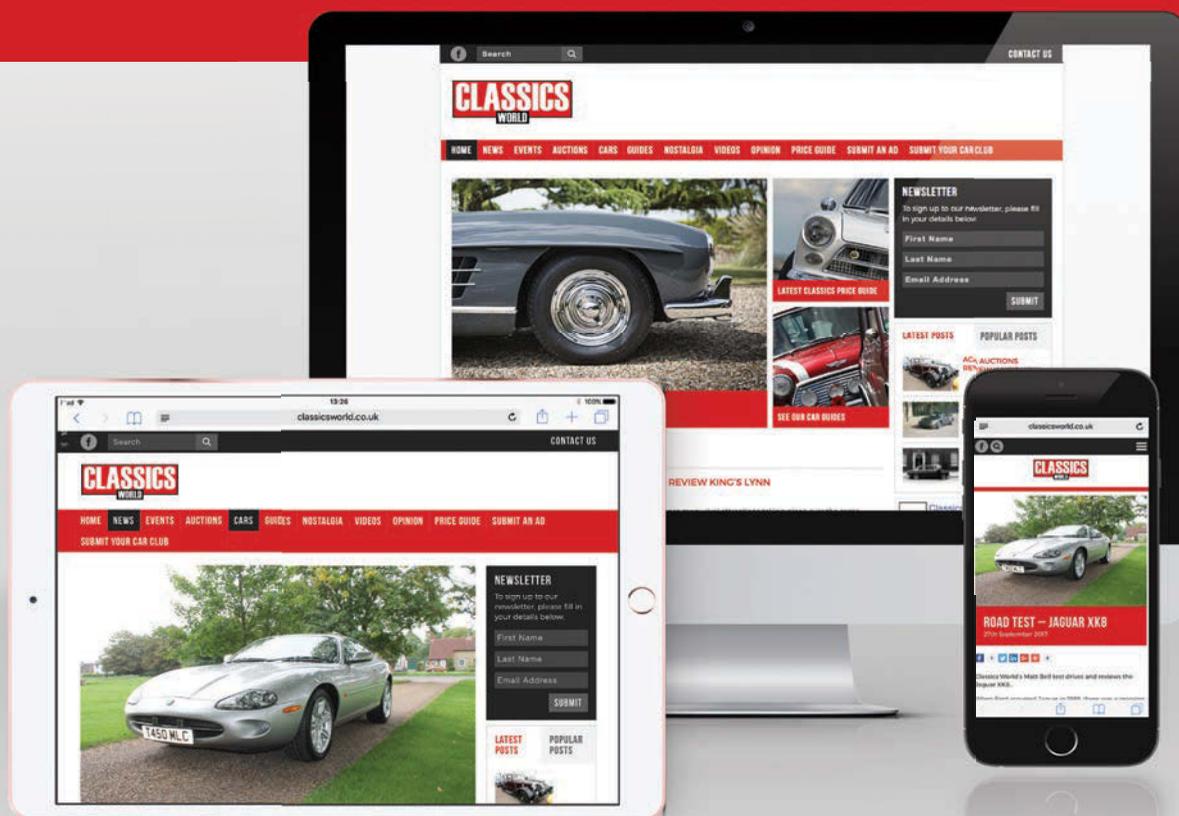
### SLK32 AMG

**Engine** 3199cc/6-cyl/SOHC  
**Power** 349bhp @ 6100rpm  
**Torque** 331 lb-ft @ 4400rpm  
**Gearbox** 5-spd automatic  
**0-60** 4.9 sec  
**Top Speed** 155mph  
**MPG** 24.7mpg

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# 1997 Mercedes-Benz SL280

This late V6-powered R129 is ideal for chasing the sun this summer

**W**hile a whisper shy of ten grand is not cheap for an R129, neither is it expensive these days for a car from a dealer. And this one is worth it – it's clearly had some love, with not even a bumper scuff to its name when we viewed it. The tyres are good, the graphite-finish AMG alloys are free from kerbing marks, and there appeared to be no damage around the hardtop mounting points caused by careless fitment. While the hardtop was on for test and thus we couldn't check the convertible hood, we are assured that it is present and in excellent condition – the condition of the rest of the car backs this assertion up. We wish, though, that a previous owner hadn't tried to be clever and remove the "280" from the boot



badge. It looks wrong, and in the right light you can see witness marks in the paint. Our first job, if we were to buy, would be to reinstate the badging.

Grey leather might be uninspiring but it is all present and functional. The electric seats work in all directions, and the seat heaters both work. The carpets are good, as is the wood – and the rare Panoramic glass roof option was ticked by a savvy first owner. Somewhat ambitiously, the first owner also specified rear seats – whether these were used when the car was new is difficult to say, although one ended up being used on test courtesy of an impromptu journey to rescue an employee who had broken down in another car. We can't vouch for their comfort over distance – but they do function as seats!

£ *One to buy*

Mileage: 80,051 miles  
Price: £9,995



It starts well, settling down to a good idle. The oil pressure reads well, and we could see or smell no leaks when looking under the bonnet. When warm, it runs beautifully, though there's more noise than you would expect courtesy of a stainless steel exhaust which is not exactly the original specification.

**"The hood is present and in excellent condition."**



**Below:** Interior is in perfect order – though we're not fans of grey



All the gear changes are smooth, and there is an alarming turn of speed which we didn't expect from the baby engine. The V6 howl under kickdown is addictive too – you'll be grateful for the good brakes if you use this car to its full potential. We're not keen on the exhaust, which is perhaps slightly throatier than it ought to be, but overall this is a good example and one we'd be happy to use on a regular basis.

This car has spent time in Spain, and much of its history is in Spanish as a result. However, there is one bill from February 2017 detailing repair work to the roof mechanism at a cost of £528. We cannot establish the efficacy of the repair, but it should pose no immediate concerns.

## Conclusion

While Brilliant Silver with grey is a little derivative in our book, we can't deny that this is a very straight and tidy example of the R129. We didn't see the hood as the hardtop was fitted on test, but we're told it is both present and good. That notwithstanding – leave the hard top at home and go and enjoy the sun.

### BUY THIS CAR FROM:

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# Market Analysis

News from Anglia Car Auctions  
and Barons Auctions





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## Market news

Words: Jack O'Brien

**W**ith 25 Mercedes Benz models on offer, ACA's April 14th auction had by far and away the largest representation of the marque. An age span of 1956 -2006 shows, once again, the lasting appeal of the Mercedes Benz name. The fact that such modern cars can appear in classic auctions without raising too many eyebrows is a clear indication as to the market's perception of the brand.

The room, however, wasn't the strongest sale room we have seen – Mercedes Driver was present, and many cars were selling for under their estimates – at least in the first half of the auction. While we saw some Mercedes models reaching prices that were worthy of their condition, we certainly felt that there were a number of bargains for the canny buyer.

**"The R170 seems to be a popular car this year."**

At £5936 including premium, the 1956 180 Ponton looks like a great value way in to a 50s Merc. With 200k, 500k and 1 million km grille badges and an interesting history – this is a car that will be a talking point wherever it goes. W186 300 Adenauers are not a common car on the UK auction scene, known to the Mercedes Benz Owners Club and having been restored to a supposedly good standard, it achieved £37,630.

Building on what we saw last month, with the two W123 coupes

**Right:** S-class sold for £1700. Cheap car despite the white paint

on offer, it is surprising that ACA failed to get the £9000 reserve price of their 46,000-mile 230C. Astral Silver with series 2 blue cloth / MB Tex, this car is similar in every respect to the mint example sold by Classics Central in 2016 for £10,600. Of potentially the most historical significance was a first full year of production, 1976, RHD, UK delivered 280E. Finished in the oh so glorious 70s hue that is Mimosa Yellow, the W123 sold for £3604 including premium (If you feel as though you missed out on this one, it reappeared back on eBay for significantly more money shortly after the auction – and will no doubt be available for viewing!).

The R170 seems to be a popular car this year, almost every example sold so far has done well. ACA achieved a fair £4770 for their Black manual SLK230, having covered 38,500 miles this seems very much "on the money." At the lower end of the scale, the 1999 105,000





mile SLK 230 sold by Barons made £1980. Still, good value for money. Conversely, R107s seem to be having a slightly rough time. The best examples for sale privately and by dealers commanding very strong money, but at auction the tale seems to be: the best cars sell, the cheap stuff sells and everything in the middle is just that. Offered at no reserve, £5936 for a 1981 380SL – albeit wearing later wheels and air dam, and subject to an insurance claim is well below the market average and feels down on what it would have been 12 months ago. A 450SLC for just £5300 including premium, with a 12 month MoT, seems like even better value – even if it is left hand drive. A pair of more modern R230 SL500s sold at ACA for £7420 and £7844 including premium – surely the next SL to start to appreciate? »





£ *Market news*

For those on a budget, there are still plenty of Sacco era Benzes passing through the auctions at almost unmissable prices. ACA's Classic White W124 230E with 162,000 miles sold for £900 including premium. There probably isn't a more pleasant form of transport for under a grand available anywhere. Increase your spend slightly and £1700 would have got you home in a lovely W140 S500 L – arguably the best S Class ever for banger money, even if it was in wedding white. Madness. Even desirable W124 estates were going cheap – a very presentable metallic blue E320 with leather but no air con went for just £1900.

