

# classic



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## On a high!

Hamburg–Hong Kong: extreme rally via the Silk Road

### One pioneer

Visiting China's greatest vintage-car fan in Szechuan

### Two heroes

The story of a very special 'Pontoon' and its owner



### Three friends

Out and about with the Unimog Club Gaggenau



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The best or nothing.



COVER PHOTO CONSTANTIN MIRBACH PHOTOS GEORGI GRANCHAROV, PRIVATE ILLUSTRATION JULIA PELZER



Jörg Heuer, Editor-in-chief, [classic.magazin@daimler.com](mailto:classic.magazin@daimler.com)

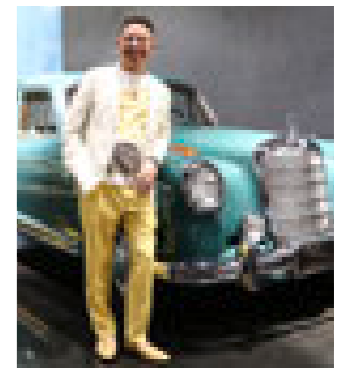
**Dear readers,** may I introduce myself. As of this issue I am responsible for Mercedes-Benz classic magazine. This is a very special task for me, because it is simply a very special magazine. I - we - have a high ambition: the best or nothing!

Speaking of setting the bar high, with this issue we have a magazine full of elated feelings and heroes, passion and emotion, adrenaline and adventure for you. Two highlights of this issue are in China: a G-Model, a 'Stroke Eight' and a 'Pagoda' travel the Silk Road and continue on to the Pearl River Delta (p. 14). We visited Mercedes-Benz fan Zongmin Huang in the city of Chengdu, home to millions of people. Huang owns his own Classic Car Museum (p. 26). We were the first foreign journalists to visit him. Why? Because we are united by one passion: Mercedes-Benz classic cars.

We gave him a copy of our issue 2.2018 as a small gift - the one with the C 111 on the cover. "Can I buy one of these cars?" Zongmin Huang asked with great interest. With a heavy heart, he eventually accepted that the C 111 is not for sale. He nevertheless spent a few hours with us.

Wishing you much joy with this magazine - wherever you may be!

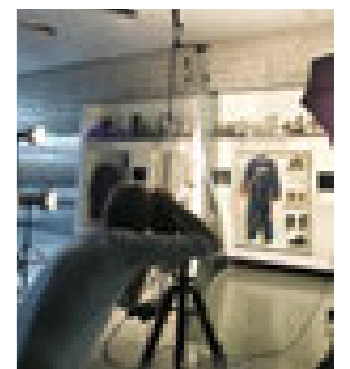
How do you like Mercedes-Benz classic magazine? What do you think of our stories and the selection of topics? We look forward to your feedback! [classic.magazin@daimler.com](mailto:classic.magazin@daimler.com)



### Collectors in Szechuan

We met Zongmin Huang in Chengdu and presented him with a copy of Mercedes-Benz classic magazine (p. 26).

### "RACING FASHION" SPECIAL



### 125 years of motorsport

Frank Hülsbömer often takes photographs for fashion and luxury brands. He creatively staged historical race suits for us (p. 44).

# classic

WARM-UP

## 8

Happy birthday! The G-Class turns 40



The legendary 1978 high-flyer is now parked in a living room

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  - A G-Model in the living room
  - Unique: advertising poster 'The lady wears Benz' from 1921
  - Purchase tips: inspired by actor Ralf Moeller
  - 5,000th member of the R/C 107 SL Club

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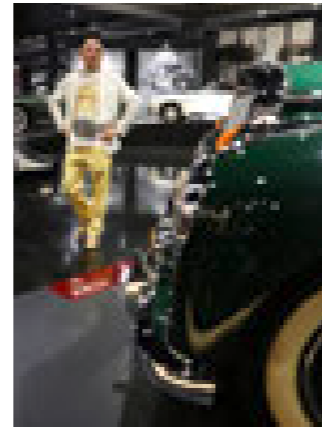
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Zongmin Huang in his museum

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From Hamburg to Hong Kong



XXL rally through the Pamir Mountains and the Himalayas

PHOTOS: ANDREAS REEG, GEORGI GRANCHAROV, SANTIAGO ARCOS, GÖTZ VON STERNFELS, COSTANTIN MIRBACH, IGOR PANITZ, DAVID KLAMMER

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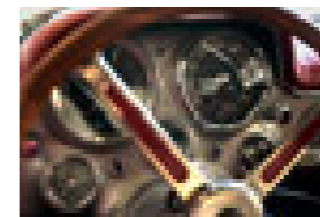
Will the 'Pagoda' make it to the roof of the Andes?



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Heavenly stars, part 3



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CLASSIC COMMUNITY

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The name stands for quality

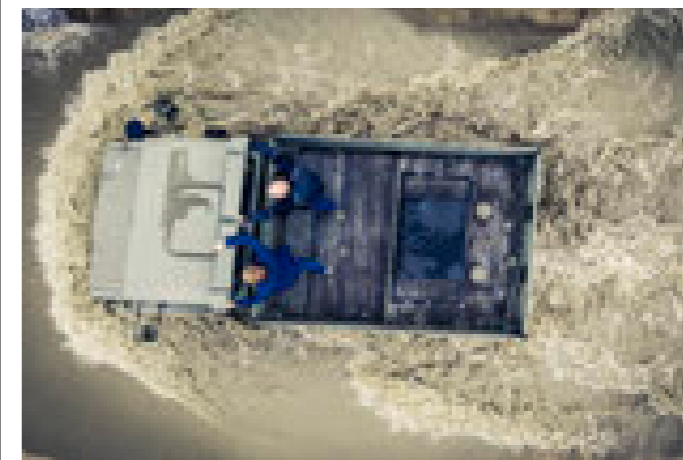
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classic

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can be downloaded from the App Store and from Google Play. The following link explains the concept of the new navigation software:

[what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com)

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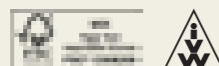
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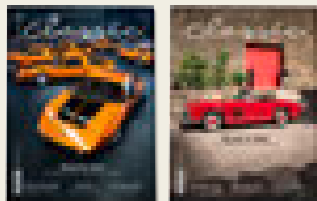
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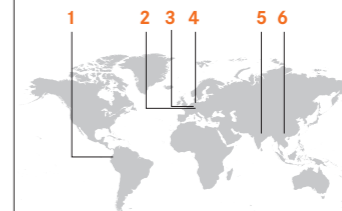
**1 Georgi Grancharov**  
*Photographer, "Chengdu", p. 26*  
"I've been living in China for seven years now and I was really happy to be able to photograph such an influential and friendly man like Zongmin Huang. A Chinese man with his own vintage car museum - a real pioneer."

**3 Marc Bielefeld**  
*Author, "Pontoon", page 36*  
"I was really impressed to be able to meet this courageous and upright man, who likes to remain in the background. He told me his story with intense vividness, and I was transported back to the situation in the former GDR. It really gave me goosebumps on one or two occasions."

**2 Constantin Mirbach**  
*Photographer, "China Rally", p. 14*  
"My first trip through Asia - and then there was the Silk Road to top it off! There was often nothing more than open space, with a village or a couple of houses every now and then. Mount Everest was the highlight - a lasting impression."

**4 Karin Hahn**  
*This issue's layouter*  
"Working on this magazine was like taking a wonderful trip around the world. I was in the Himalayas, the Andes and also in Grombach close to Stuttgart - all of this without even having to leave my desk. What will I do next? Book a long-haul trip, of course!"

Around the world in 98 pages



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**ECUADOR**  
Page 50

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Page 26

SOUND BITE

**Author Michael Kneissler reports on his South American road trip to the sun with five Mercedes-Benz Classics:**  
"A Classic is ultimately the symbol of intransience in the transience of the mundane. That's why Pablo drove his wife Veronica to their wedding in a robust W 123 in 1982. The car was orange, just like the sun. And their marriage is still going strong. 'So much for eternity,' Pablo says, smiling as he sits behind the wheel. First of all we have to manage the last ascent."  
*From page 50*

INFORMATION



**Mercedes-Benz is one of the founding partners of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.**  
Ever since the foundation was established in 2000, Mercedes-Benz has been supporting and promoting the aims and values of this worldwide charitable programme: improving the lives of underprivileged or sick children and youths by means of social sports projects. Laureus has become a fundamental element of the social responsibility of Mercedes-Benz. Every new Mercedes is therefore an ambassador for these values. With the purchase of a Mercedes, you support the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

PHOTOS DAIMLER AG (2), PRIVATE (4)



# Warm-up

SHORT STORY

## Green room

The G-Class has turned 40. Its success story began with the leap of the legendary “high-flyer”, which is now parked in a living room

### BRIEF FACT

# 80

### clubs

They are present in 47 countries and on all continents except Antarctica: Mercedes-Benz brand clubs. The youngest and now the 80th member of this global community is the club in Kenya (below). Founded in 2013, with its 220 members it now has official status. In 1952 the Mercedes-Benz Club United Kingdom became the very first club of the brand with the star.



“I was a teenager when I saw a photo of the “high-flyer” in a car magazine for the first time. Back then it was my dream to have that car. And my dream has come true”

Michael Steiger, G-Model collector

As soon as Michael Steiger had finally finished setting up his G-Model living room – probably the only one in the world – he knew who he wanted to invite first to his “green room” along with Classic magazine: Heinrich Wangler, former G-Model series test driver. It was Wangler (large photo, to the left of Michael Steiger) who was sitting at the wheel of the cactus green (DB 6880) “high-flyer” (top right) when it took off on Gran Canaria back in 1978.

A good 40 years later the “high-flyer” is the showpiece in Michael Steiger’s living room at his home

near Frankfurt. “I’ve got to hand it to you, Michael!” says Heinrich Wangler on seeing the vehicle – which Steiger found by chance and restored, and which evokes lots of memories for Wangler: “We had been given permission to drive into the dunes from 6 p.m. I started from the beach, drove towards a high ridge at 60 km/h and took off. When we were developing the G-Class back then, no way did I ever imagine it would become such an icon.”

Michael Steiger leans back with satisfaction. He has more than 30 G-Models in his collection.

PHOTOS: MERCEDES-BENZ CLASSIC, PRIVATE, ANDREAS REEG

GOOD IDEA



Picture-perfect

A Swiss photographer couple has specialised in vintage “wet-plate” photography, a craft best paired with vintage cars

Creative types and artists often look to the past for ideas and inspiration. Anja Witkowski (49) and Harald Wagner (50), both German expats from Schaffhausen, Switzerland, are photographers – or perhaps “photo artists” would be more accurate. Their passion has led them to discover antique lenses and “wet-plate” photography, as it is known. This method, which has been around since 1851, is based on a collodion process. Though it died out in the

1920s, the couple is determined to bring back the almost 170-year-old art form – especially in this era of digital photography. They see taking pictures using analogue technology as “a new way to learn how to slow down.” If you ask them, they’d tell you they’re artisans and artists in one. They even use their craft to skilfully show off historical vehicles, like the 300 model (W 186) from 1953 shown above. The result? Simply brilliant!

NOT TO BE MISSED

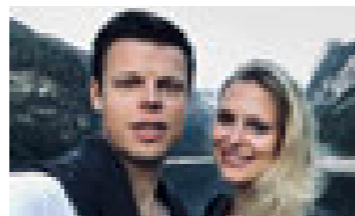
5-7 APRIL  
Veterama at the Hockenheimring

Veterama is Europe’s biggest parts and engineering market for classic vehicles – a well-stocked supermarket with a large range for fans and enthusiasts, connoisseurs and do-it-yourselfers. Over 2,500 exhibitors are coming to the show in Hockenheim, where they will be showcasing around 300 vehicles: classic vehicles and young classics, and almost every imaginable replacement and accessory part needed to maintain the technical cultural asset that is the car.

3 QUESTIONS - 3 ANSWERS

“My 500 SL is older than I am”

Florian Haug is the 5,000th member of the Mercedes-Benz R/C 107 SL Club. He sought out fellow enthusiasts



→ You are 31 years old and a newcomer to the community. Congratulations! How did you come upon the club?

← My 500 SL is two years older than I am and one year older than my girlfriend Annkathrin. I set out in search of like-minded people so I could learn from experienced SL drivers and get some tips for replacement parts.

→ When did you acquire the 107, and why?

← A friend of my father’s had one just like it. And back then I thought: when I grow up I’m going to drive this car. And now I am grown up and I’ve owned the car for nearly a year.

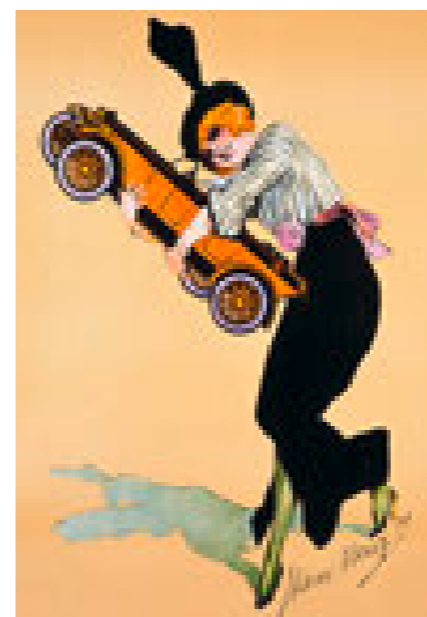
→ Where will your next major tour take you?

← To the Swiss mountains. That’s where Annkathrin lives. In winter I nearly drove there with the original ski rack for the SL. But then I decided the 107 was too good for that.