**Far left:** SLCs have stayed cheap – this 450SLC sold for £5300

A 190E 2.5-16 with a guide range of under £10k is a rare beast these days, only one has sold at auction for under five figures since July 2015 – and even this car was £9900. This did not stop Barons' Almandine

**"A 190E 2.5-16 with a guide range of under £10k is a rare beast these days."**

Red 1988 example failing to meet its lower estimate of £7000 on April 21st. It must be speculated that for this to occur, it must be a particularly tired example. With 208,000 miles on the clock, it will never be a collector example but in "running condition", an interesting and enjoyable daily driver; surely. To further add to the irony, the car in question will be recognisable to Top Gear fans, as it's the example that Richard Hammond drove in Series 5 – telling the virtues of the 16v and to buy an automatic valver... Nearly there, but the real blue-chip investment is a low

mileage Getrag manual rather than the automatic Benz the BBC predicted would hold most value.

Falling in the middle of the guide range, £51,700 for a tidy, restored 230SL is what would be expected in the current market. Recent performance of Pagodas remains strong but level. Looking at the auction results over the last 12 months, there has been very little movement, and the average price is somewhere between £55-70k for nicely restored or good original examples.

It would probably be fair to say that all of us desire a stacked headlight Merc. The quintessential 60s style icons are becoming

harder to find, more expensive and generally less obtainable in anything other than shed state. The late model 280E sold by Barons appears to tick every box. M110 fuel injected straight 6, automatic transmission, tan interior and no rust. I say no rust, it's a /8, you'll find some somewhere, but a South African car will always be better than one that has enjoyed 40 of our finest winters. Sold for £4950, this 280 is a rare car, unlike the wheezy 4 pots and diesels, this car will actually keep up with traffic. A usable, classy, classic Merc for sub £5k. What more can you ask for, other than a bit of sunshine to enjoy it?





# 1991 Mercedes-Benz 500E

One of the best 500Es we've ever seen

**T**he body is in fantastic shape, with not even a parking dent to besmirch those fine Blue-Black flanks. The wider arches are in perfect condition on all corners, as are all the lenses and the glass. The wheels are perfect, shod with Dunlop SP Sports all round. This car previously wore AMG five spokes – while these 8-hole wheels are more in keeping and are what the car would have worn new, they are unlikely to be the original set. There's a little stress cracking to the top of the rear bumper, but it's 27 years old and perfection can't reasonably be expected. There's nothing to confirm when this car was facelifted to the post 1992 nose, but as it is a 500E it should wear the earlier bonnet and grille if originality bothers you.

**"You'd be forgiven for thinking that the 23,000 miles shown is its total."**

The grey leather is in excellent order too, with front sports seats and the individual rear seats alike smelling and looking perfect. The wood is unblemished, even the 500-specific items such as the wood around the

**Far right:**  
Half walnut steering wheel a desirable touch

speaker grilles on the top of the dash. There's a rare half-walnut wheel in here too, a desirable extra and one which wouldn't be cheap to retrofit. The car has a more modern Alpine radio head unit, and a Bury Bluetooth system fixed to the dash. Sensibly, someone has wired in a permanent live 12v feed for a satellite navigation system behind the dash, to avoid unsightly trailing wires. The rear sunblind works, as does the sunroof – though on test the sunroof inner trim did not retract with the outer panel. The original first aid kit is present, and appears unopened.

Starting the car is easy when you know how the immobiliser works, and it settles to a perfect idle. Gearchanges are perfectly smooth, as is the suspension. On the road this car feels absolutely perfect – a fact borne out

£ *One to buy*

Mileage: 23,134 miles  
Price: £24,995



by the excellent condition of the engine bay. The kickdown is rapid – and the acceleration is certainly rapid too. It's a little sharper than most W124 models, though left hand drive puts UK drivers at a slight disadvantage. We shouldn't count that against this car though – all 500Es were LHD regardless of market. You'd be forgiven for thinking that the 23,000 miles shown is its total – in truth, it did 134,000 kilometres (approximately 84,000 miles) before being fitted with a UK-spec speedometer.

The history files shows incredible detail from 2009 onwards, including regular servicing and an engine rebuild. Unfortunately a previous owner lost the original service book, but there is a written account of telephone conversations which shows the extent of the original file. 

## Conclusion

If you want a really good 500E, buy this one. Not only is it the best colour, but it's original, largely unmolested and in near mint condition. And while £24,995 might seem a lot for a W124, this is a car that has doubled in value over the last decade. There's more investment potential in it yet...

### BUY THIS CAR FROM:

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# BREAKING *the seal*

Why and how you should service your sealed-for-life transmissions

**S**adly, the automatic transmissions of many 1996-on Mercedes have turned out to be something of a weak spot – at least by Mercedes-Benz standards. Moreover, this situation hasn't really been helped by the factory not specifying any routine change interval for the automatic transmission fluid (ATF). Not only that, they don't even provide a dipstick for checking the level! The tube/filler pipe is still there, but instead of containing a dipstick, it is blanked off with a plug that can be removed only by breaking its seal.

However, although there was no recommended change interval at the time, Mercedes have now changed the service schedule, and for most 1996-on automatics now recommend an ATF change every 50,000 miles or five years. The problem, though, is that because this will not be listed with the service data that's with the car, many owners will be unaware of it.

Overall it's a relatively straightforward process, though it does involve dropping the gearbox's sump in order to renew the internal filter. The sump gasket should also be changed – in most cases a replacement will come with your new filter. However as the job does involve opening up the gearbox, absolute cleanliness underneath is vital, and for that reason it's not a job that we'd recommend doing with the car on wheel ramps or axle stands – the risk of dirt getting swept up inside is too great. You need decent access underneath from a pit or similar.

As noted a moment ago, Mercedes-Benz dispensed with the transmission fluid dipstick on most models from



around 1995 onwards. You can buy one from a dealer, but because they're considered a special tool rather than a car spare, they're not especially cheap. You do, though, need the exact-right one for your car; although the same basic gearbox was used across many cars the length of the dipstick tubes varies. It therefore follows that if the dipstick tubes vary, so do the dipsticks, and using one from another car that 'looks right' can cause problems. So please don't just grab an MB dipstick from your pile of bits and assume it will be right – chances are it won't be.

There is, though, another method you can use. Simply measure the amount of fluid that comes out, and then put back in the exact same amount of new ATF! Then, assuming the level was correct when you started it should also be right at the end. You

do need to make a small allowance for fluid that's lost through dripping and soaked up in cleaning rags – but do be careful not to overfill – but in practice, unless your box has a leak (relatively unusual and usually obvious) the 'replace what comes out' method works well.

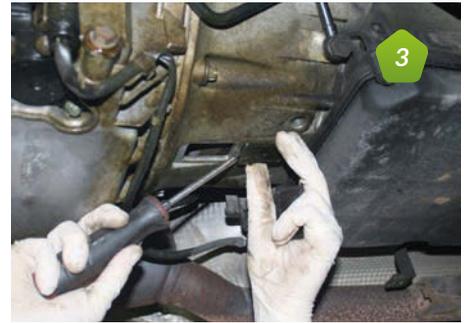
The process was demonstrated for us by Peterborough-based Mercedes (and BMW and Porsche) specialists TWG – thanks for your help everyone. While proprietor Mark Twigg does recommend the 50,000 mile ATF

change, he did mention one possible downside; if these changes have been neglected up to now and/or the box is already past its best, changing fluid can actually hasten its demise as the fluid will have become conditioned to the slightly worn box. This, though, is relatively rare and on balance the fluid change is still well worth doing – a box that fails shortly after receiving new fluid will have been on its way anyway, and would probably have failed within a year or so anyway...

Our picture-sequence shows the procedure on a fairly typical car – in this case a 2005 CLK which had covered around 115,000 miles – it's not known whether this was its first or second change. While the basic procedure is applicable to most models there will, of course, be detail changes depending on age and model.



**1** First job – obviously – is to remove the engine undertray – held on by 8mm bolts in our case. There are usually two trays – one under the gearbox and one under the engine – and while you can access the gearbox with just the rear tray dropped, you’ll need to turn the engine in a minute, and this is generally easier from underneath and with both undertrays off.

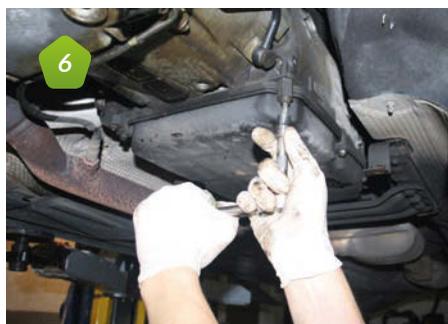


**2** Now you can drain the old ATF out – the drain plug is usually a T30 Torx fitting. Drain the old fluid into a measuring container, so you can see how much comes out and use that figure – allowing a bit for spillage, cleaning-out etc., - and in the absence of a dipstick you use that as a basis for how much you need to add.



**3** Although most ATF will be in the gearbox itself, the torque converter also holds a significant amount – usually around 1½ - 2 litres – and this should therefore also be drained if at all possible. The problem, though, is that Mercedes-Benz don’t always provide a drain point, and the provision or otherwise isn’t 100% age or model specific! To find out if yours has one prise out these rectangular plugs...

**4** ...and then, using a 27mm socket on the crank end, turn the engine over while watching the torque converter inside move round. If there is a drain plug, you’ll see it, but unfortunately our car didn’t have one. In cases like this all you can really do is change what you can drain via the gearbox, and do the job again soon afterwards; this should mean most of the fluid gets changed.



**5** With the fluid out, you next need to drop the gearbox sump – again you’ll most likely be dealing with T30 Torx fixings, but make sure your Torx bit’s fully

engaged as these fixings are easily mangled. Once you’re down to the last couple you need to prepare for the sump to come down as the last ones are released, though if it’s tight you might need a couple of mallet-taps to the side to free it.

**6** From now on, observe absolute and total cleanliness – you really don’t want anything getting inside the gearbox. The filter is a press-fit into the bottom and can be pulled down and off. As you can see, this is very likely to ‘release’ some more ATF

– prepare for it, and add, in your mind, any that’s lost this way to the amount you need to put back in.

**7** Give the sump inside a very thorough wipe and cleanout using degreaser and clean rags that won’t lose any strands. Don’t be tempted to reuse the old gasket when it comes to refitting; even if it doesn’t leak immediately it can’t be relied in long-term, and with no dipstick for routine level-checks the first indication of low ATF might well be (expensive) damage to the box! »



**8** There's also a magnet inside the sump; this, clearly, is meant to retain any small pieces of metal which might wear off the box innards, and prevent them from circulating and causing damage. This also of course needs a very thorough clean. Some light 'iron filings' type material is fairly normal, but obviously anything big that's attached is cause for concern.

**9** Sump inside and magnet after cleaning – a thorough job here is absolutely essential, and again bear in mind that a little more fluid will be lost during this stage, so again you need to 'add' a bit more to the measured amount being replaced.

**10** Refitting the sump and its new gasket. Once you've got it in position put a couple of the fixings – one on each side – in loosely to hold it in while you fit the others. There's no torque setting or official tightening sequence, but it's good practice with anything like this that needs to seal to fit and tighten bolts 'alternately' – ie one on one side first, then one on the opposite side and so on.

**11** When Mercedes-Benz made automatic gearboxes non-serviceable it was done by simply blanking off the combined dipstick/filler tube with a sealed plug. To refill, the plug needs to be removed; lever the red seal out using a screwdriver – this will break it; it isn't designed to be removed – and then take the plug off. There's no need to reinstate the seal – the plug will stay in place fine without it.

**12** Though there's no need to stick to 'genuine' Mercedes-Benz, you do need to use a decent quality ATF. With more recent products it's also important to choose the right one – nowadays not all types of ATF are the same. This is the recommended Millers Oils product for the 2005 CLK we were working on, but double-check with the manufacturer if you're unsure.



**13** Being a professional operation, TWC use a pump-type device to refill the gearbox – a lot quicker and easier than using a funnel, though the latter is fine in an environment where time isn't money. Start by measuring into the pump the exact-same amount of fluid as you know came out, not forgetting to allow a little for 'spillage' and the ATF that was soaked up by your cleaning rags etc.

**14** Then slowly pump the contents into the box via the 'dipstick' hole. If you haven't got a pump you can do this using a clean funnel, but take it steady. With the box refilled, start the engine and run the gear selector through its whole range three or four times before road-testing the car. Take it to full running temperature and check for leaks. Reluctant/sluggish gear selection means you need to add a bit more fluid.



**Thanks to..**

Peterborough based independent Mercedes specialist TWG Sports (Thorpe Road, Longthorpe, Peterborough, PE3 6LU (01733 332911, email twg@supernet.com) for providing photographic facilities and technical advice for this feature. For more details – and a load of useful Mercedes technical information to boot – go to their website at [www.twg-mercedesservicing.co.uk](http://www.twg-mercedesservicing.co.uk)



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## Technical Tips

### Fluid Facts

**B**rake fluid has a limited life in or out of cars. With the exception of silicone brake fluid – a subject that I'll return to a bit later – all brake fluid is hygroscopic; in other words it absorbs moisture from the atmosphere. This is a bad thing for two reasons; firstly it reduces the fluid's boiling point. This is potentially very dangerous indeed as braking creates heat, and while 'unadulterated' fluid has a boiling point high enough to withstand this, water boils at 100 degrees c., and once the fluid becomes significantly waterlogged there's a very real risk of it boiling under heavy braking. The net result is then total loss of brakes at, in all probability, a moment when you really need them...

Additionally, modern braking systems are a lot more sophisticated than those which were around 10 or 15 years ago, and many internal components in things like ABS pumps can be damaged by waterlogged fluid. The official Mercedes-Benz recommendation is that brake fluid should either be changed annually or bi-annually depending on model – mileage isn't relevant for this – and once a fluid bottle has been opened, its contents should be used within a year.

Brake fluid is classified by its DOT (American Department of Transportation) number, and the four you are most likely to come across are DOT3, DOT4, DOT5 and DOT5.1. DOT3, 4 and 5.1 are successively higher-performing versions of standard fluid – chiefly in the area of boiling point) and each one exceeds the performance of its predecessor. DOT3 has a 'wet' boiling point of 140 degrees C and dry of 205 degrees c, DOT 4 is 155 and 230 respectively, and DOT5 and DOT 5.1 are 180 and 260. Successive DOT ratings are also supposed to work with one another if



**Above:** DOT4 and DOT5.1 brake fluid – the latter has a higher boiling point and was originally specified mainly for sports/performance cars. This particular bottle of DOT 5.1 is, though, way past its use-by date.

'mixed' in a system.

Many older (sixties and seventies) cars were specified for DOT3 fluid. This can be found with a bit of searching, but frankly you might just as well use DOT4 as the performance is better, real-world price is about the same and in my experience DOT3 and DOT4 are fully compatible without issue. I have, though, heard of a few cases where using DOT 5.1 in an older vehicle for which DOT3 or DOT4 were originally specified has caused problems with rubber seals swelling and distorting, and wouldn't therefore recommend it in a vehicle for which it was not originally specified.

As you've probably noticed, I haven't mentioned DOT5 yet. DOT5 is silicone brake fluid, a product which, it would be fair to say, was all the rage 15-20 years ago but which has since become somewhat controversial. Its main benefit is that, being silicone-based, it doesn't absorb moisture

– a factor that led to its widespread adoption by organisations like the US Army which often needs to leave vehicles in store; something classic car owners saw the advantage of. It doesn't attack paint either – in fact some say it makes a pretty good polish, but that's one to try at your own risk!

However it is slightly more compressible than conventional fluid, which sometimes means a longer pedal travel, and on some cars this can be significant. Certain types of rubber are also affected by it. Consequently, many motor manufacturers – including Mercedes-Benz – and component makers/reconditioners say it should not be used in their products. I've never myself used it in a Mercedes, but did once use it in a Volvo Amazon – it stayed in that car for more than fifteen years without any issues.

Changing brake fluid is one of those jobs which takes very little time indeed using garage/trade equipment but though usually possible on a DIY basis, can be a bit fiddly and messy, especially if you can't get under the car – some may think 30 minutes or so of paid garage time a price worth paying. If, though, you do want to go ahead then I'd recommend investing £20 or so in a Gunson 'Eezibleed' kit – an old favourite that's still available from good spares shops and works by pressurising the whole system using pressure sourced from the spare wheel. The kit also includes a bottle which you fill with fresh fluid. Then go round each bleed nipple in turn, starting furthest from the master cylinder. Undo, use a tube to direct the old fluid into a container, and carry on until new fluid appears – the old stuff should appear slightly darker. Carry on until all four (or six/eight in some complex dual circuit systems) have been done – the average Mercedes will probably take 1 – 1.5 litres to do a complete change.