PHOTOS: MERCEDES-BENZ CLASSIC (2), WITKOWSKI/WAGNER, PRIVATE (2), ALFONS MUCHA/HERITAGE IMAGES/AKG IMAGES

UNIQUE



1 | 2  
3

- 1 My Benz Benz & Cie. advertising motif from 1921
- 2 The spring Art Nouveau allegory by Alfons Mucha from 1900
- 3 Ernest Merck A successful racing driver in the 1920s

The lady wears Benz

By Johannes Erler, art director and author

In 1888 Bertha Benz courageously climbed into the machine her husband had just invented. With the first country drive from Mannheim to Pforzheim she proved that the future of mobility was motorised.

This 1921 advertising motif is symbolic on many levels. It featured various ladies and Benz models and was used from 1912 onwards. It is not known exactly which model the lady is hugging so lovingly because in those days, before Benz & Cie. merged with Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft to become Daimler-Benz in 1926, different engine series were widely crossed with many body variants. What is discernible, though, is the influence of the Art Nouveau of the 1910s. It vehemently swept

into Wilhelminism, celebrating progress and freedom, as seen in Alfons Mucha’s allegorical seasonal scenes of young women with bouquets of flowers.

The car was also a symbol of progress, which is the fundamental idea behind this motif. The lady’s clothing is already very Twenties, the modern age had begun, women were confidently fighting for their rights, and pioneers such as the poet Mascha Kaléko, the painter Jeanne Mammen and the racing driver Ernest Merck represented the voices and faces of flourishing feminism. The future was inexorably female.

Benz & Cie. realised this at an early stage – and made use of the trend for this wonderful picture.

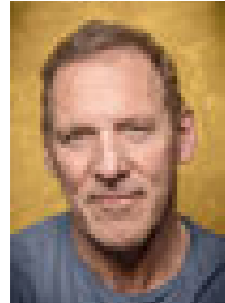


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How to spring into spring

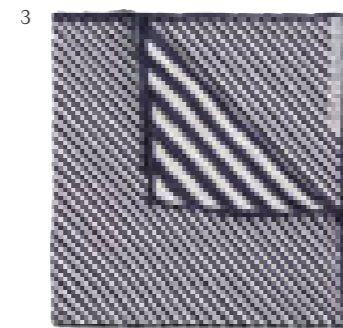


RALF MOELLER'S HITS

The multiple bodybuilding champion moved from Recklinghausen in the Ruhr area to the dream factory of Hollywood, where he has lived since 1992 making a name for himself as an actor (in *Gladiator* for example). He revealed his five favourite songs to us, and we have selected five lifestyle accessories to match.

PLAYLIST

1	David Bowie	Space Oddity
2	Bee Gees	Stayin' Alive
3	Bobby Darin	Beyond the Sea
4	Bob Marley	No Woman No Cry
5	Diana Ross	I'm Coming Out



**1 Otherworldly: Earth to Ziggy**  
With "Space Oddity" David Bowie supplied the soundtrack to the 1969 moon landing. You can invite Major Tom to your home with this limited print. Photo print, approx. €4,200, [taschen.com](http://taschen.com)

**2 Spotlight: not a hair out of place**  
Whether it's long hair or a rockabilly look, a good acetate comb is an absolute must, approx. €50, [buly1803.com](http://buly1803.com)

**3 Stylish: California dream**  
Jacket, open-necked shirt, pocket handkerchief: perfect dress code. Drive a cabriolet listening to "La Mer". Cotton/silk handkerchief, approx. €40, [tommy.com](http://tommy.com)

**4 Transparency: sunshine reggae**  
These elegant sunglasses offer protection from UV rays and prying eyes. Dark green lenses ensure a clear view of your surroundings. Glasses, approx. €399, [mykita.com](http://mykita.com)

**5 On tour: on the soul train**  
Stevie, Aretha, Isaac, Diana: their Motown hits and gospel tracks defined an entire generation's attitude to life. Bruce Talamon was there with his camera. Coffee-table book, approx. €50, [taschen.com](http://taschen.com)

PHOTOS DAVID KLAMMER, PR (5)



Poliform



# 14,000 km of highs

From Hamburg to Hong Kong: in 2018 the New Silk Road Rally was once again one of the greatest adventures to be experienced at the wheel of a car. We accompanied three teams in the Pamir Mountains and the Himalayas – and visited them after their return

TEXT Jörg Heuer PHOTOS Constantin Mirbach

**Straight as an arrow**  
On the move in the Himalayas, travellers encounter vast expanses of landscape over hundreds of kilometres.





**Dream destination**  
Tajana Honegger and her father Andreas have casually parked the W 115 in front of Mount Everest.



**Spectacular stretch**  
Countless hairpin bends lead up to the base camp at the foot of the world's highest mountain.

**Intrepid trio**  
The "Böhringer Pagoda",  
the 'Stroke Eight' and  
the G-Model in eager  
anticipation of the next  
mountain stage







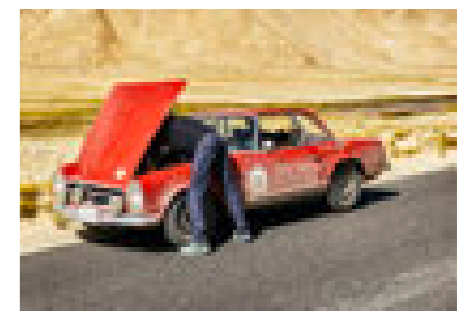
This rally is much more than just an adventure on four wheels. It is accompanied by teams of mechanics, and even by medical personnel. It is the ultimate experience for both human and machine. For example on China National Highway 219, which holds the world altitude record for highways with an average of 4,000 metres above sea level – or when crossing passes, where the classics had to climb to over 5,000 metres. This is also where oxygen canisters for the drivers and fuel boosters for the cars came into occasional use, as 95- to 98-octane petrol is simply not available up there.

The New Silk Road Rally celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2018. It always begins in Germany in the late summer, passing through eastern Europe and the expanses of Asia to China. This time the long-distance tour started in Hamburg and ended in Hong Kong, with 46 daily stretches and 14 rest days. The participants: 28 men and women in 14 classic cars, six of which were made by Mercedes-Benz. The drivers from Switzerland and Germany expected temperatures ranging between a sauna and a deep-freezer. 14,000 kilometres. Eight countries: Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. Highlights such as the Pamir Mountains and the Himalayas, then the delta of the Pearl River on the South China Sea.

Our photographer accompanied the participants on the most exciting stretches. What memories remain of this tour? After their return we met the drivers of a 'Pagoda', a 'Stroke Eight' and a G-Model. This is their story.

**Susi and Kurt Infanger, a couple from Switzerland**

Kurt Infanger acquired his Mercedes-Benz 230 SL (W 113) dating from 1964 a year before the rally, with one aim in mind: "I had it converted to make it practically identical to the famous "Böhringer Pagoda" in which racing legend Eugen Böhringer achieved spectacular long-distance victories in the early 1960s," says the 69-year-old. "The car already fascinated me as a child." And as he is a "passionate driver and true mountain-lover" himself, he wanted to see how he and his car would cope on this →



1 | 2  
| 3

1  
**Fulfilment**  
A sublimely happy Kurt Infanger

2  
**Dream journey**  
He is the man at the wheel; his wife Susi is the perfect co-driver.

3  
**Engine check-up**  
Taking a look under the bonnet. The 230 SL runs like a Swiss watch.



1 | 3  
2 |

**1 Good-luck symbol**  
The key fob of the Stroke Eight reads "Safe Journey".

**2 Tea break**  
Tatjana and Andreas Honegger take a break in a restaurant.

**3 Cold start**  
The daily stretches ranged from just under 100 to a maximum of 600 kilometres. The departure time was usually very early in the morning.

ultra-long rally along the Silk Road. "The time was right for a highlight like this. We're both retired, and we wanted to do something really crazy together." His wife Susi, 67, fondly nudges his arm. So the Infangers decided to take part in the New Silk Road Rally. Their doctor gave them the all-clear, and the car with its special underbody protection was ready to go.

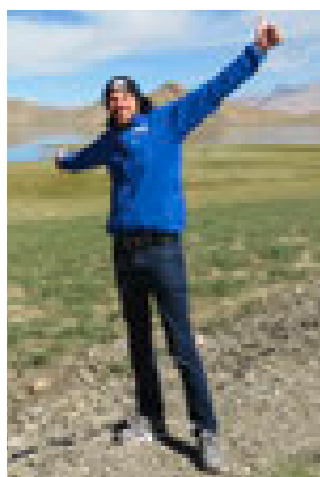
So how was it? "14,174 kilometres of highs," he enthuses. "We drove through the Pamir Mountains and Himalayas for weeks at an altitude of 4,000 metres and more," says his wife. "It was superb, breathtaking and grandiose. It was interesting to see the division of roles between the men and women on such an extreme tour. The men almost exclusively concerned themselves with technical aspects, while the women provided the social cohesion."

Although the air was often very thin, the Infangers were repeatedly compensated by the many natural wonders and encounters with people along the route. They only used the oxygen canister for a short time: it had two thin tubes that were attached to the wearer's nose. And the 230 SL? It ran as reliably as a Swiss watch. It was only when flying back from Hong Kong to Zurich that they realised what they had achieved - when they saw the plane's flightpath on the screen. "My goodness, Susi, pinch me," Kurt Infanger said to her. "Have we really just covered the entire route by car - or was it just a dream?" "It was a dream, Kurt," his wife answered with a smile.

**Tatjana and Andreas Honegger, father and daughter from Switzerland**

Andreas Honegger, 62, a businessman from the Upper Zurich region, was already an experienced long-distance driver before the rally. Driving his 220 (W 115) petrol model produced in 1969, he had already completed long tours through southern Asia and northern Europe. "This time I wanted to drive through the wide expanses of China - and park my car in front of Mount Everest," he says. His daughter Tatjana, 23, a student at London's King's College of Liberal Arts, accompanied him as co-driver on the high-altitude stretches. "My only condition was that we had a good sound system on board," she says. Indeed, they both had →





INTERVIEW

## “Adventures are my passion”

**Andreas Flück** organises dream journeys with his team at China Tours

→ What’s the great appeal of long-distance rallies such as these?

← For us, these tours in classic cars are always also a mobile intercultural encounter. Where

ever we appear, practically the whole village comes out to meet us and we arouse both curiosity and enthusiasm.

→ In what way?

← Where have you come from, where are you going? These are the questions local people ask us. And we start a lively conversation right away.

→ What else can participants in the New Silk Road Rally expect?

← Everybody must be well aware of what an adventure like this means. It’s a physical

and mental challenge. Perhaps you get to know yourselves in a completely different way – both yourself and your co-driver.

→ So this rally really is a journey of self-discovery?

← Definitely!

→ When is the next one planned, and where?

← On 24 August we’ll be leaving Kurfürstendamm in Berlin for Beijing, taking the Silk Road in 52 days to mark the 25th anniversary of these twinned cities. It’ll be yet another amazing adventure!

PHOTOS PRIVATE (P. 16, P. 21 TOP RIGHT, P. 24 BOTTOM LEFT)

### How about Berlin – Beijing this year?

China Tours has been organising long-distance tours to and from China for over twelve years. More information is available online: [newsilkroad.de](http://newsilkroad.de)

their reservations about being together so long and so intensively in a confined space, as they were prone to coming into conflict fairly quickly. So was he the sole decision-maker and she the dutiful daughter? “Fortunately it wasn’t like that. We learned to appreciate each other much more on the journey,” says Tatjana. “After all, we were spending practically 24 hours a day together, and felt a new closeness,” her father confirms.

Both found it “absolutely sublime” to enjoy the shared and intense feeling of freedom and independence in the robust and dependable Stroke Eight. Densely populated Switzerland and the hustle and bustle of London were a world away. It truly touched their hearts.

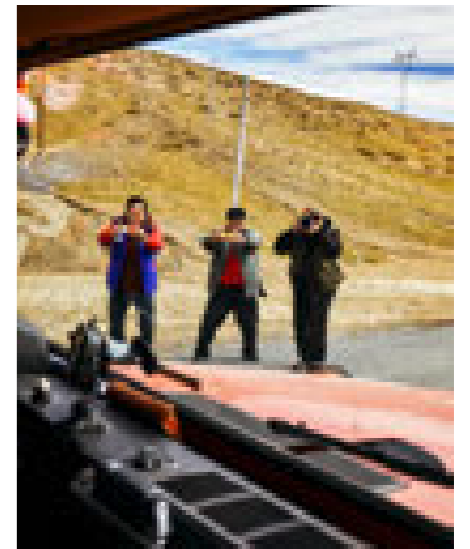
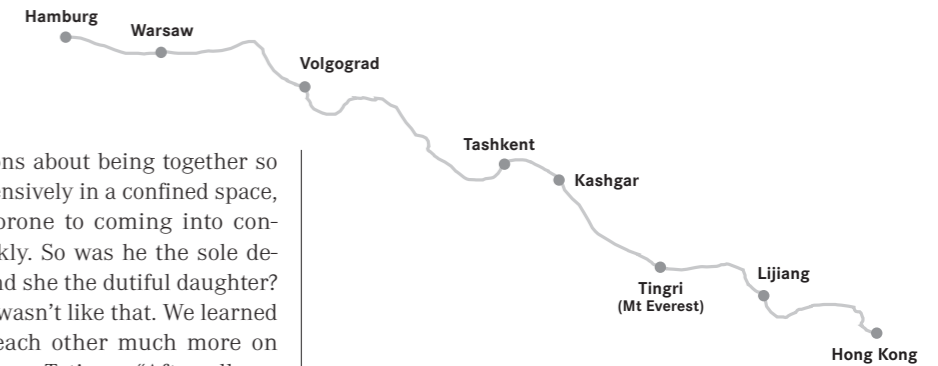
She collected stones for her friends and washed them in the mountain lakes. And he simply enjoyed “the stretches of sometimes over 250 kilometres with nothing but stony desert, high plateaus, glaciers and hardly any oncoming traffic on the absolutely straight roads. And of course my grown-up daughter next to me, with her cool music, her intelligent ideas – and also the hot noodle soup she sometimes prepared for us in the hotel in the morning.”

### Eve and Tom Rüggeberg, father and daughter from Germany

“The Rally was a lifelong dream come true,” says industrialist Tom Rüggeberg, 79. He intentionally purchased a car that had already mastered the Silk Road: a red 230 GE (W 460) produced in 1983, in which the previous owner had driven to Shanghai.

Tom Rüggeberg’s wife opted not to accompany him, but his daughter Eve was willing. Her father gave her the trip as a 50th birthday present. His wife had only one wish for her when they departed: to bring him back safe and sound.

And that is what Eve did. “Whenever my lips turned pale in the mountains, Eve gave me oxygen,” Tom Rüggeberg explains. They took turns at the wheel. The thinner the air became, the more often she took over. And the highlight of the journey? Tom Rüggeberg does not have to think for long: “In the Himalayas I heard that I had become a great-grandfather. That was simply overwhelming!” ♦



1 | 2

### 1 Grandiose

The G-Model is really in its element among the sandy cliffs.

### 2 Attraction

The drivers and their classic cars soon become a popular photo motif in the Himalayas.



# Huang's dream

Zongmin Huang, an entrepreneur from the megacity Chengdu, is a man on a mission: the Mercedes-Benz fan wants to make classic cars popular in China

TEXT Jörg Heuer PHOTOS Georgi Grancharov



Love isn't blind, it's red  
Zongmin Huang is at the wheel,  
about to take a spin in front of his  
company's office in Chengdu in  
his Mercedes-Benz 170 D from 1951.



“Later I’ll take you for a spin in my red 170, which I’m sure you already noticed outside. Unfortunately not in the city, just on my company premises. I can’t drive on the roads – well, not yet!”

1  
**Blue wonder**  
The Benz 8/20 hp from 1913 is a permanent exhibit in Mr Zongmin’s automotive museum in Chengdu.

2  
**Silver glamour**  
Zongmin Huang’s employees ensure that his vintage cars are always in tip-top condition.

3  
**First love**  
The Chinese businessman’s passion for collecting began with the Hongqi (“red flag”) 28 years ago.

**Y**ou’re really lucky”, says Zongmin Huang when he sees us approaching. He immediately explains why: “Last night I stayed up quite late with friends. It was well past midnight by the time we said goodbye. Because I fell asleep rather late, I wasn’t at all sure whether I would make it to our early meeting.”

Luckily, he did. The entrepreneur not only appears spirited, he is also in a great mood. Full of curiosity, he takes a close look at the visitors from faraway Germany. He is obviously delighted and no doubt also somewhat flattered that we undertook the long trip to China especially for him.

We are here because he is something of a pioneer, a trailblazer. And because he’s on a mission: he is enthusiastically working on opening up China to the vintage vehicle market. The 61-year-old is wearing light brown shoes, yellow trousers,

a vanilla-coloured jacket. With a relaxed and inviting gesture, he asks us to take a seat. Tea, coffee and fruit juice are passed around. The armchairs and sofas are deep and cushiony. The expansive light-filled lounge is dominated by bright colours. Art hangs on the walls, expensive originals. Stucco on the ceiling. A tasteful ambience right in the middle of an industrial area close to the motorway leading to the airport.

We are in southwestern China, in Chengdu. With 16 million inhabitants, this is one of the megacities of Szechuan Province, also known as the “land of plenty”. Zongmin Huang lives in this city, which is home to China’s largest panda breeding centre and the largest free-standing building in the world, the New Century Global Center.

He is one of the leading luxury car dealers in the province with a total population of 83 million, and is one of the richest men in China.

His collection of vintage vehicles numbers well over 200 exhibits; about every tenth vehicle is a Mercedes-Benz.

“Later I’ll take you for a spin in my red 170, which I’m sure you already noticed outside. Unfortunately not in the city, just here on my – okay, not completely tiny – company premises”, he says. “I can’t drive on the roads. Well, not yet!”

**From mechanic to multimillionaire**

It is currently not permissible to import vintage or classic cars to China. Driving old cars on public roads is only possible, if at all, with a special permit that is extremely hard to come by. According to many Chinese, older cars – as was the situation 30 or 40 years ago in Western Europe – are simply old: uncomfortable, uninteresting and uncool. Does anyone in China have a larger vintage car collection than he has? Mr Zongmin cradles his head as →

1  
2 | 3





he thinks. "I am surely at the top of the ranking. Vintage cars are still a very delicate flower in China. But they are gradually coming into fashion here, too. They deserve our appreciation; they have had mine for a long time now."

He explains the situation: there are already a few thousand vintage vehicles in the country, often imported as exhibition pieces, cultural assets or furniture. However, many more vintage cars in containers and warehouses abroad and at the borders are still waiting to enter the country.

Around 40 of Mr Zongmin's 200 valuables spanning more than 100 years of automotive history are parked in his private Classic Car Museum, which is the only one of its kind in China in this form and in terms of its range of exhibits. And he also runs a vintage car workshop with 50 employees. This is China's first workshop dedicated

to vintage car restoration and repair, he says. "Let me tell you how my passion for these pieces of history on wheels developed."

Zongmin Huang is a trained car mechanic, having become a master craftsman in his trade at 22 years of age following his years as an apprentice in a rural area. He mainly repaired Japanese cars, which were well established on the Chinese market at that time. He specialised in repairs and then opened his first workshop along with three friends. He made a name for himself as an expert for foreign vehicles throughout the province of Szechuan back in the 1980s: "Back then, many workshop operators tried their luck, but quite a number of them quickly went bankrupt. We went about things in a more serious and methodical way. Repairing and restoring particularly hopeless cases was our speciality - and we were good at it."

The word quickly got around: Huang can help! His business rapidly grew. In 1993 he employed 300 mechanics in two large workshops: "Motivated and well-trained men, and women too."

#### The Hongqi state carriage

"Oh, just a moment", Mr Zongmin interrupts himself. He sips his tea, stretches and crosses his arms behind his head. "1991 was a decisive year. That's when I acquired a car that sparked my passion for vintage vehicles." But he didn't buy the car for himself, rather for a customer. A rich fellow countryman wished to acquire an older model of the Chinese state saloon by the name of Hongqi, meaning "red flag". He found one of these rare specimens, paid the equivalent of around 10,000 euros for the Red Flag model, and reckoned with a further 3,000 euros for restoration work. The businessman from Hong Kong was willing to →

"Vintage cars are still a very delicate flower in China. But they are gradually coming into fashion here, too. They deserve our appreciation; they have had mine for a long time now"

1  
2 | 3



1

#### Proud owner

The Sanhe Classic Car Museum, the only one of its kind in China, is open for visitors.

2

#### Treasure trove

Valuables from more than 100 years of automotive history can be found behind this door.

3

#### Star classics

No fewer than 44 automotive treasures are parked in the museum on an exhibition area of 4,000 square metres.





pay 20,000 euros for the restored car, so Mr Zongmin still made a profit of around 7,000 euros: not bad, he thought.

However, his customer went bankrupt all of a sudden. Mr Zongmin was left with the black state carriage with a V8 engine and a good 200 hp. The Hongqi went into series production in 1959 with the model designation CA72 and as built until 1981 (from 1965 as CA770).

“I became more and more familiar with the car that I now unexpectedly had in my possession”, he explained. “The Saloon was not simply beautiful, breathtaking and rare, it was also a piece of history. And that’s what I found fascinating. I became interested in this vehicle and saw it with very different, curious, interested and even admiring eyes.”

Before long, there were three Red Flag models in the exhibition area of his business, known as Sanhe, established in 1966 in Chengdu.

He still owns all of them today, and he won a major prize with one of them at the Concours d’Elegance at Pebble Beach in California: the “Chairman’s Trophy”.

Sanhe, with around 4,000 employees, has long since become one of the best-known car dealerships in Szechuan. What does Sanhe actually mean? “Three harmonies: sky, earth, humans. The sky stands for big chances; earth for the physical background; humans for the community, a common desire as it were.”

When visiting the Blackhawk automobile museum in Las Vegas at the beginning of the new millennium, he had an idea: “I’ll build my own Classic Car Museum – the first of its kind in China!”

He acquired models from almost every manufacturer. He found many of them in the People’s Republic, and others abroad: Italy, England, America and Germany. The red 170 Da OTP (open police touring car)

was the first Mercedes-Benz he bought. A businessman from western Europe who had long since moved elsewhere had left the car in China, where it had been standing around for a long time. “Follow me down here; I’ll now show you the museum”, Mr Zongmin says.

#### China’s most beautiful automotive museum

It is 4,000 square metres in area and located on the ground floor. The door opens and a sparkling treasure trove is revealed. We walk through the two halls, amazed at the impeccable vintage cars. “I acquired both of my Mercedes-Benz 190 SL cars on exhibit, one in white, the other in red, in Germany and had them restored there, just like the 220 Cabriolet A”, he explains, his eyes aglow. The green 220 S in front of me belonged to a Chinese enthusiast before Mr Zongmin acquired it, and the Benz 8/20 hp from 1913 was →

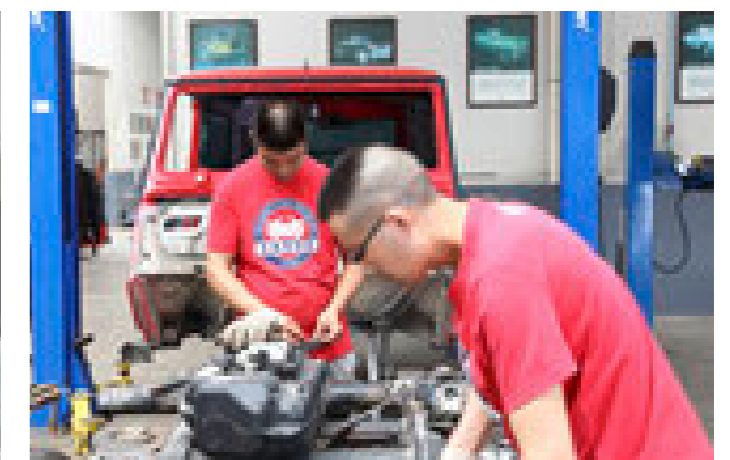
1 + 2  
**Collector and hunter**  
Mr Zongmin collects just about everything: art, furniture, watches... What’s he missing? “A collection of rare trees.”

3  
**Warm welcome**  
The businessman likes to receive his guests on the level above the Classic Car Museum.

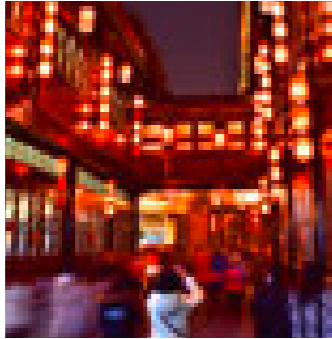
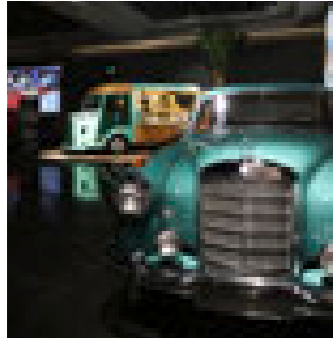
4 + 5  
**Precision and craftsmanship**  
Around 50 employees work in the vintage car workshop.

“I acquired both of my Mercedes-Benz 190 SL cars on exhibit, one in white, the other in red, in Germany and had them restored there, just like the 220 Cabriolet A”

1	
2	3   4   5



# Discover



1	2
3	4

## PAGEENTRY

### 1 Sanhe Classic Car Museum

This museum will warm the heart of any vintage car enthusiast. More than 40 meticulously and lovingly restored valuable automotive exhibits are showcased here on an exhibition area of around 4,000 square metres.

## PET THE PANDAS

### 3 Panda Breeding Center

They chomp, sleep and relax in the shade. Over a hundred pandas live in this breeding centre located in a generously dimensioned park. Visitors can watch the animals being fed and even get up close to baby pandas.

## PROMENADE

### 2 Jinli Pedestrian Street

Located beside Wuhou Temple, the pedestrian precinct is full of hustle and bustle, with no end of shopping and culinary delights. In the style of the Qing dynasty, at night it is aglow with countless red lanterns and colourful lights.

## PLUSH PILLOWS

### 4 Hotel InterContinental

Sleep in the world's largest free-standing building. In the New Century Global Center shop over an area of 400,000 square metres, go ice-skating and visit the water park. An internal shuttle service is provided.



- 1 Sanhe Classic Car Museum: *Xinyuan South Road 2*
- 2 Jinli Pedestrian Street
- 3 Panda Breeding Center: [panda.org.cn](http://panda.org.cn)
- 4 Hotel InterContinental: *1736 Tianfu Avenue North*

owned by a collector in New Zealand. "I've driven in the annual Beijing-Shanghai rally in many of my Mercedes", he says. "They are my emperors, and they must be driven over long distances."