Words: Peter Simpson



## Tight Nuts

**A**s well as being too loose, wheelnuts and wheel bolts can be too tight. Contrary to popular belief, it isn't just nuts for alloy wheels that have a specified torque setting; Mercedes steel wheels have one too, and while it isn't as critical on steels, the figure is there for a reason, and it makes sense to stick to it because besides making removal harder, too-tight wheelnuts can result in broken-off or loose studs, stripped threads and so on.

This, incidentally, is why it's sometimes a struggle to undo a 'hasn't come off for some time' wheelnut using the factory-supplied wheelbrace; people say the brace isn't big enough, but it's actually designed that way to prevent anyone from overtightening a nut/bolt during a roadside wheelchange. Use a socket and long extension bar to remove overtight nuts by all means, but when it comes to fitting use the supplied brace in an emergency but best of all a good quality torque wrench set to the correct setting.

These days, most fast-fit tyre depots recognise this and will use a torque wrench, though it does help if the 'operative' understands how to

**Above:** It's good practice to never refit a wheeltrim or hubcap without first double-checking that all the nuts are tight.

use it correctly. The following is not something I witnessed personally, but my 'source' is 100% reliable. Anyway, matey fits the (alloy) wheel and then proceeds to tighten the wheelnuts using an air ratchet. He then reached for the torque wrench, went round each nut in turn and pronounced that they were all torqued correctly 'because the torque wrench had clicked'..... It wasn't of course - all this proved was that the torque was AT LEAST the set figure, but probably a lot, lot more....

Finally, and talking of professional workshops, a common 'rule' - and one which I've always tried to follow when working on my own cars - is that wheel trims/hubcaps are NEVER fitted to a car unless, at exactly the same time, I also double-check that the wheelnuts or bolts have been fully tightened. It's all-too easy to make a potentially dangerous mistake here; put the wheel back on, finger-tighten the nuts so it stays in place, go off for a break or to do something else, and then go back, but forget that although the nuts look tight, they ain't....

If, though, 'hubcap off means check the nuts' that can't happen.

## Tee Hee...

Most of us have 'odd' items in our toolboxes - things we've found useful for certain specific jobs that we do quite often. One such is to be found in the 'brake tools' drawer of my box - and it's actually used quite a lot.

As you can see, the item in question is a plastic golf tee - something which, when I was trading cars, I found quite often in the lowest corner of the boot!

It's there because a plastic golf tee is exactly the right size to 'plug' a brake pipe end that's been disconnected (to change a caliper or cylinder for example) but still has fluid from the master cylinder behind it - to change a caliper or wheel cylinder for example. The tee is soft enough to avoid damaging the pipe, and if pushed in the pipe end it will stop most, if not all, of the fluid from escaping.

This is useful, as besides being messy stuff, conventional brake fluid is also an extremely efficient paint softener/stripper, and once on your hands it will transfer to anything you touch. The 'tee trick' probably won't eliminate the need to bleed the system, though it will probably make the bleed easier as hopefully air won't have travelled much past the part you are actually working on.





## Technical Tips



### Clean hands

We've all been there. You finish a Sunday afternoon job just in time to clean up before tea, and go into the kitchen (or bathroom if you're married or similar) for a cleanup. Then you discover that you've run out of hand cleaner...

Most of us in this situation reach for the 'Fairy Liquid' bottle and use that to remove grime. It works after a fashion, but is nothing like as good as the real stuff because, quite simply, it's formulated for cleaning dishes rather than hands. You can, though, improve its effectiveness a lot using something else that's found in most kitchens – use a teaspoon or so of sugar to help work the washing-up liquid in, and you'll find it's a lot more effective at lifting dirt out of all the lines and from under your fingernails. It's still not as good as a proprietary product of course, but as an emergency 'get out of trouble' tip it's well worth considering...

### Axle top up

**F**illing/topping up rear axle can be a bit tricky for the inexperienced. For starters, the total capacity is likely to be somewhat less than you expect - most hold between one and two litres, and if the oil is down, it's unlikely to take much to bring it back up. It is, though, very important not to overfill an axle – there is supposed to be air above the oil to allow for movement, heat expansion and so on and there will also be a breather of some kind to allow air in and out.

The usual procedure is that the oil level is correct when the oil is at the bottom of the level/top up hole; in other words no more can be added without it running straight out. This clearly, however, is dependent on the vehicle being sat level. I also recommend checking it after the car's been stationary for at least 10-15 minutes so any oil which was at the top has had time to drain back down.

Then, rather than pour some more in and wait for it to run out, I prefer to take a short length of welding rod or similar and bend about an inch at one end over at 90 degrees. This can then

#### Below:

Checking/topping up rear axle oil level can be a bit tricky, especially if access is slightly restricted.

be used as an improvised dipstick. You can then add a little if needed, but again bear in mind that unless the oil is a long way down it won't need much.

In practice, the only way that an axle can lose oil is by it leaking out – so any sudden or significant drop needs investigating. This does, though, mean that axle oil can in theory stay in the axle for a Very Long Time – quite possibly ten years or more - and I'm not sure that's a good idea. Personally, I'd change it completely every five years/50,000 miles unless there's a Mercedes recommendation for earlier changes – which I believe there is for some specialist/performance models. The drain plug is usually obvious and will be at the bottom – but check with a manual if you're in doubt. Refilling can be a bit time-consuming as you need to wait for oil to settle before adding more. Rather than keep checking the level and waiting, I'd measure how much you take out, and then (slowly) add the same amount of new oil – but watch that you use the correct type and grade as using the wrong type of oil – even the wrong grade of axle oil – can cause major problems.





## Don't Drive through floods...

I'm based in the East Anglian fens, and while flooding around here is pretty common, we also have the infrastructure and know-how to deal with it. Certain roads are known to flood sometimes and when it happens warning signs go up, and locals generally shrug their shoulders and use an alternative route for a day or four; it's a bit inconvenient, but that's life.

Sometimes, though, 'incomers' will, thinking they know better than people who've lived here their entire lives, or believing that they'll be okay because they own a quality car like a Mercedes, 'take a chance' and try to drive right through it. Often, they'll try to get through quickly, thinking the sooner they can get out, the better.

Four times out of five though, it doesn't work. The problem, contrary to popular belief, is not generally the electrics getting waterlogged, but water getting into the engine. Modern cars usually have relatively low air intakes within the grille. Water, unlike petrol and air or diesel/air, is not compressible. Driving through

**Above:** Corrugated connecting rod resulting from an attempt at driving through a flooded road – they are closed for a reason!

water creates a bow-wave and the air intake action sucks water through the air intake and up into the engine where something expensive bends or breaks. This con-rod is fairly typical of what happens when a piston's upward stroke tries to 'compress' a cylinder-full of floodwater; it's the weakest part, so it bends...

Damage like this not only writes the engine off but most likely also renders it scrap as there's a likelihood the bottom end has been weakened or pushed out of alignment, meaning it can't even be rebuilt. You're therefore looking at buying another engine outright which is always expensive. With a relatively recent car it can easily run to over £5000 with fitting, even if you're lucky enough to find a suitable secondhand unit.

This type of damage won't be covered by any warranty either – you can't insure against stupidity.

So if you come across a road that's closed due to flooding, please don't 'take a chance' – it's almost certainly been 'closed' for good reason...

## Smoke Signals...

Next, an old school mechanics trick which can be very helpful if you suspect – or know – that there's an 'induction' air leak somewhere around the inlet manifolds, but you're not 100% certain, and want a further clue. Try spraying a little Plus Gas, WD40 or similar 'maintenance spray' over the affected area with the engine running. Watch the exhaust smoke. If it changes colour, or the engine note changes while you are spraying a part, then you've found a leak, because whatever you're spraying on has been sucked in and is being burnt.

I've used this tip to good effect on many cars over the years – it's especially good if you have a suspected glowplug or diesel injector leak, but it is old school, and best suited to older – pre-1990 – cars and I wouldn't recommend it on modern cars with DPF and similar systems. I would also 'exercise caution' when using it on petrol Mercs with a catalytic converter, as 'unexpected substances in exhaust smoke' can cause damage, though a little one-off testing as described above shouldn't cause problems unless it was already starting to go.