What does a man dream of who already owns a lot and can afford almost anything? Mr Zongmin rests his chin on his hand: "The strict import and driving restrictions have been lifted in China. Classic cars are no longer just my passion, they are my business. And whenever the mood takes me, I take a spin in my 190 SL or 170 D through the city - or a road trip through the beautiful Szechuan landscape with a group of fellow classic fanatics." ♦



**Jörg Heuer** had written many an email before the busy entrepreneur finally said to him, "Come to Chengdu - and please bring me a few of your Classic magazines!"

PHOTOS TIPS GEORGI GRANCHAROV, SHUTTERSTOCK, JEREMY C/UNSPLASH, ACTION PRESS ILLUSTRATION JULIA PELZER



**Licence to drive**  
"The classic cars deserve our appreciation", Zongmin Huang says. "They have had mine for a long time now."





# Who is he? A hero!

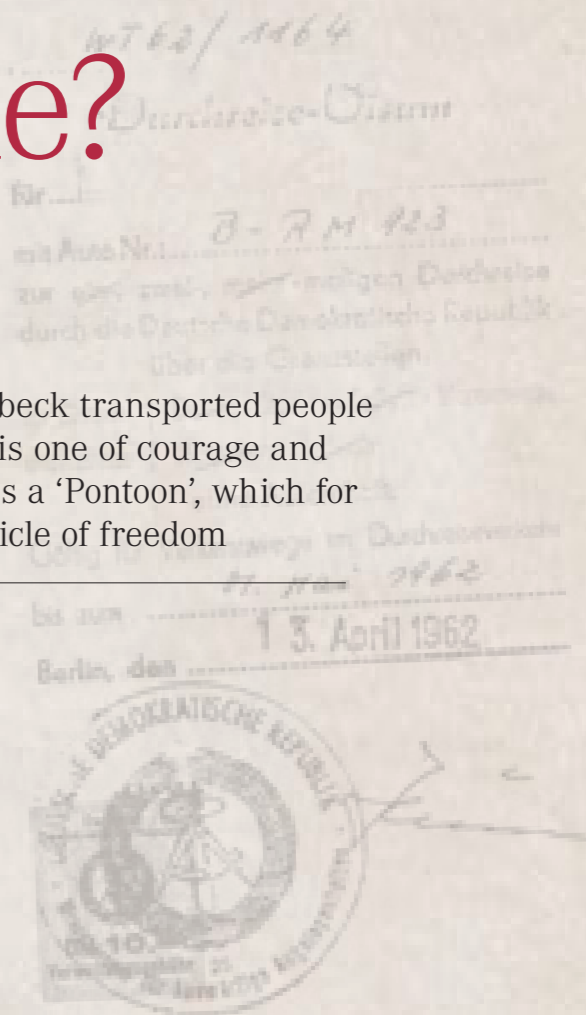
At great personal risk, Dietrich Rohrbeck transported people from the GDR to the West. His story is one of courage and determination – and one that involves a ‘Pontoon’, which for many East Germans became the vehicle of freedom

TEXT Marc Bielefeld

A tall, upright man with white hair wearing jeans sits on his balcony in Hamburg-Niendorf. He drinks a glass of water. After a while he goes into his living room and comes back with a piece of German history. He smiles as he places the folder on the table.

Old vehicle registration documents, consignment notes, forged signatures from bygone days all but forgotten are stored in clear plastic covers. He takes another glass of water while the birds chirp merrily in the nearby forest. Photos appear – a black Mercedes-Benz 180 with the number plate B-X 439, built in 1955. A man is standing beside the car turning his back to the viewer.

“Back then, nobody working in my sector wanted to be recognised”, Dietrich Rohrbeck explains. “It could have been fatal or you could have ended up in Stasi prison.” In the photos, the black Pontoon is a very beautiful vehicle. But you cannot tell by looking at →



**Border-crosser**  
Perfectly forged immigration and emigration papers from GDR security bodies were essential for Dietrich Rohrbeck's survival.



the vehicle what was really hidden inside it. A hole. A hollow space. A gap 17 centimetres wide a person could fit in to, located between the back seat and the boot. That person had to be slim and no taller than 1.80 metres. That person had to worm their way into the niche as they would into a dark cage. They had to bend their legs and breathe shallowly, not moving an inch in this hiding place. But that is how they escaped the GDR back in those days.

Dietrich Rohrbeck's wife now steps on to the balcony. She brings us coffee and biscuits because it will take another while yet to hear all of the story. Mr Rohrbeck, now 82 years of age, relates his account in a detailed, calm and matter-of-fact manner.

#### Mercedes to freedom

Where did his courage and will come from? The story begins with his first escape at the end of the war, which led him to Weilrode and Silkerode in Südharz. Then the second escape, from the soon-to-be GDR. Following the riots on 17 June 1953, the young Mr Rohrbeck escaped from Görlitz to West Berlin; however, many people did not make it. Families were separated, sisters and brothers divided. The Iron Curtain existed between West and East Germany and in people's heads. This is the origin of his anger over a life stolen, freedom robbed. And so he came to the decision to help others fulfil their dream of freedom with all the means at his disposal.

He bought the used Pontoon on 19 October 1962 for 2,500 deutschmarks. The car, with a self-supporting body, had a solid steel wall between the boot and the back seat. The very next day, on 20 October, Dietrich Rohrbeck got down to work. He took a drill and the blade of a hacksaw, crawled into the interior of the Pontoon and began sawing. He sawed and drilled for two days while the car was in his West Berlin garage, unobserved.

Born in Szczecin in 1936, Dietrich Rohrbeck was 26 years old at the time and wore his dark hair swept up. He removed parts of the underbody and segments from the rear panel until the hiding place was finished. He could now "go on tour", as it was known by those who assisted people in escaping.

Soon Mr Rohrbeck smuggled a woman named Ingrid B. from the GDR. Then a woman



called Ingrid P. Soon after, a man called Hanns-Stephan W. No surnames. Best not to know too much. Dietrich Rohrbeck hardly made himself known. "Purely a precautionary measure", he says. "I was in the shadows." By and by, in December further GDR citizens crawled into the cavity of his Mercedes, and the number of people Dietrich Rohrbeck transported to the West in his special taxi steadily increased. The risk to him and his passengers was huge. Punishment for such so-called "Wall saboteurs" was up to 15 years' imprisonment, and several GDR citizens as well as those assisting them had already been shot while trying to get to freedom.

Two clear eyes look at me. Mr Rohrbeck sips his coffee. No, he was never really scared. But he always felt a bit "queasy". "The GDR Ministry for State Security had eyes and ears everywhere, even in the Federal Republic. I had to keep my nerves →

1 | 2

**1 Confined**  
A hole, a hollow space.  
A gap 17 centimetres  
wide between the back  
seat and the boot

**2 Safe**  
The GDR border  
guards inspected the  
boot but found  
nothing suspicious.

"The GDR Ministry for State Security had eyes and ears everywhere, even in the West. I had to keep my nerves and maintain complete silence; I had to be a man of the shadows"



and maintain complete silence; I had to be a man of the shadows.”

He had already had the idea of transferring people to the West in his car: thanks to special circumstances, Mr Rohrbeck had discovered a hole in the perfidious bureaucracy of the East.

At the time, he was married to his first wife, a Danish woman. The couple had a daughter, and in this dual-state marriage the child was included in her father's passport. Mr Rohrbeck often commuted between Berlin and the Danish Falster, where his wife's family lived. He always took the ferry between Gedser and Warnemünde near Rostock, travelling though the GDR – from and to West Berlin. One day, after he had guided some people through the underground tunnels in Berlin where they crawled like moles between two worlds, he dared to try a different approach: by car from Denmark.

#### He brought 16 children to the West

On the ferry, he went to the GDR border official, produced his passport and said: “My little daughter is feeling poorly and sleeping so peacefully in the car below.” A precarious moment, the decisive seconds. Mr Rohrbeck remained calm and friendly. “Do I really have to wake her right now?” The officials, already rather tired in the evening, issued the permit of transit. They knew that there would be a more detailed identity check on entering the GDR. But Mr Rohrbeck then hid his daughter's permit of transit – because she never got into the car in the first place.

In the meantime, here up on the balcony you gain a vague impression of what civic courage can mean. Mr Rohrbeck now takes out the old stamps that he then used. Perfectly forged stamps made by a Dane who was familiar with these matters; he had already forged documents during the Second World War. Mr Rohrbeck stamped his daughter's permit of transit, although she wasn't actually in the car, and put it back in his pocket. On his arrival in the GDR, he picked up the first child at a previously agreed meeting point. He then travelled with this child – his “daughter” – across the border to West Berlin. It worked straight away.

This is how Dietrich Rohrbeck brought 16 small children across the border. They

were to follow their parents, who had already escaped to the West. For the most part, the children were only one or one and a half years old. There was usually a mild sedative in the little bottle he brought so that the little children would not scream when the big strange man took them and placed them on the back seat. If they were boys, Mr Rohrbeck put his daughter's little jacket on them. He of course had nappies and soothers from the West with him. He was never caught. They got through 16 times – “dancing on the edge of a cliff”. And with all the courage that goes with such daring manoeuvres.

Mr Rohrbeck wanted to keep going. Like many others who helped people escape, he had a great sense of anger and rage towards the unjust system, towards the lack of freedom – being locked behind the Wall and →

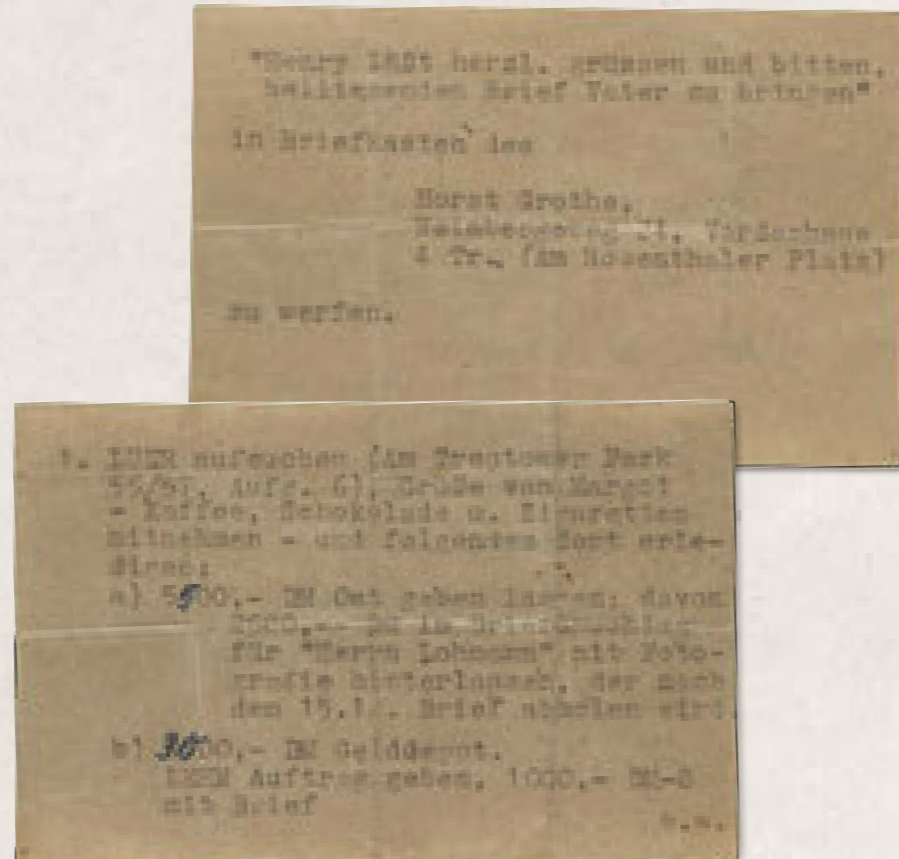
1 | 2

#### 1 Instructions

Dietrich Rohrbeck also unofficially brought people across the border on behalf of the Western secret services. The agents provided him with money and information.

#### 2 Hiding place

Those who were accommodated in the Pontoon had to be slim and not too tall.



“A hole, a hollow space. A gap 17 centimetres wide a person could fit in to, between the back seat and the boot. That person had to be slim and no taller than 1.80 metres”



barbed wire – and towards the order to shoot on sight.

Secret services also contacted and supported him, as did friends and acquaintances who knew what was going on. They asked him to collect even more people, to bring even more families together. Daughters, sons, wives, brothers-in-law. But where would he put the adults? The daughter trick would not work with them. Mr Rohrbeck took out his tools and sawed the hiding place into the vehicle's belly. He often travelled from West Berlin to Falster, as that's where the Danish family lived, and his daughter often spent time there with his parents-in-law. That seemed plausible. Secret meetings were arranged once again, and coded telegrams were sent. Waiting. Silence. Mr Rohrbeck then finally set off. This time he left from Berlin-Zehlendorf in the west of the city. This is where he lived and where he was actually studying to become a civil engineer.

Border crossing at Staaken – the usual checks. He then travelled through the GDR, something that at the time was possible with a passport from West Berlin. Little-used country roads, well after sunset. The meeting point was in Rostock. Everything had to happen quickly. He whispered a code word; once it was "Malli". The people prepared for the escape followed him to the Pontoon, which he had parked elsewhere. Mr Rohrbeck folded away the back seat and a person disappeared into the gap. It all happened as quick as lightning. Mr Rohrbeck started the car and went on his way again. He headed for Warnemünde, where the late ferry to Denmark was waiting and would soon set sail.