## Technical Tips

### Dirty Bulbs

Once upon a time, changing bulbs was generally fairly easy and the sort of thing pretty-much everyone could do themselves. Nowadays though, ever-more crowded engine bays mean it can be rather more of a fiddle than in the past – to put it mildly! Fortunately, it's one of the few jobs that's still usually covered in a Mercedes driver's handbook, mainly because in much of mainland Europe drivers are expected to carry a set of spare

bulbs with them, and change same en route if needed.

One tip – when changing halogen or tungsten headlight bulbs, avoid touching the glass part. Hold the bulb only by the metal base as shown here. That's because oils from your skin will otherwise 'transfer' on to the bulb glass and though barely visible, it will tend to reflect light from the filament.

The problem here isn't so much reduced light output as the reflection causing the bulb to operate at a higher temperature

**Above:** Headlamp bulbs should only be handled at the base, not the glass.

than intended, which will shorten its life. And with some headlight bulbs now costing upwards of £15 apiece, it makes sense not to reduce their life unnecessarily.

Incidentally, if the headlight bulb is, like most modern ones, a bit tricky to reach, it's worth double-checking that you've got it in properly; a small mirror is sometimes a help here. Many MoT failures due to headlamp alignment being wrong are actually caused by a bulb having been fitted incorrectly...





## Squeal Piggy Squeal

**W**hy do some disc brakes squeal? What you are actually hearing is the brake pad vibrating in between the disc and its piston as pressure is applied - hence the noise often goes under hard braking, because the pad can't then move.

A good way of avoiding this is to apply a little copper grease (PLEASE don't use conventional grease) to the back of the pad, where it

**Below:** Copper grease on the back can be a good way of reducing or eliminating brake squeal.

contacts with the calliper piston. You can also put a little on the sides, to prevent seizure. Don't, though, cover the whole back - the quantity you can see here is quite sufficient and there is no benefit at all in going outside where the calliper piston will be in contact.

The copper grease should dampen pad/piston contact and vibration, leading to (almost) silent slowing....

## Improvised anvil

Finally this month, here's a handy tip that's most appropriate if you, like our esteemed Editor, are the sort of person who has lots of cars in various states of (dis)repair and major parts from same scattered about the place. A couple of identical engine back plates welded together can actually make an extremely effective and efficient 'anvil' on which to shape up small replacement panels and repair sections. The outer edge will usually consist of a range of curves - and maybe even a straight edge or three - which you can beat around the outside of, and they'll be a few holes of various sizes in the middle that can also be used for shaping purposes.

All you need to find apart from a couple of suitable and matching engine backplates and, ideally, two or three similarly strong but smaller pieces of similar height for it to stand on. Weld it all together and there you have it and it's cost you next to nowt...





# A *happy* accident

Craig's E220 estate found him – an ideal classic for a large family

**W**ith a large family and a crumbling relic of a house restoration project, a large estate car is a requirement rather than an object of desire for me, so when it came to choosing a car that was suitable for the job after I sold my Volvo 740, there was only one vehicle in the frame.

A Mercedes S124 was the perfect car for my requirements, especially if I could find a seven-seater in which the mother-in-law could face backwards during her not-infrequent visits to see the brood.

My problem was that, with multiple other cars on my roster, I had a severely limited budget of less than £1,000, unless I managed to sell a few of my other cars.

In the end, though, P972 UJR



found me. I was looking for a cheap seven-seater of any variety for our family holiday last summer, and a friend of mine had advertised his Citroen Synergie for sale via Facebook. With 100,000 miles on the clock and a healthy MoT, the sensible and functional Citroen looked like an ideal vehicle for the job in hand, especially for the £795 asking price, so I was a bit disappointed to find he'd already sold it when I sent him an email.

At least until I read the line "but I am selling another seven-seater". The 'other' car turned out to be a 1996 Mercedes E220 Estate, with 196,000 recorded miles but in seemingly solid condition and recently serviced. It was mine for £1,200, or half that if I was prepared to part-exchange an immaculate 40,000-mile Rover Metro



**Craig Cheetham** News Editor

**1996 Mercedes-Benz E220 estate**  
Mileage: 200,670  
First instalment

that the E220's seller had an eye on. It was impossible to say no to that, especially as I've always loved old Mercs and constantly rue the day that I foolishly parted with my W124 300E Sportline – a sale forced by a move overseas for a year back in 2012.

**"I constantly rue the day that I foolishly parted with my W124 300E Sportline."**

As one of the last 124s to roll off the production line (the W210 saloon was already well into production by the time it was registered), my E220 has the advantage of the later 2.2-litre four-cylinder engine, coupled to a four-speed auto box.

Driving it for the first time was a revelation. Having previously owned both a six-cylinder W124 and a six-pot 190E, I was expecting it to feel a bit of a sluggard. Sure, it's not going to burn off any sports cars at the lights, but it's a far more eager machine than the modest powerplant would suggest, while it's also a ridiculously comfortable cruiser. It will sit happily all day at the legal limit, and on a run it returns almost 40mpg, which is more than my wife gets out of her diesel seven-seater.

Of course, being a cheap Mercedes it isn't without its faults, but they're reassuringly few. The body is solid where it matters – indeed, when I took it for an MoT last October the tester said it was astonishingly good underneath. It does have a coupe of very small rust bubbles on the rear arches, and the driver's side front wing has started to go behind the



indicator lens – but this will hardly come as a surprise to the average 124 aficionado.

Imagine my delight, then, when a friend called me from a scrapyards in Southampton where he was getting some parts for a Rover 75 he was working on to tell me there was a 124 in the exact same blue being broken thanks to a rear-end shunt, but with perfect front wings. I was even more delighted when he told me I could have the pair for £35.

We finally met up at the NEC Classic Restoration Show in March this year, where his brother turned up with a

**Above:** More than enough room for Craig's family!

wing under each arm. Having friends who also appreciate older cars is always a bonus.

Otherwise, my estate's copybook has been blot-free aside from one thing. When I checked the MoT history online, it turned out that I wasn't the first person to take it past the 200,000-mile milestone, as it had 246k on the clock in 2015. So yes, it has done more than a quarter of a million miles – yet it doesn't burn a drop of oil and is as tight and comfortable as the day it was built. What an astonishing, high-quality car it is...



# WET WEEKEND

Skelton's Coupe disgraces itself in Wales.

**T**here had to be a catch, when I managed to get an E220 Coupe and cash my way in return for a slightly tired 280TE. And my new car does have its share of issues. I mentioned in the last instalment that there are a number of electrical and trim items that are past their best – now it's time to start on the mechanical maladies.

When I took the car on, the temperature gauge was reading cold all the time – something I attributed to a dodgy thermostat and thought

nothing more of it. My belief was that it was stuck open, confirmed by the lack of heat from the heater. But then I changed the thermostat – and while it did help, the car still wouldn't sit at the correct operating temperature. It would now get warm – but not warm enough to open the stat and pressurise the system.

The fan was permanently engaged, and so I wondered whether it might be possible that the viscous coupling had seized. Another was procured courtesy of Euro Car Parts, and fitted to the car. No change – with

**Above:** Not what you want to see 200 miles from home...

a brand new viscous coupling the fan was still on full time. And the car still wouldn't reach temperature. I can't fit a cooler thermostat because it's integral to the housing and Mercedes only list one thermostat for the M111.

I've solved this on a short term basis in an old school manner. Remember in the 1970s, people would use grille mufflers and bits of card cable tied in behind the grille to reduce the area cool air was hitting? My idea is equally low tech – but waterproof. Having dug out an old



**Sam Skelton** *Editor*

**1995 Mercedes E220 Coupe**  
Mileage: 179,227  
Second instalment

universal rear floor mat from my shed of many things, I found it was the perfect size to sit under the slam panel and ahead of the radiator. With half the outer face of the rad blanked off, my car now reached and sits at temperature. I've checked - it doesn't overheat either.

Successful pressurisation of the system, however, highlighted another issue. I'd occasionally get the coolant light on in use, and so I took to carrying water - after all, with none emerging via the tailpipe it was highly unlikely to be a head gasket failure, the car still ran and it would help me diagnose precisely where the issue was.

This idea was less clever than I thought, as I found out when I took my partner to a charity ball in Rhyl; staying with contributor James Bellis and his wife. Partway through I left to put something in the Coupe, only to find the floor underneath soaked with water. In full black tie, I opened the bonnet and started fiddling - there was nothing in the header tank. So I filled it, using water from the boot. 2 hours later when we left, all that had gone too.

It was much the same story the following morning on James's driveway, where I established that there was a crack somewhere in the water pump housing and that this was the source of my leak. Over 220 miles from home I had a car that wasn't holding water - and that by my estimate would take approximately the whole of the Menai Strait to get me back to the safety of my driveway, my toolkit and the Fens.

There wasn't much choice - I had to find something to use as a temporary fix. James's local motor factor stocked K Seal. I know K Seal has a poor reputation, but that's because most people don't use it properly. I ran my car up to temperature, using a constant supply of fresh water. Once my



**"It would take the whole of the Menai Strait to get me back home."**

**Above right:** Skelton's overcooling solution is low tech...

thermostat had opened and in order that K Seal shouldn't congeal around the housing, I drained the system, poured in my coppery coloured goo, added water and started the car once more. A few high-revs miles later, I seemed to have a watertight car. And one which made it back to the Fens later that evening.

I've a new water pump sitting on the shelf for when my bodge ultimately fails. But for now I'm focusing on enjoying my Mercedes. 🐾



# One family owned

Tim's father bought his 180 new - and it's still used properly

**M**y Mercedes is very special to me, but I suppose everybody's is to them. It's just that my history and my Merc's go a long way back. To year dot. In 1959 my father took a secondment to Malta to run the Naval Supply Office. Life was pretty much tax free, so in 1960 dad sold his old Alvis TA14 shooting brake to the Maltese Governor, and went where the engineering was. He ordered a bright red petrol 190, and hitched a naval lift to Palermo on his way to fetch it from the factory. On arrival in Stuttgart the nearest they had was a dark red 180. So I've been riding in the 180 since it was new, and I wasn't so old either.

Import tax on foreign cars was approaching 100%, but if you



"I've been riding in the 180 since it was new, and I wasn't so old either."

brought a car home a year old with a certain mileage on the clock, it was a used car, and therefore exempt. A month had to be spent exploring Italy, and the car still has 2000 more miles on the clock than it's done. It came home tax free.

Back in Surrey it was our family car, and at fourteen it became the first car I ever drove. Dad would take me up to the army ranges and just go off with the dog, leaving me to work out how to drive the thing. I forget how unusual it is to still be driving the first car you ever steered when you're sixty.

Unfortunately my father died when he wasn't much older than I am now, so the Merc has been mine for forty years. Always making my living as an artist and writer I was perpetually broke, and the 180 stayed in mum's garage for the next twenty years. But



**Tim Slade** Contributor

**1960 Mercedes-Benz 180**  
Mileage: 131,820  
First instalment



by then I wasn't doing so badly and sorting the Merc became a priority. I came across John Haynes down in Worthing, and the car was dispatched. I hadn't even seen their premises. They kept sending me large bills with photos, one showing something with no opening panels, no wings or sills, no glass or paint, no interior and no engine. I asked if maybe I should come down and see it. They said don't - it'll only depress you!

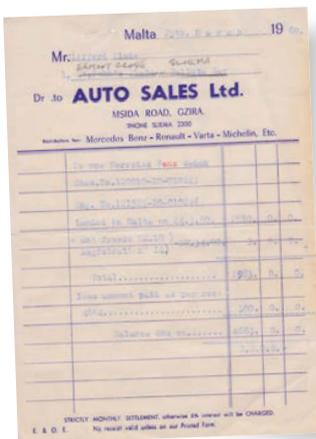
They did a proper job, and almost straight from collection my sister and I took it down to Palermo to repeat the journey through Italy we had made forty years earlier in 1961. This proved to be the first of many trans-european journeys for the 180. And we haven't needed assistance yet. Last year my wife and I took the Porsche Boxster S on honeymoon, simply because we had covered too many miles in the Merc. The year before we had been down to the Tarn Gorge and on to Cadaques. There were fuel starvation and vaporization problems, but we got home. A fuel pump rebuild and fitting an auxiliary electric pump sorted it out, along with its starting difficulties after a few weeks standing. I do all the work on the car myself, partly because I'm mean, but mostly because I don't trust anyone else.

Most recent work has been the fitting of a 'dynamator'. It's an alternator that looks just like the original dynamo, and it makes such a difference. We've been a Goodwood Revival taxi for a dozen years, and all that sitting in traffic made the next early morning start questionable. No longer.

Top speed is only 84, but it cruises at 75 all week. It revs a little high, but it's smooth and comfortable. In fact it's a very good drive - light on its feet, free revving, and even its last generation drum brakes are reassuring.

I'm thinking about Albania this summer. Is that completely mad? 🇲🇹

**Left:** The original bill of sale - unsurprisingly, the history is huge





# Sound *sense*

James's E430 now has a more fitting radio than before

**S**ince buying the W210, I noticed that the climate wasn't functioning like it should. The fans seemed non-existent and the front screen would not demist.

The previous owner had put in two cheap dehumidifiers to combat this. I bit the bullet and bought the required filter set, which comprised of two pollen filters and two active carbon filters.

These filters are very expensive if genuine Mercedes, I picked up an eBay set for £50. Still, expensive for filters.

After watching a quick Youtube video, I was armed with screwdrivers to tackle the job. I started with the carbon filters. I



**Left:** Pioneer didn't look at home in the dash.

removed the trim from under the glove box which comprises of two screws and once that is out of the way you can get to where they are hiding.

Once you slide the two retaining plastic parts, the filters drop down. They weren't dirty but felt heavier than the new ones so am guessing that they retain water.

The pollen filters are housed behind the glove compartment; this was more of a challenge. There are six Philips screws to remove and then you have to prise the glove compartment out and disconnect the light.

Once the glove compartment is out, you remove the plastic cover to get to the pollen filters. One pulls



**James Bellis** Owner

**1998 Mercedes-Benz E430**

Mileage: 161,719

Second instalment



**Right:** New pollen filter far cleaner – was the old one original?



out and then you slide the other over and pull it out.

These were absolutely filthy black. I then replaced with the shiny clean ones and then refitted the glove compartment and reconnected the light.

The climate control unit fired back to life as if factory fresh, and now all speeds work and the front screen demists as it should.

This is a nice cheap easy fix, even for a novice like myself. It probably took me about 40 minutes to complete, next time I bet that I can do it twice as fast!

The previous owner had left his Pioneer cd-radio which he wanted back. Initially I purchased a Sony Dab cd tuner but after discovering the original cd changer in the boot, I decided to keep it OEM.

After some eBay searching, I discovered that the car would have come with either a Becker Audio 10 or Audio 50.

I settled on an Audio 50 for £30 delivered which even came with the code.

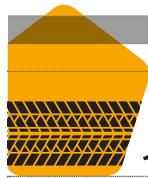
The Pioneer was a pig to remove, after 20 minutes of swearing and effort, it eventually prised out.

All original cabling was there so I connected the blocks into the back of the stereo including aerial and fibre for cd changer.

The radio fired up but would not accept my code. I discovered that the code supplied was wrong so got one for free from [www.radio-code.it](http://www.radio-code.it)

This site is a gem for most car radios and the code worked first time. The Audio 50 is quite a good OEM radio and gives off good sound quality. The only downside is that the cd changer is broken, most likely the main reason why the original radio was removed in the first place.

It does at least get power and eject the magazine. A quick Google has shown that it is most likely down to the ribbon cable on the changer, so a job for next time.



**John Leyden** Owner

Mercedes-Benz SL280

# YOUR CARS

John's SL is the realisation of a thirty year dream

**W**hen the R129 came out in 89-90 I lusted after it, but it was hugely expensive and I had gone back to University to do another degree, so money was tight.

A couple of years ago I decided I'd like to buy a car to keep for retirement. We had had a few British convertibles and I love 70s and 80s cars too so my search list was pretty wide ranging. I started looking at MGs, 944s, SAAB 900 Turbos, SECs, E28 BMWs, all of which I had owned or driven previously, and then I realised that I could get an R129 and I started researching.

I used the forums to get an idea of common problems and initially decided I'd go for a 320, avoiding the dodgy wiring loom years. I looked at 8 or 9, all over the place, getting more and more depressed about turning up to see a car that had been inaccurately described. I once drove for 3 hours to look at a 320 described as "immaculate" only to see visible rust as I walked up to it. The owner used a screwdriver to open the door! It had looked great in the advert photos, but drove like a shed.

I bought this car near Glasgow from a small trader. It had 95000 miles and I bought on condition. I saw that a local independent had

**Right:** Helios Yellow interior a rare option

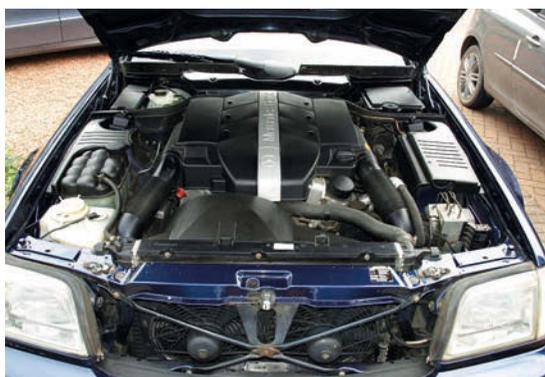
last serviced the car so I phoned him to get his opinion on its condition. On the test drive it was totally silent, no squeaks or bumps, and as a later car with the 5 speed auto, didn't feel any slower off the mark than the 320s I'd driven. I'd negotiated hard and agreed a price, then asked to see the hardtop. It was a panoramic roof, which was a nice surprise!