#### Hours of perseverance

"From this point on, I couldn't do any more", Mr Rohrbeck recalls. "Just remain as calm as possible, appear relaxed, don't let anything show."

He was a bag of nerves before boarding the ferry. Mere millimetres of metal separated him and the fugitives from a sudden end to the trip. The outlook: endless interrogation, years of imprisonment. Mr Rohrbeck sat at the wheel and smiled. If necessary, he talked about his family and their life across the border in Denmark. The access ramps to the ferry were lit up with spotlights. Men in



uniform inspected the car. The dogs sniffed around. His passport and visa were checked in the border building. The officials opened the boot and poked around. A mere cough would have been enough.

"Some people had to endure up to three and a half hours in this narrow hiding place", Mr Rohrbeck explains. "That's how long it could have taken until they were on board from East Germany to Denmark, and finally in safety."

While telling this story, Dietrich Rohrbeck had only eaten one biscuit. His cup of coffee was on the table and now cold. He had

brought 85 adults and 16 small children out of the GDR over the course of two years. He had done so in the Pontoon, with forged papers, through tunnels and on foot. Sixteen people were stowed away in the tiny space in his Mercedes. And then they knew what it meant to finally reach freedom.

His brother crossed the border one last time in the car to collect someone. On 5 January 1963, he was captured in the East. He spent two years in prison. The risk was now too great for Dietrich Rohrbeck as well. His car was gone. No traces, no clues. He never saw the black Pontoon again. ♦

PHOTOS PRIVATE (8), P. 43 JOHANNES MINK



"Some had to endure up to three and a half hours in this narrow hiding place. That's how long it could have taken until they were on board the ferry from East Germany to Denmark, and finally in safety"

1 | 2

**1 Cover names**  
Those who helped people escape often operated with false identities.

**2 An upright man**  
Thankfully, Dietrich Rohrbeck no longer has to hide his face.





## 1910-1934

### Gentlemen drivers

At the beginning of the last century, drivers usually wore leather caps with goggles such as these. Driver Wilhelm Merck wore this black cape at a car race around 1925. Using a special technique, our photographer conjured up reflections reminiscent of rally stripes.



## 1956-1964

### Rally sport

Eugen Böhringer, who made a name for himself in many long-distance races, seems to have liked light blue. The driver wore these racing overalls, this helmet and these goggles when he won the European Rally Championship with Mercedes-Benz in 1962.

# Very sporty

125 years of motorsport: a throwback to the racing attire of past eras. We photographed them at the Mercedes-Benz Museum with rally-stripe reflections inspired by the C 111. Here, these treasures are securely on display behind panes of shatterproof glass. But even so, you can still smell the petrol and hear the roar of the engines

*TEXT* Uwe Siegmund *PHOTOS* Frank Hülsbömer



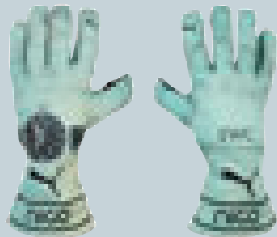
## 1989-1991

**Sports Car Prototype World Championship**  
Mercedes-Benz was involved in the Sports Car Prototype World Championship from the late 1980s onwards. Wearing this outfit, Jean-Louis Schlesser won the drivers' and manufacturers' titles. Jochen Mass contested races wearing these gloves.



## 1934-1939

**Grand Prix racing**  
The era of the legendary Mercedes-Benz Silver Arrows began in the 1930s. They dominated Grand Prix racing. In this outfit, driver Hermann Lang won several Grands Prix in 1939 alone, his most successful year of all.



## 2014

### Formula 1

This was a highly successful year for the Formula 1 team: Lewis Hamilton - wearing this helmet - was world champion driver, and Nico Rosberg - wearing this racing outfit and these gloves - came in second. Together, they won the manufacturers' world championship in the Mercedes F1 W05 Hybrid.



## 1952-1955

### Motorsport comeback

The Silver Arrows made a comeback to motorsport in the early 1950s. And what a comeback it was! The 300 SL tore ahead of the competition in Le Mans, at the Nürburgring and at the Carrera Panamericana in Mexico. Hans Herrmann wore these goggles in 1954. In the same year, Juan Manuel Fangio wore this helmet and racing suit.





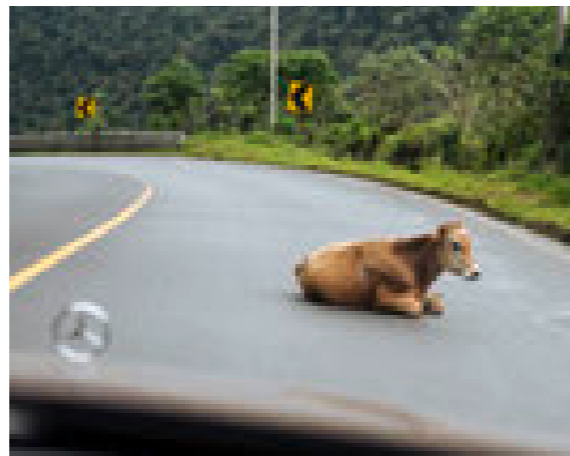
# Sun-bound

A truly breathtaking road trip with five classicos: up the Chimborazo in Ecuador, the closest place to the sun that you can reach in a car

*TEXT* Michael Kneissler *PHOTOS* Santiago Arcos

**Good to go**  
Juan Pablo Carrera and his wife Florencia check their camera before setting off up the mountain. He drives the 'Pagoda', model 280 SL, pictured here; she drives a 280 C.

1  
**Procession**  
Hundreds of people  
file past Ernesto's  
R 107.



2  
**Downhill**  
On the jungle road,  
a dozing cow demands  
our attention.

3  
**Uphill**  
The Chimborazo is  
calling: three  
classicos on their way  
to the summit

1 | 2 | 3

“A classico from Mercedes-Benz is a state of mind, an object of veneration and love; it’s a lot more than meets the eye”

Pablo Carrera

For a few kilometres now, Juan Pablo has been continually leaning forward as soon as we go downhill. He is listening to the sound of the engine with his head tilted. “That’s better”, he says and puts his foot down again. Juan Pablo Carrera is 29; his ‘Pagoda’ is 50 years of age. But that’s not the problem. The problem is oxygen. Juan Pablo and his car are now already at an extremely high altitude and the air is becoming thinner and thinner. The peak of the Chimborazo mountain is close.

Alexander von Humboldt was the first person to climb the mountain more than 200 years ago, and this German scientist almost fainted here in the Andes when he reached the top. Altitude sickness. Juan Pablo’s Pagoda is suffering the same fate – it is gradually running out of breath.

Given the oxygen depletion, this altitude of 4,000 metres corresponds to around 6,000 metres elsewhere. The reason is that the earth is shaped more like a potato than a sphere, because at the equator it bulges out by more than 2,000 metres on its journey through space on account of the centrifugal force. And one of its highest points is the volcanic cone of the Chimborazo: at 6,300 metres, it is almost as close to the sun as the peak of Mount Everest.

“If the sun even exists, that is”, says Juan Pablo. A cloud front pushes toward the mountain from the east. A heavy roll of thunder sounds from its midst. An icy snowstorm in the west envelops the peak in menacing clouds. This had not been part of the plan when the group of eight Mercedes-Benz fans left Quito, Ecuador’s capital, the day before. They are a circle of friends all

connected to Pablo Carrera, 55, Juan Pablo’s father and Mercedes-Benz dealer in Ecuador, the small South American country with the widest variety of species in the world. Members of the group are driving five classicos, as classic cars are known here: W 113 and 121, C 107 and 123 and the R 107.

The plan was to drive up Chimborazo right to the end of the road at 4,800 metres (which is the equivalent of almost 7,000 metres), and to be as close to the sun as a car can be on this planet.

However, things are often quite different in reality. It is windy and cloudy rather than sunny and clear. “Of course, the sun shines behind the clouds and the freedom there is boundless”, Pablo philosophises. “But what use is that if you can’t see any of it?”

#### An object of veneration

He explains that while for him, a classico from Mercedes is a car too, “in reality, it’s a state of mind, an object of veneration and love; it’s a lot more than meets the eye.” Ultimately, a classico – he owns 50 of them – is a symbol of immortality in the transience of the mundane. That is why Pablo drove his wife Veronica to their wedding in 1982 in a robust W 123. The car was orange, just like the sun. And their marriage is still going strong. “That’s enough talk of eternity”, Pablo says at the wheel, smiling.

For now, the last ascent has to be conquered. The journey was easy up until now. From Quito (2,850 metres above sea level) the cars initially travelled downhill into the jungle of the Amazon basin. First barren volcanoes, then damp foggy forests and finally the green →





1	4	5
2	3	



- 1 **Stately**  
Juan Pablo's Pagoda parked in front of the hacienda
- 2 **Delicacies**  
Ernesto tries roasted maggots.
- 3 **Police inspection**  
"Hermosa", says one officer. "Beautiful"
- 4 **Almost there**  
Pablo only has a few metres to go.
- 5 **Chimborazo**  
Florencia is delighted with a ray of sunshine.

of the jungle. Ernesto Mantilla, a knee surgeon, closes the top of his red R 107 because it is starting to rain. He has just had the wooden parts in the dashboard and the centre console replaced. He only paid 300 dollars for this, but it all glistens and gleams as new. It costs twenty times more when he repairs a knee, he says. And in his long career as a doctor, he has carried out to date 7,500 knee operations. "I no longer need this for my ego - and not for my bank balance either", he says. "Many colleagues operate as a matter of course. These days, I prefer to help people with conservative treatment. Without a scalpel."

In Baeza at the police inspection, Carla makes what must be the best corn tortillas in all of Ecuador. Ernesto orders two of them. And the police don't really carry out any inspections; rather, they take pictures of the elegant cars with their smartphones. "Hermosa", one of them says. "Beautiful."

#### Through the tropical rain forest

It is a long journey through the tropical rain forest. Cows or horses can be seen grazing along the edge of the track; sometimes they even doze in the middle of the road. We must be attentive. In Archidona the cars end up in a procession in honour of the Virgin Mary. Hundreds of colourfully dressed people in good spirits march along. The Catholic Church plays a very big role in Ecuador.

Our journey continues through the Pastaza Valley up towards Baños de Agua Santa (Baths of Holy Water), the hub for adventure tourists in Ecuador. The ravine is narrow and deep, but the classico aficionados aren't interested in canyoning, rafting or bungee jumping. Some of

them take out their cameras and take pictures. The journey was not easy and, like everywhere else along the equator, it gets dark early here. They spend the night in a 300-year-old hacienda.

The Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts reach the charming estate via an impressive avenue of fruit trees in full bloom. They park on the plaza at the main entrance where the carriages would have pulled up in times past. The murmur of a fountain can be heard. The air is fresh and cool as palm trees rustle in the breeze. Colourfully plumed birds sing or caw their last songs for the day. An open fire crackles in the hacienda's main hall while ice cubes rattle in glasses. Night may now descend.

We make an early start the next morning. Ernesto quickly changes a fuse in his car. The writing on the lid of the 40-year-old fuse box is in German: "Kältekompressor" (air-conditioning compressor). But Ernesto definitely won't be needing that today.

From 1,800 metres the road winds its way higher and higher. The air gradually begins to get so thin that people can start to hyperventilate or even hallucinate, and cars need their last reserves of power in order not to run out of steam.

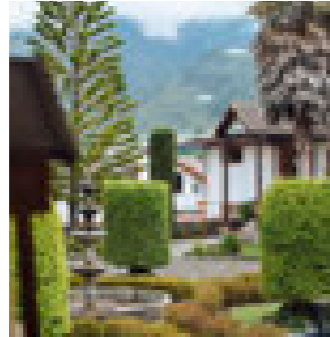
The mountain really isn't making things easy for its visitors today. There are almost always heavy clouds in front of the peak. Sunshine on the eternal ice of the mighty Chimborazo is simply swallowed up within a matter of minutes, sometimes even in a matter of seconds, by the brilliant snowstorms. At such times, the proximity to the sun seems to be mere fiction - right now for example, as Juan Pablo's beloved Pagoda gradually runs out of breath. It splutters and shakes. It simply cannot go on. →

"The Pagoda may take a break. I'm not annoyed with her as she has already done so much"

Juan Pablo Carrera



# Discover



1	2
3	4

## ENJOY

### 1 Carla's tortillas

Ecuador's best corn tortillas can be found in Baeza, 100 kilometres from Quito. They are prepared by Carla in a tiny food stand opposite the petrol station. They are served with strong jungle coffee.

## EXPERIENCE

### 3 Rent classic cars

Pablo Carrera owns quite a number of Mercedes classicos in Quito; they're real gems. He rents them out exclusively to Mercedes-Benz fans, either to drive themselves or in a group led by him. For enquiries, contact Pablo directly at [jcarrera@carreraautos.com.ec](mailto:jcarrera@carreraautos.com.ec)

## SLEEP

### 2 Historic hacienda

A stopover in the 300-year-old hacienda estate Leito near Baños is well worth while. Even the Spanish conquerors dined and slept here like princes. [haciendaleito.com](http://haciendaleito.com)

## VIEW

### 4 Virgen de Quito

This statue, 45 metres high, is located on El Panecillo hill overlooking the capital, Quito. It's worth the walk from the city centre because it offers the best view of the city's many tourist attractions. The city is located 20 kilometres south of the equator and 2,850 metres above sea level.