The paint is Azurite Blue, and it has a Helios (Sun Yellow) interior which is in great condition, as is the walnut veneer. The soft top is blue and in really great condition too. The hard top looked like it had never been on the car as it is unmarked.

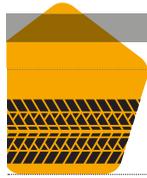
The car, as a late, second facelift model, has the M112 V6 twin plug engine, 5 speed electronic auto, the big Brembo brakes (vented all round) and 17 inch wheels, mine having the optional 644 wheel style. It has electric, heated seats, folding mirrors, rear parking sensors, the rear seat option, 6 CD changer and an aftermarket handsfree phone and iPod kit. As well as the all important pano roof.

I still find the car as beautiful as when I first saw one. Walking back to it when it's parked takes my breath away. There is not a bad angle to the car. Sacco and his team really got the whole wedge shaped, big shouldered look spot on.









**Geoff Roper** Owner

**Mercedes-Benz  
E240 V6 Elegance**

# YOUR CARS

Geoff's E240 is testament to the car a daily driver can receive

**I** bought this car on a bit of a whim just over a year ago in February 2017. Overall it's been a pleasure to own and drive, I was looking for a car to fit my needs as a disabled driver, it had to be comfortable and it had to be an automatic, I've had several different types of car before and my son told me how good his C and E-classes had been.

When I found it, it was in a sorry state, it had dents to the nearside front wing, the offside rear wing and the boot lid, it also had an annoying knock over bumps from somewhere in the front suspension, however I thought it was worth saving so I paid more than I wanted. Looking back though, probably less than it was worth.

Bought as a 2 owner car with no service history and under 70,000 miles recorded I set off on the drive home from the outskirts of London to Chesterfield, I made it to Oxford and had to be recovered by the RAC when the first of very few problems reared its head, the auxiliary belt tensioner seized completely shredding the belt and losing the use of water-pump and power steering! Fortunately no damage was done to anything other than the tensioner and the idler, both replace the next day, easy to do without having to resort to a garage.

Next was the repair of the bodywork, for the grand sum of £1500 the dents were repaired the wheels refurbished and things were looking up. At this point

**Left:** Geoff's restored his E240 - it's now one of the best left

I decided to fix the knock from the front suspension, turned out that the top arm ball joint on the offside was worn, this I couldn't tackle myself due to my health problems but it's a straightforward job for anyone who's moderately capable.

Then I backed into a fence and put a dent in the opposite rear wing... I found a different body-shop to the one who had done the first work and was told that I'd been overcharged for the first repair and repaint. I had my dent repaired - at a competitive price - and discussed the price of a bare metal respray, as by this time I'd fallen for the car, and it's going to be as good as I can make it.

Next came the job of finding the near impossible wheels, I was after a set of Mercedes Sador rims as fitted to a limited edition E430, finally tracked a set down which involved a trip to the south coast, these rims look the same as the ones fitted to certain SLK's but the offset is different.

Now the water-pump is starting to fail. I can't help but wonder if it started when I was driving home after buying the car, overall though it's really been a pleasure to own so far. Repair costs are manageable, and it's easily as comfortable as any of my old Lexus LS400s or LS430s (but maybe not as many toys or as much acceleration, after all it is only a 2.4 V6). It's most at home on the motorway, returning near 35 mpg on either summer or winter tyres, would I buy it again knowing what was needed? Most definitely. 





# CLUB NEWS

Our man Jack reports on the club scene over the May bank holiday

**M**ay bank holiday 2018 will probably go down as "the hottest on record", or something like that. Certainly, as Countryfile is on in the background as I write this, Sheffield was hotter than Havana. I can see the summer number one now: "I Left My Heart in Attercliffe."

Anyway, 29 Mercedes Benz models were on display at the first show on the South Yorkshire calendar at Thoresby Hall, ranging from W111 to W211 there was definitely something to suit all tastes. Tea and biscuits were of course exceptional, and rather pleasingly my 190E 2.5-16 picked up the award for Best Four Door Car. Paul Panay's sensational R107 300SL taking the prize for Best Two Door, but with 32,000 miles and stunning throughout, it's hard to argue that Paul's SL is much less than perfect.

## "29 Mercedes Benz models were on display at Thoresby Hall."

James Harrison's 1990 pre-cat R129 500SL is although worthy of a special mention. Arguably the best model of SL since the Gullwing, I was once again blown away by how good those cars are as we enjoyed a little blast after the show. Speaking of SLs, the club also held an R129 meet at Cheshire Oaks on 28th April to celebrate the opening of their new dealership. 30 examples attended,

**Above:** Our Club Editor's 190 2.5-16

and even a rogue Audi S4 managed to sneak in to the midst.

Looking forward to the next bank holiday, which will most likely be a shower after the sunburn inducing weekend we've just enjoyed and the online W201 group Mercedes-190.co.uk will be holding their annual West Midlands Get Together on the 27th. Last year saw over 100 cars turn out to the Sparrow Pub in Coventry and hopefully this year will top that. All models of Mercedes Benz are welcome, and I would encourage owners to have a read of the forum ([www.Mercedes-190.co.uk](http://www.Mercedes-190.co.uk)). I've found it a useful resource for diagnosing all sorts of issues, and the members and organisers are all very pleasant people. I hope to see some readers there on the 27th, in 190s or any other Merc. I'll be the chap in the pink 16 valve.



**Jack O'Brien** Club Editor



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**230**

**230**



**1981, 57,000 Miles, £12,995.** Only one owner. Finished in immaculate Taigu beige with tan interior. Spec includes auto transmission and power steering. Very hard to find low mileage and one owner. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

**230**



**1981, 57,000 Miles, £12,995.** Please call 01485 541526 (T)

**250**

**250 SE**



**1967, 25,366 Miles, £19,995.** Finished in immaculate Mercedes classic white with unmarked red MB TEX trim. Huge history file with this car and known to us for a number of years. The car was imported from Botswana in 1998 by a titled gentlemen who we purchased the car from in 2008 and looked after the car since then. The car is in immaculate condition, rust free and original. Please call 01485 541526.

**C-CLASS**

**C250 CDI**



**2011, 39,000 Miles, £12,999.** Automatic, estate car, diesel, one owner, 39,000 miles, heated seats, full black electric leather seats, cruise control, remote central locking, 2 keys, roof rails, parking sensors, alloy wheels, stereo and CD player, finished in metallic grey, full black leather trim. Please call 02380 766870, Hampshire.

**CL**

**CL500**



**1999, 99,000 Miles, £2,750.** Automatic. Silver with grey leather interior. MOT. Good condition all around. Please call 01483 282830.

**CL500**



**2002, 89,000 Miles, £7,995.** Finished in light metallic blue with grey hide, immaculate unmarked car, very high spec with full service history. Superb looking and driving car, exceptional value. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

**CL600**



**2008, 80,000 Miles, £23,995.** Black metallic exterior. Automatic gearbox. Finished in immaculate Obsidian black with unmarked black leather. Panoramic roof, upgraded alloy wheels and Mercedes Command system. Please call 01485 541526. (T)

**CLC**

**CLC 180 KOMPRESSOR SPORT**



**2011, 31,000 Miles, £8,950.** Automatic, gun metal grey. All of the extras included. Please call 01484 420902. (T)

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## E-CLASS

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## S CLASS

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### SL60 AMG



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### SL500 CONVERTIBLE POWER



**2003, £7,999.** Hard top, automatic, power steering, electric windows, remote central locking with 2 keys, heated/electric seats, alloy wheels, fitted with parking sensors, air conditioning, cruise control, air bag, leather interior, abs brakes, stereo and cd player, this vehicle has been owned by vendor for the last 2and1/2 years and comes with service history. Please call 02380 766870 (T)

## SLK

### SLK 230K CONVERTIBLE



**1998, 89,000, £3,999.** Service history, automatic, power steering, electric windows, power electric hood, alloy wheels, remote central locking, also 2 keys, fully documented history file including old mot's, invoices and bills for servicing repairs, electric roof, finished in canary yellow, black upholstery, nice looking vehicle. Please call 07545 703474, Hampshire. (T)

### SLK 230 KOMPRESSOR



**2003, 68,000 Miles, £5,995.** Finished in special order sapphire blue metallic with full black leather trim. Includes the owners handbook, service book, spare keys and original document holder. The car also includes front fogs, red brake callipers, mesh grill, MB dustcaps, AMG badging, cruise control, climate control, high level brake light, GB badge, white dials, hrw, overmats, wind deflector, radio/cd with extra speakers, airbags, centre armrest, ESP, and extra chrome kit. Please call 01202 709407, Dorset. (T)

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**2003, £7,499.** Convertible power, hard top, automatic, power steering, electric windows, remote central locking with 2 keys, heated/electric seats, alloy wheels, fitted with parking sensors, air conditioning, cruise control, air bag, leather interior, abs brakes, stereo and cd player, this vehicle has been owned by vendor for the last 2&1/2 years and comes with service history. Please call 07545 703474, Hampshire. (T)



# BRITAIN By Benz: *Pt 4.*

Mercedes Driver tackles the West Coast of  
the East of England

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## Classic Touring

Words and pics: Sam Skelton

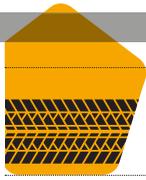
It feels perverse to think of the East of England as having a west coast, and yet it is a quirk of the shape of our island that there are beaches in north Norfolk which point west and north west. Our planned tour would suit as a weekend retreat, with several things to do and places to go to distract along the way. It's a part of the country that many rarely feel the need to visit, despite it playing host to the weekend retreat of our Royal family. And yet those who dismiss it are missing out, with a host of places too visit, some excellent roads, and scenery which has been likened to several more popular holiday destinations.

We start our tour on the north coast, in the popular seaside resort of Wells next-the Sea. We've started here as it's in the centre of the north Norfolk coast, neatly splitting the western oddity from the east coast.

"It's a part of the country that many rarely feel the need to visit, despite it housing our Royal family."

A typical seaside town, it regularly attracts over ten thousand visitors keen to soak up the sea air at Bank Holidays and over the summer. It's popular with beach-seeking families, nature enthusiasts keen to explore the region's RSPB sites, and those seeking to revisit the traditional British seaside holiday. »





## Classic Touring

Its primary interest to us, however, is as home to the Wells and Walsingham Light Railway. This is believed to be the world's smallest public railway – since a 1982 Act of Parliament deemed the preserved 10 ¼ gauge steam line a public railway, it is considered alongside conventional rail lines rather than similar miniature preserved steam railways. The work of Lt Commander Roy Francis, who had already built the mile long Wells Beach Railway, the 4 mile Wells and Walsingham Light Railway is also the longest 10 ¼ gauge railway in the world. While many use the line for transport purposes during its operating season of March-

**Right:** Norfolk  
Lavender's fields  
near Heacham

November, the summer holiday season sees a dramatic increase in traffic as a result of families seeking an enjoyable day out. The railway routinely operates four steam locomotives and two diesel locomotives, with an adult return fare at £9.50. More information can be found at [www.wvwr.co.uk](http://www.wvwr.co.uk), including details of the special Wells at War weekend on 2-3 June.

Just up the road from Wells lies the picturesque village of Holkham, now mostly owned by the Holkham Hall estate and targeted to serve the estate. Commissioned by Thomas Coke, first Earl of Leicester, the house lay in the Holkham estate founded by his father Edward Coke. Palladian in style, the interior is





free of excessive ornamentation and shows that a relatively simple interior can be opulent. The grounds cover over 25000 acres, and were reputed to have cost £90,000 to complete even in the 1700s. It virtually bankrupted the family, ensuring it wasn't updated to suit fashion trends and is thus one of the most original houses of its type in England. The estate now covers over 25000 acres, and is open to the public on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. It is still, however, the family home of the Earl of Leicester. For more information including admission fees, visit [www.holkham.co.uk](http://www.holkham.co.uk).

Heading west along the A149, the next significant town is the seaside town of Hunstanton. And it is just the other side of Hunstanton, in Heacham, that we find Norfolk Lavender. Lavender is believed to have been brought to Britain by the Romans, and Norfolk Lavender is today one of Britain's largest growers of lavender. World War 1 saw a decline in the fortunes of English lavender growers despite the plant's antiseptic and healing



**"The village of Snettisham plays host to The Rose and Crown, voted UK Pub of the Year in 2015."**

**Above:** The Rose and Crown, Snettisham

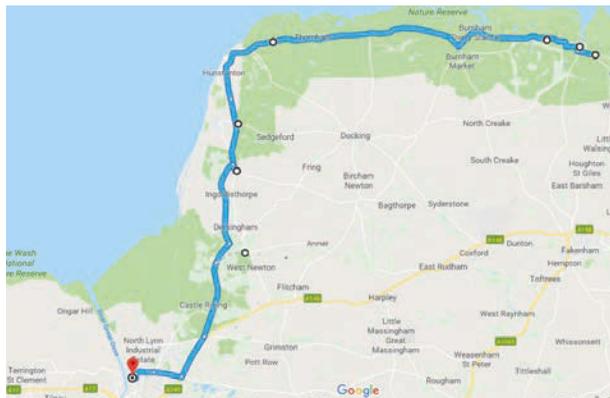
properties, disease rendered the fields on the outskirts of London unusable. In 1932, just before the English lavender trade died out for good, Linn Chilvers planted his first six acres in Heacham. Some of the lavender is distilled into lavender oil, a part of the business since 1936. Lavender is also sold from the site for medical and aromatherapy purposes, and is available to be planted at home. Tours are available to discover the tradition of English lavender, while. More information can be found at [www.norfolk-lavender.co.uk](http://www.norfolk-lavender.co.uk).

As we approach our next destination, it makes sense to stop for a bite to eat and a drink. The village of Snettisham plays host to The Rose and Crown, voted UK Pub of the Year in 2015. Hidden away near the church at the back of the village, it's a 14th century village inn which offers an excellent range of pub food alongside a selection of real ales. Steaks and burgers make up the majority of the menu, though there are several alternatives for those seeking a healthier option. Plenty »



of vegetarian or gluten free meals are available, including cauliflower steak and salads. Eat in the bar, the restaurant or in the outdoor area, should the weather be good enough – this is a favourite haunt of many in the area. The Rose and Crown also features 16 rooms, making it an excellent place to stay if you're looking to tackle the attractions of the area over an extended stay. Rooms cost from £100 per night, including breakfast.

It's just a couple of miles from Snettisham to the royal estate at Sandringham House. Originally built in the 1770s, the estate was purchased for the Prince of Wales in 1862 and remodelled in the latter part of the 19th century in a style Pevsner described as "frenetic Jacobean". The location was chosen as the Princess of Wales, Alexandra, found the surrounding scenery reminiscent of her Danish homeland. Plans for the site's demolition and replacement with a modern royal house in the 1960s never came to fruition – which given the house's role in history can only be seen as a good thing. It was, after all, the site of the first televised Christmas



**"Originally built in the 1770s, the estate was purchased for the Prince of Wales in 1862."**

broadcast in 1932. Adult admission fees cost £11 for access to the museum and garden, or £16.50 if you want to view the house too. There are concessions for senior citizens and children, and family tickets are available. For more information visit [www.sandringhamestate.co.uk](http://www.sandringhamestate.co.uk).

The Lynn Museum is our final

destination. Situated in central King's Lynn in the Union Baptist Chapel, the museum moved to its present location in 1904. Founded in 1844 by members of the Conversazione and Society of Arts, it met their desire for 'an institution so well calculated to improve the taste of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, and particularly the rising generation; as well as to afford a source of continued amusement and gratification to those persons who had already paid attention to scientific pursuits.' A number of galleries tell the story of West Norfolk, from a Bronze Age henge through the town's history as a medieval fort and latter day engineering centre.

Adult entry fees vary throughout the year to a maximum of £4.50, with concessions available. Museums.norfolk.gov.uk will be able to provide further information.

King's Lynn is one of the major junction points into Norfolk. From here, finding your way home shouldn't be too difficult.



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**1991 MERCEDES 190E 1.8 AUTO** Finished in Smoke Silver with unmarked brown interior. Factory sunroof, lovely unmolested example. Only 65,000 miles and Full Service History. .... **£6995**



**2000 BMW Z3 3.0** Finished in titan silver with black leather sports seats. With lots of Schnitzer modifications, including Schnitzer front bumper, 17inch Schnitzer wheels, Schnitzer exhaust system, Schnitzer handbrake and Schnitzer gear knob. 98,000 miles with a Full Service History. .... **£8995**



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