- 1 Baeza [w3w.co/adjoin.excessive.borderless](https://www.what3words.com/adjoin.excessive.borderless)
- 2 Historic hacienda [w3w.co/portal.throaty.timer](https://www.what3words.com/portal.throaty.timer)
- 3 Rent classic cars [w3w.co/circle.informal.whizzed](https://www.what3words.com/circle.informal.whizzed)
- 4 Virgen de Quito [w3w.co/bedroom.skunks.added](https://www.what3words.com/bedroom.skunks.added)

Have you tried out the what3words address system yet? More information at [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com) and on page 6.

The 190 SL passes by and the 280 C, 280 SLC and 280 SL follow. The tow truck which has accompanied the eight friends the whole time comes to the rescue. "The Pagoda can take a break", Juan Pablo says. "I'm not annoyed with her, as she has already done so much."

He is relaxing on the back seat of his wife Florencia's car. She happily and assuredly steers the yellow 280 C over the ice-covered track. They have reached their destination at 4,800 metres. They cannot go any further; the road ends here. They have reached their destination.

A place - *the place* - near the sun, which shows its face only fleetingly. An almost magical moment. ♦



For the past 18 months, **Michael Kneissler** has been living together with his wife and his son in Guayaquil on Ecuador's Pacific coast - at sea level.

PHOTOS TIPS SANTIAGO ARCOS (3), FOTOLIA



**Delicacies**  
Everywhere along the route, little cookshops provide hearty dishes.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster's front headlamp. The lamp is oval-shaped with a vertical ribbed lens and a chrome housing. It is mounted on a dark, polished metal frame. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some reflections of light.

HEAVENLY STARS, PART 3

# Photo finish

With our third visit behind the scenes of the Mercedes-Benz Vehicle Collection, our series is now heading for the home stretch. After gaining spectacular insights and fascinating views of the vehicles, we are now taking a look at some very special treasures

*TEXT* Thomas Glesefeld *PHOTOS* Igor Panitz

**Iconic**  
These front headlamps made their debut in 1957 in the 300 SL Roadster. Their vertical orientation greatly improved road safety.



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**Legendary**

The large lateral air inlets on the C 111 contribute to optimal cooling of the major assembly and display a stylish synthesis of form and function.

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**Charismatic**  
The distinctive face of the Mercedes-Knight 16/40 hp, from 1912, originates from a period when the car's radiator mascot doubled as the filler neck for the coolant.

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**Dynamic**

The speedometer of the 300 SL "Uhlenhaut-Coupé" car confidently attests to speed. The design vocabulary of its instruments is also to be found in the Mercedes-Benz production vehicles of the 1950s.

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# Exceptional vehicles to be gazed at in wonder

Millions of people per year view the collection of vehicles

→ **Mr Böcklen, how long has the Mercedes-Benz car collection existed?**

← Collecting began back in the early 20th century. We look after the oldest vehicle collection in the world and also one of the biggest with some 1,000 vehicles.

→ **Is it still customary that cars from the production line of every Mercedes-Benz car model series are automatically included in the collection?**

← In times of flexible production of many model series, this is no longer really the case, as it often was up until the end of production of the E-Class 211 model series. Our conservation job naturally includes taking over vehicles from plant stocks and fleets, and we also buy some vehicles of interest to us. If a par-

ticular treasure is available, we try our luck.

→ **Doesn't the size of the collection automatically mean that the cars, well looked after and conserved, simply just stand around?**

← On the contrary! We have a wide range of expertise when it comes to conservation, but one of our main tasks includes organising around 1,100 vehicle movements per year at press and historical motorsport events. We deliver everything from a single source, from insurance and transport to service. Millions of people worldwide view and marvel at our collection of vehicles every year.

→ **What other tasks are involved in the collection?**

← Apart from our worldwide presence, our vehicles are also an

important role model for the reproduction of replacement parts. Even in times of 3D printing, this is often only possible using a real, contemporary original. We are especially delighted that young designers regularly visit the collection, looking to the vivid history of our vehicles for inspiration in designing the future. You can see one of the results in the so-called Panamericana radiator grille of the AMG GT models.

→ **And what challenges do you see for the future?**

← We have to come to terms with the growth of our collection, and with the changes in the vintage car scene and technological developments. Just as we benefit from the work of our predecessors, our current work behind the scenes will safeguard efficiency and performance in the future.



**Ralph Böcklen** has been in charge of the Mercedes-Benz Vehicle Collection for more than four years.



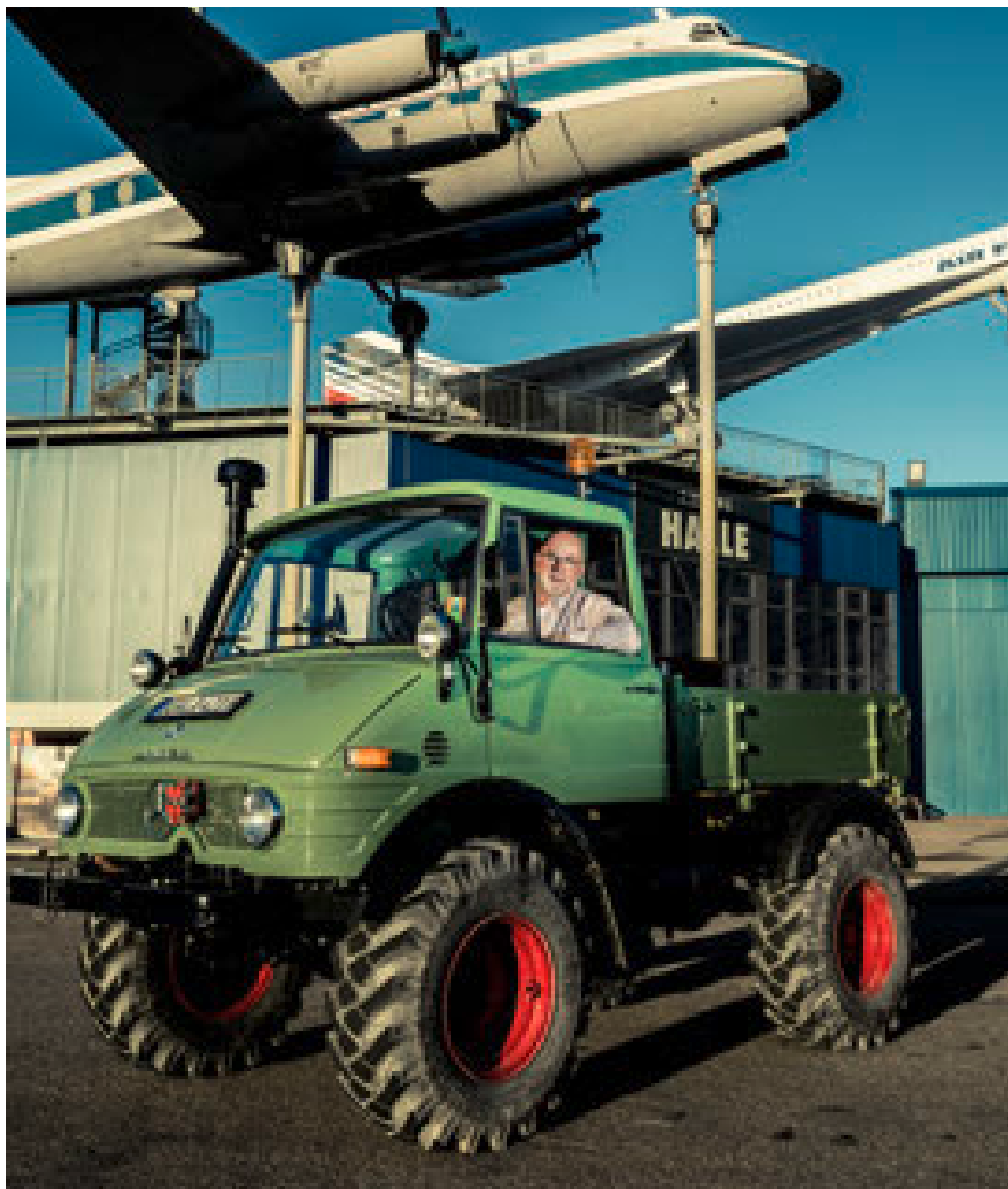
## Fantastic

The Mercedes-Benz Classic vehicle collection is among the largest and most impressive in the world. The combined value of some 1,000 vehicles beggars belief.



# Classic community

The practical section of  
Mercedes-Benz classic



**Off the road with**  
the Unimog-Club  
Gaggenau and  
its president,  
Rainer Hildebrandt,  
pictured at the  
Technik Museum in  
Sinsheim, Germany.

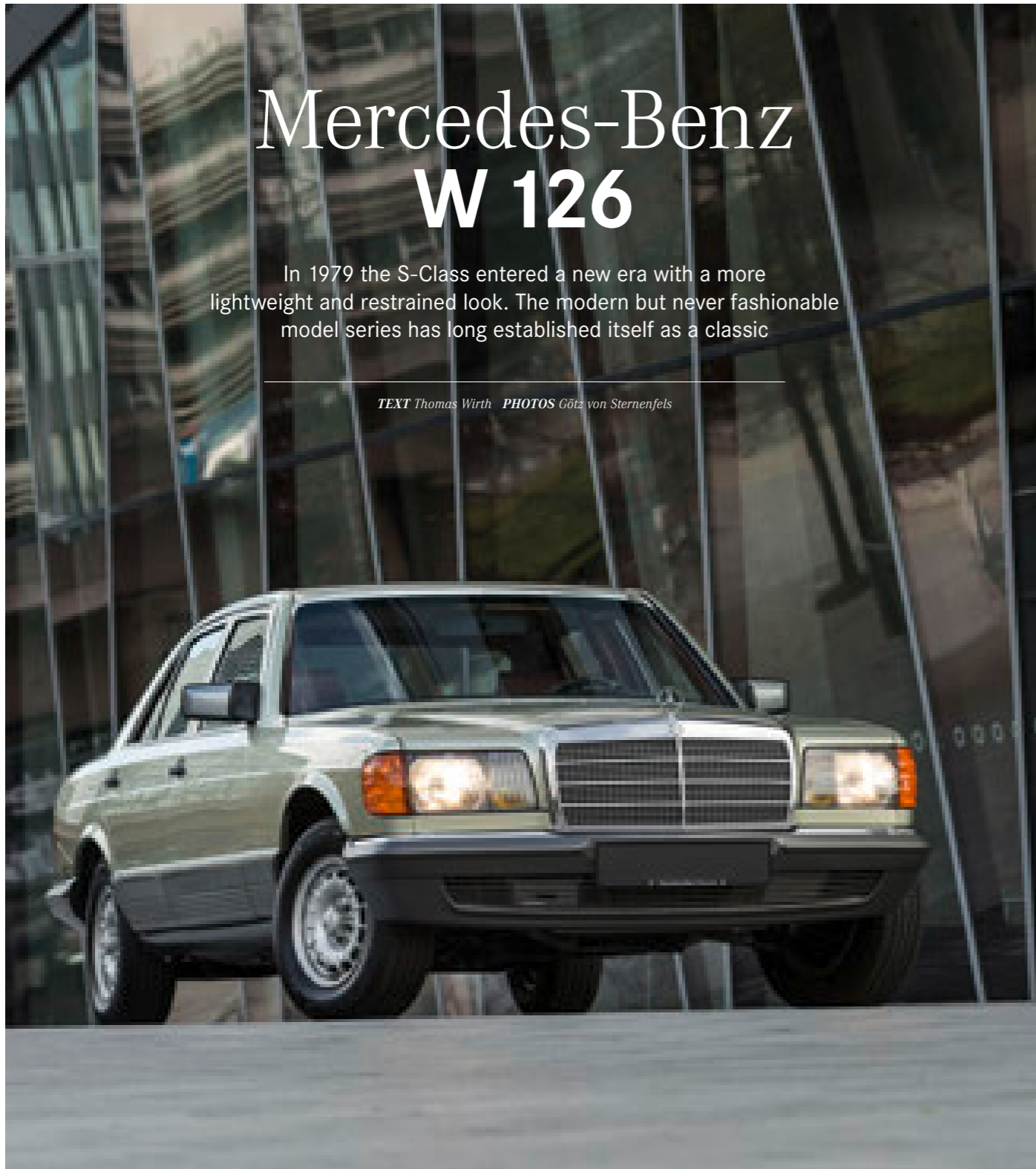
“Sure, in this vehicle I’m not exactly the fastest driver of all. But I might just be the happiest. It’s such great fun being out in the Unimog 421”

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# Mercedes-Benz W 126

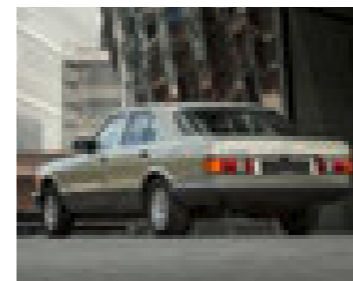
In 1979 the S-Class entered a new era with a more lightweight and restrained look. The modern but never fashionable model series has long established itself as a classic

TEXT Thomas Wirth PHOTOS Götz von Sternenfels



For a better understanding of the S-Class in the early 1980s, it helps to take a brief look back to the 1970s: the automotive world was preoccupied by the oil crisis with its fuel shortages and rapid price increases, and there was a general move towards lower fuel consumption. A sustainable future was only possible with due regard for the environment. This defined the constraints within which the engineers had to develop a new flagship model for Mercedes-Benz. Firstly, it was necessary to defend the claim to leadership in the luxury class: solidity and comfort, size and safety were therefore indispensable key parameters. Secondly, however, the new S-Class was to be lighter, more economical and aerodynamically progressive – conflicting aims that had to be reconciled at Mercedes-Benz level.

The result, introduced as the W 126 series in 1979, was all the more impressive as it attracted even more customers than its predecessor. Even at that time, computers calculated precise material thicknesses and reinforcements to save weight. New materials including high-strength steel alloys were used, and on conclusion of the



Hardly any chrome, and a slightly wedge-shaped design: the W 126 was once seen as impressively modern.



The interior still impresses with its comfort, while avoiding ostentation.

development work the bodyshell was around 100 kilograms lighter than that of the predecessor – and provided even more passive safety. The new light-alloy engine blocks and practically all other components likewise weighed in at far less. This rigorous engineering discipline was also to be reflected by the impressive exterior.

Under the aegis of chief designer Bruno Sacco, the result was a decidedly modern but sober design with visibly less chrome trim except for the radiator grille, window frames and a few details. All

in all, the W 126 made a much smoother, stretched impression, which was accentuated by the side rub strips of ribbed plastic. Although they initially met with a certain amount of criticism, these elements – which have long been colloquially known as “Sacco boards” – are now admired as features typical of their time. They never hampered the career of the 126 series: around the world, this second edition of the S-Class was also easily the top seller in the luxury class, and is still seen as an impressive sales success to this day.

## Market value

Only a minority of the more than 818,000 examples of the S-Class Saloons delivered worldwide have survived in good condition, but the overall number seems large enough to keep the market lively. There was also an enormous variety of models: alongside the long and short versions, the engine variants ranging from the 260 SE, 122 kW (166 hp) to the muscular 560 SEL, 220 kW (300 hp) offer a wide choice of different characters. Plus there are the equipment options: the models with smaller engines in particular tend to have plainer standard equipment, while the top models are lavishly equipped. Market prices are correspondingly wide-ranging – even in condition 2, six-cylinder models can occasionally be found for under 10,000 euros, while well-documented, generously equipped V8 variants can cost twice this amount, or even considerably more in individual cases. However, the enormous value increase of around 50 per cent in recent years has also attracted less reputable sellers who are offering condition 4 examples at totally inflated prices.

**M**ercedes-Benz started the 126 series with a classic in 1979: the success story of this second S-Class began with the 280 S (carburettor engine) and 280 SE. In January 1980 the 380 SE and 500 SE followed as the first eight-cylinder models. The newly designed engines saved considerable weight with their light-alloy engine blocks. In 1981 Mercedes-Benz modified some of the engines, but the great departure only came with the W 126 model facelift in late 1985: the entry-level model was now called the 260 SE, while the 300 SE added a six-cylinder variant. The V8 category was now represented by the 420 SE, 500 SE and 560 SEL. The diesel models were reserved for export to the USA. From June 1980 onwards, customers with higher expectations of comfort and spaciousness could also order a long-wheelbase version of the W 126, which was 14 centimetres longer and bore the suffix SEL – only the 280 S and 260 SE never became available with this extra space. The standard equipment of the S-Class was also extended over its production period: ABS as standard was introduced in the autumn of 1984 for all vehicles with eight-cylinder engines, and in 1986 for all six-cylinders.



The shorter version of the SEL offers generous spaciousness for five.



## Body

Compared with previous model series, Mercedes-Benz established a new level of corrosion protection with the W 126. Their bodysells are even more robust and durable than those of the predecessor series, and some of their weak points are reasonably accessible and can also be easily checked by the non-professional. Nonetheless, the early models from this series are now almost 40 years old – time enough for rust to eat its way into the body panels. Whether a repair is worthwhile can only be decided from case to case.

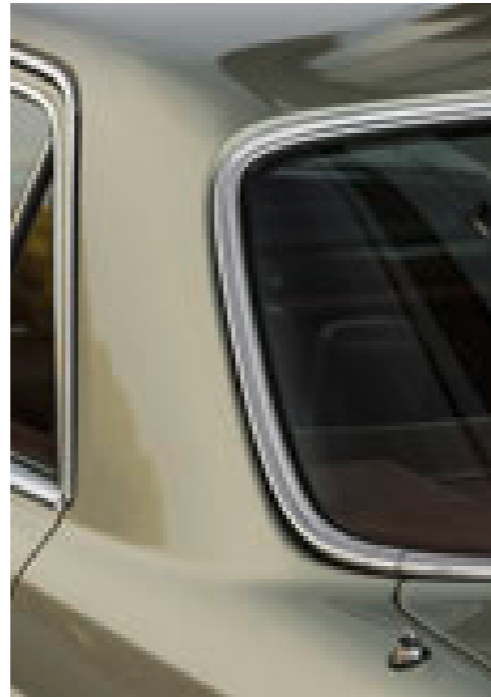
One of the most critical areas of the W 126 is the lower panelled area around the large rear window. The cause is aggressive ultraviolet radiation: this section is often subject to massive solar exposition over the years that weakens the rubber components. Moisture event-

1 | 3  
2 |

1 Brittle seals around sliding sunroofs can allow water to penetrate. Concealed rust is the result.

2 Rust can spread beneath the side rub strips and also in the side sills.

3 The areas around the lower corners of the rear window often suffer rust damage.



ually penetrates and deterioration begins, undetected by the owner. If rust or a milky patch in the glass is already visible from the outside, the process is usually well advanced. Earlier stages can be recognised on inspection from the boot, where a torch and a mirror prove enormously helpful.

An equally thorough inspection should be given to the frame components around the front suspension. Rust can also develop undetected here: it migrates under the original underbody protection. Rust can also be concealed beneath the “Sacco boards”, though this can only be made visible by removing them. It is easier to take a look at the recesses on either side of the boot floor, which are also critical areas. It is also a good idea to look carefully for hidden signs of accident damage.

## Engine and transmission

The W 126 models are undoubtedly very durable: many examples have covered hundreds of thousands of kilometres, usually without any major problems. Accordingly, W 126 models with very low odometer readings are nowadays rarely encountered in the market. However, the mileage alone should not be a key criterion if the long-lived engines have been well maintained: the critical areas for wear are the timing chains with their slide rails, and the shaft seals and guides of the valves. The injection nozzles and hydraulics should also be replaced over the course of the engine’s long life. If the previous owner has already done this, corresponding documentation should be available as evidence. Another criterion is the condition of the camshafts and cam followers, especially in the V8 engines, and the mixture

control unit of the KE-Jetronic can develop leaks. Generally speaking, engines and transmissions with excessively oily surfaces should at least give cause for concern. However, a slight exudation of oil is not a reason for downgrading. The differentials are particularly susceptible to this.

The fact that low mileage not only has advantages is confirmed by the automatic transmissions, which were only standard equipment for V8 models. These wear much more rapidly in short-distance operations than on long motorway journeys.

A quietly and smoothly shifting automatic transmission is therefore a definite plus. It is always a good idea to check the fluid levels of the transmission and differential. Many potential buyers neglect this, as it involves a degree of effort.

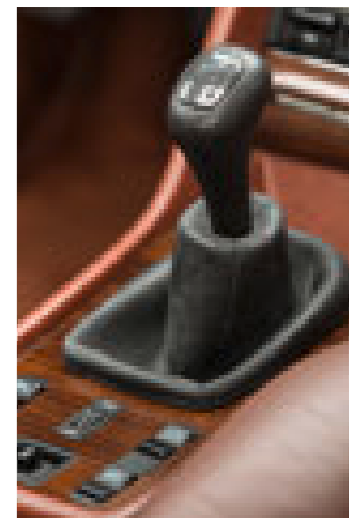


1 The engines have a reputation for their long life and reliability.

2 The oil pressure display should not be too unsteady.

3 Manual-transmission W 126 models are the exception. V8 engines were only available with automatic transmission.

4 Some slight sweating wouldn’t be anything to worry about. But overly greasy engines are a cause for concern.





## MODELS

### 280 SE

**Vehicle data**  
**Displacement** 2,746 cc  
**Output** 136 kW  
(185 hp)  
**Top speed** 210 km/h  
**Built between** 1979-1985

### 300 SEL

**Vehicle data**  
**Displacement** 2,962 cc  
**Output (with cat. conv.)** 132 kW  
(180 hp)  
**Top speed** 205 km/h  
**Built between** 1985-1991

### 500 SE

**Vehicle data**  
**Displacement** 4,973 cc  
**Output** 170-195 kW  
(231-265 hp)  
**Top speed** 220-235 km/h  
**Built between** 1980-1991

### 560 SEL

**Vehicle data**  
**Displacement** 5,547 cc  
**Output** 200-220 kW  
(272-300 hp)  
**Top speed** 225-250 km/h  
**Built between** 1985-1991



Only with low mileage can the interior look as immaculate as this.

1 Some dashboards now show cracks. This is usually due to intense UV radiation.

2 Replacements are hard to find: the exotic wood trim is now rare and expensive.



1  
2



1 | 2  
3 | 4

## Interior

Most W 126 models were upholstered in fabric as standard; upholstery in leather, velours or the highly robust MB-Tex was available as an optional extra. However, the seat structure is no less important than the condition of the upholstery. The usually much more frequently used driver's seat can show signs of weakness, especially when compared with the less-used front passenger seat.

The exotic wood facings often have cracks in the varnish. This is not too much of a problem for experts. If the layers of veneer have separated from their metal backplates, however, the cost and effort can be greater. Suitable replacements are very hard to find.

## Instruments and operation

Mercedes-Benz has always attached great importance to easy, functional operation. The luxury-class models also dispensed with unnecessary fripperies - and thoroughly: easily comprehensible switches, clearly legible instruments and outstanding climatic comfort always ensured a pleasant journey for enthusiasts of vehicles with the three-pointed star.

The control stalk on the left behind the steering wheel was no exception in this regard. This feature allowed the windscreen wipers, turn indicators and headlamp flasher to be operated very easily. It is normally not particularly susceptible to faults, but should nonetheless be checked.

1 The instruments provide objective information and work very reliably.

2 Defective ignition locks are often the result of a key fob that is too heavy.

3 Optional equipment is highly sought after. Its operation should be checked before buying.

4 All the functions of the control stalk must be checked for safety reasons alone.

The same applies to cruise control, if included. If this system does not work perfectly, the fault usually lies with the control unit - the cruise control system is fitted with its own processor, which can normally be repaired given sufficient expertise.

Another annoying problem is if the ABS and ASR warning lamps fail to go out as they should after the engine is started.

Fortunately, the systems themselves only very rarely malfunction. Faults here are due to an insufficient onboard voltage, which can easily be remedied by overhauling the alternator. Defective wheel sensors can also occasionally be the source of the fault.

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## CONTACT

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### Mercedes-Benz Interessengemeinschaft e.V.

Im Hang 16, 52428 Jülich, Germany, [www.mbig.de](http://www.mbig.de)

### Mercedes-Benz S-Klasse-Club e.V.

Feldmarkweg 31, 58093 Hagen, Germany, [www.s-klasse-club.de](http://www.s-klasse-club.de)

### W 126 Club Deutschland

Joachim Weiland, Auf den Steinen 17, 65599 Dornburg, Germany, [www.mercedes126.de](http://www.mercedes126.de)

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## MEDIA

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**Heribert Hofner, Mercedes-Benz W 126 Die S-Klasse, das beste Auto der Welt, Heel Verlag (2018), € 49.95**

**Mercedes-Benz S-Klasse Club e.V., Kaufberatung Mercedes-Benz Baureihe 126, Mercedes-Benz S-Klasse Club e.V. (undated), € 15**

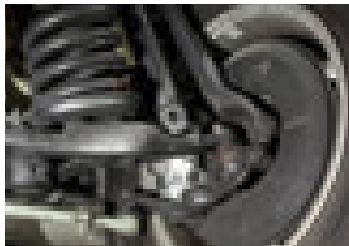
**Mercedes S-Klasse Serie W 126 ab September 1979, Bucheli (2012), € 39.90**

**Hans-Peter Lange, Die 126er Codes – Jetzt entschlüsselt: Die S-Klasse von 1979 bis 1991, MBIG (publisher), antiquarian**

The vehicle shown, a 280 SE, was produced in 1982. Its original 35,500 kilometres are fully documented. ALL TIME STARS is offering the 280 SE as an example in the Collectors' edition for €47,890. [www.alltime-stars.de](http://www.alltime-stars.de)

1

2



**1 The light-alloy wheels of the early models adopted the design of the predecessors.**

**2 Front axles are also subject to wear. If they have been repaired, this is seen as a plus.**

## Wheels and suspension

Most W 126 models are now fitted with light-alloy wheels. The data card indicates whether a feature has been delivered as an optional extra. If the wheels are retrofitted, approval of their size should be verified. The wider the tyres, the more quickly the suspension components will wear, especially at the front. The necessary parts are available; however, the need to replace supporting joints, tie rod ends, brake supports or steering arm bearings should be included in the calculation, as the technical effort involved is quite considerable.

Buyers should also be cautious if there is excessive play in the steering when driving. The steering

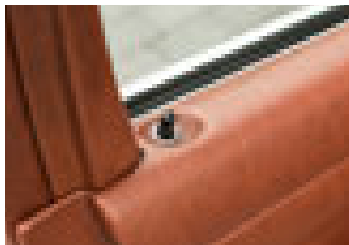
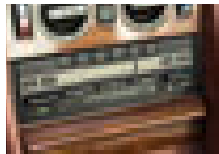
gear is often at the limit of its adjustability and also tends to lose oil. This makes an expensive replacement necessary.

If well maintained, the high-performance brakes of the W 126 make for deceleration that is still impressive today. However, after extremely heavy braking the front brake discs may become slightly deformed, which could lead to brake shudder. Fitting new discs will resolve this problem.

The hydropneumatic system is an extremely comfortable but now also somewhat feared optional extra. It guarantees ride comfort at the highest level, but is enormously cost intensive if faulty.

1

2



**1 A suitable radio is an important accessory. But replacements are also available.**

**2 Identifying a fault in the central locking system often requires intensive work.**

## Special considerations

Radios are one of the most popular discussion topics among equipment experts. The most expensive unit for the W 126 series, the very easily operated "Becker Mexico Compact Disc Electronic Full-stereo", was priced at just under 4,400 deutschmarks in the final year of production. A remote control unit and a sound system could also be ordered. Also fascinating today is the once prohibitively expensive mobile phone technology: in 1990 a C-network mobile telephone cost around 7,750 marks, plus the installation kit, aerial and hands-free system. Customers wanting or having to make phone calls in their W 126 first had to spend more than 10,000 marks on hardware. One compensation being, that at the

launch of the first W 126 in 1979, the necessary technology had been even more expensive.

The electric window regulators (2 or 4), which were initially only available as standard in the 500 SEL, tend to function reliably over the long term. Failure of a power window is often due to worn slide shoes, which are expensive to replace – especially in relation to the cost of the parts. Another feature to check is the central locking system, which was initially only standard for the 500 SEL. This operates on the vacuum principle, not electrically, so even the slightest leaks in the system will lead to failure. Identifying the cause can be expensive, as it involves a great deal of disassembly and reassembly work. ♦

**Innovative**

With its launch of the A-Class in 1997, Mercedes-Benz decidedly redefined the compact car category.



## A? Classy!

TEXT Thomas Giesefeld PHOTO Daimler AG

A vehicle portfolio suited to (almost) any mobility need is part of the tradition at Mercedes-Benz. In the 1990s this logically meant redefining the market segment of “small” cars. However, the concept of the 168 series was not only a daring move because of its often colourful and unusual appearance. As early as 1993, the front-wheel-drive ‘Vision A 93’ study vehicle was presented with a body that created a synthesis of safety and economy of space. The “sandwich concept”, where the drive assemblies were accommodated in the double floor, gave the later A-Class extraordinary crash safety and variability.

On market launch in October 1997, an incident in which an A-Class rolled over in Sweden during the so-called “Elk Test” caused a sensation. After production modifications, the A-Class started leaving the production lines with extended safety features as early as February 1998. The earlier vehicles were retrofitted. The modification included a different suspension setup, the Electronic Stability Program (ESP®), Brake Assist (BAS) and acceleration skid control (ASR). Henceforth the A-Class distinguished

itself as a fully test-resistant, highly innovative and very safe compact car that feared no encounter with an elk.

A systematically weight-saving generation of new four-cylinder engines with a light-alloy engine block was then gradually introduced. There was a choice of ‘Classic’, ‘Elegance’ and ‘Avantgarde’ design and equipment lines. In 2001 the A-Class was fundamentally modernised. The interior ambience and ergonomics were raised to the level of larger Mercedes-Benz classes, and the long version ensured opulent spaciousness and comfort.

Rising above the wide range of day-to-day examples on offer, the classics of the future are likely to be original examples with low mileages in nearly as-new condition. These include early, colourful ‘Elks’ and the certified F1 Edition limited to 250 examples, whose appearance is similar to that of the 1998 company cars issued to Formula 1 drivers Häkkinen and Coulthard. A shortlist should also include late A 190s rated at 82 kW (125 hp), the A 210 Evolution with AMG bodystyling, an Alcantara® leatherinterior and producing 103 kW (140 hp), and special models (e.g. “Piccadilly”) – preferably as a well-maintained, elegant long version with a louvred sunroof and manual transmission. Most of these cars are on offer at up to 5,000 euros, though rarities can be more expensive. ♦

**1997**

**Premiere**

The model range has two petrol and two diesel models. The proportion of female customers is around 40 percent.

**2001**

**Facelift**

The long version is introduced. Optional extras include windowbags and the humidity-controlled air conditioning system.

**2004**

**Production of the 168 series ends**

Around 1.1 million units of the vehicles have been produced by the Rastatt plant.



A chat in the vineyard  
Collector Wolfgang  
Zappel in the U 411 (left)  
and Rainer Hildebrandt  
in the U 421 out near  
Grombach in northern  
Baden-Württemberg



## “Rustic ride”

Club President Rainer Hildebrandt meets the passionate collector Wolfgang Zappel and his wife Martina to take a trip both on and off the road. Unimog equals fun and friendship!

TEXT Jörg Heuer PHOTOS David Klammer





**H**e may only have to travel around 80 kilometres to get here, but he is still reckoning on driving for around two hours. “Sure, in this vehicle I’m not exactly the fastest driver of all,” says Rainer Hildebrandt, 60. He runs his hand across his face and smiles mischievously. “But I might just be the happiest. Because I just really love being out and about in it on the road and even more so off the road.”

Hildebrandt’s U 421 is 48 years old. The 52 hp output of the green (DB 6277) Unimog with red wheel rims has a top speed of 63 km/h. Okay, probably downhill. But it is built for off-road terrain, where it is virtually unstoppable.

Rainer Hildebrandt, president of the Unimog-Club Gaggenau, is on his way from his home on the Wine Route in the Palatinate region to Grombach between Heidelberg and Stuttgart. He has known the man he is going to meet there for a long time from many club meetings. People get together there, have a chat and enjoy the excursions.

But this time he is visiting Wolfgang Zappel at home. And there is a special reason for this: Rainer Hildebrandt knows that the entrepreneur owns one of the most interesting Unimog collections around. Some 30 historic vehicles, including some very rare ones – true curiosities, valuable gems. Zappel’s profession has a lot to do with his hobby. In Grombach the machinist, →

**Unstoppable**

With all-wheel drive and differential locks at both axles, the Unimog 421 can cope with practically anything.

“Sure, in this vehicle I’m not exactly the fastest driver of all. But I might just be the happiest. Because I just really love being out and about in it on the road and even more so off the road”

Rainer Hildebrandt, president of the Unimog-Club Gaggenau

56, runs the medium-sized company Zagro, which prepares new Unimog vehicles for special applications – commercial vehicles that operate in the normal way, but also on rails. The main task of these so-called “road-railers”, which he exports to Japan, India, China, Nigeria, South Africa, Mongolia, Turkey, Russia and Singapore and many more countries besides, is to shunt rail vehicles. His father built up the family business, and Wolfgang Zappel later took over from him.

The Unimog (Universal Motorised Working Machine) is part of German industrial history. In 1948 it was unveiled to the public for the first time in Frankfurt by the German Agricultural Society (DLG). Series production began at Boehringer in August of the same year. 602 Unimog vehicles were built there until the summer of 1950, their trademark being a stylised ox head with U-shaped horns on the bonnet. Daimler-Benz AG then took over the Unimog business in 1951. As of 1953 the star replaced the ox

head on the universal motorised working machines produced at the Gaggenau plant.

From then on new fields of application made the Unimog the world’s most versatile commercial vehicle. Its applications include winter maintenance, field work, road construction and mowing work on virtually any terrain, often with spectacular attachments. And it increasingly developed into an implement carrier. 380,000 units of this compact light-duty all-wheel-drive truck have been built to date. Two thirds of them are believed to be still at work: in forestry and agriculture, transportation, within the military and in rail construction.

#### Simply a passion

With its unparalleled off-road capability thanks to all-wheel drive with differential locks on the front and rear axles, it drives through and climbs over virtually anything: deep water, steep inclines and high ridges are no problem for this all-rounder. Over 2,000 Unimog

vehicles are still built every year, many of them by hand. Around 2,500 implement manufacturers worldwide are currently certified for Unimog attachments.

Rainer Hildebrandt will soon be at his destination. He only has limited space behind his steering wheel of his U 421. It’s loud and cramped in the cab, and there is neither a radio nor air conditioning. Everything has a nice look about it, even if a little outdated. And you sit really high up, higher than in any SUV. That gives you a good overview.

Queues of vehicles often form on the main road behind Rainer Hildebrandt, because he isn’t the fastest of drivers, what with the modest horsepower at his disposal and the large, high-profile tyres. But when he is overtaken there are often smiling faces looking up at him.

“To me, driving the Unimog is quite simply a passion,” says the former Daimler AG manager shortly before he arrives in Grombach. And he has very vivid memories of →

$\frac{1}{2 \mid 3}$

**1 Utility vehicle**  
Martina and Wolfgang Zappel collect wood in the U 411 for their fireside evening.

**2 Country outing**  
Mrs Zappel now has plenty of firewood on board.

**3 Lunch break**  
Rainer Hildebrandt has bought himself a burger at the drive-in.

#### Unimog-Club Gaggenau

The club was founded in 1993 and is named after the place where Daimler-Benz AG built Unimog vehicles as of 1951. The club has over 6,900 members in 34 countries. Their average age is 53, and around three per cent of the members are women. In Germany there are 29 regional groups which organise meetings: nuts and bolts days, model information evenings, excursions. The club also initiated the Unimog Museum in Gaggenau, where rides in the outdoor area for visitors are a highlight.

[unimog-club-gaggenau.de](http://unimog-club-gaggenau.de)





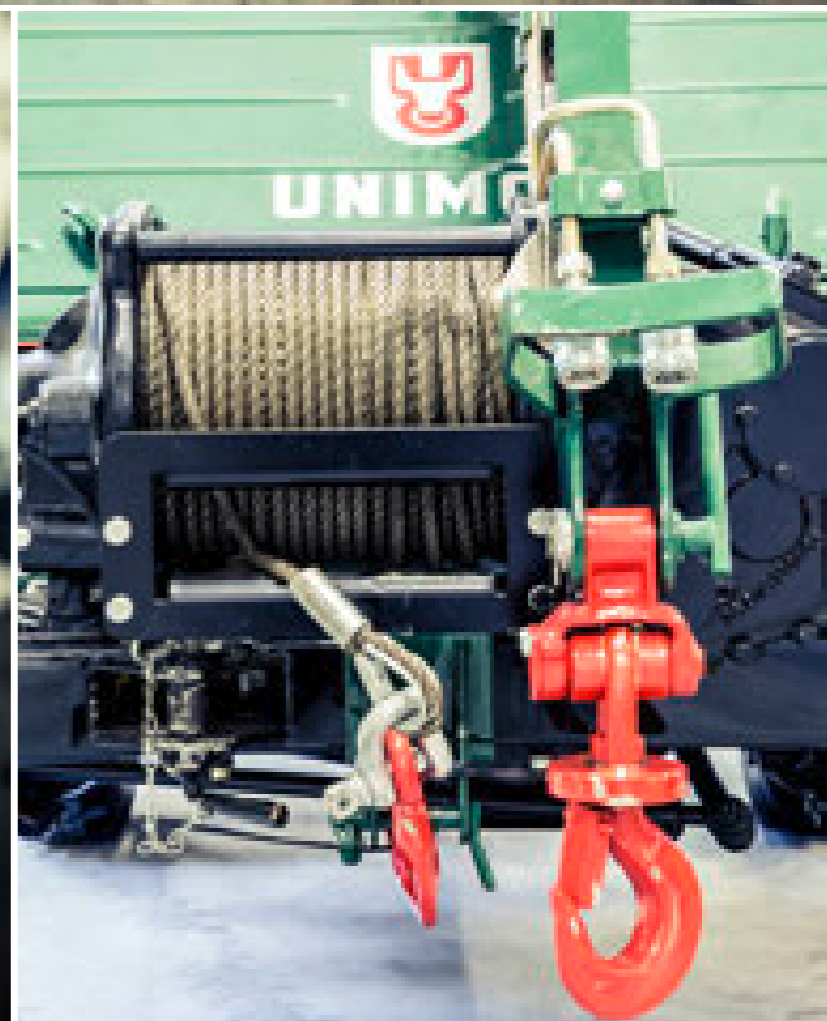
1 | 2  
3 | 4

1  
**Cabriolet drivers**  
The Zappels love being out in the fresh air.

2  
**Happy collector**  
The two Unimog enthusiasts in the treasure trove

3  
**Manual labour**  
A historic Unimog has no power steering system.

4  
**Ox head**  
Wolfgang Zappel also has two Boehringers.

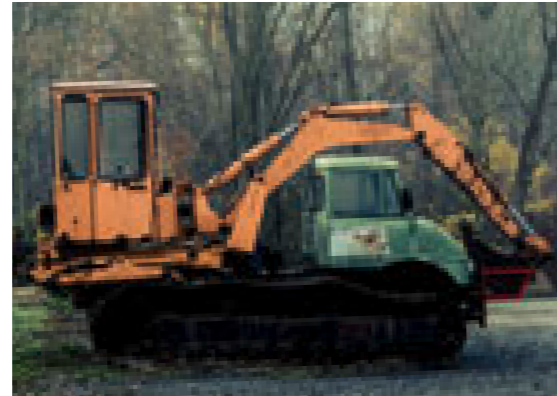




Bird's-eye view  
Club President Rainer Hildebrandt  
takes a breather on the platform  
of his U 421.







“I know someone who specialises in photographing historic, often exotic, Unimog models. He sometimes calls me and says there’s an interesting vehicle up for sale. With any luck I then become its next owner”

Wolfgang Zappel, Unimog collector

1	2	3
		4

**1 Exotic**

A Boehringer with a body for excavation and loading; Zappel’s favourite Unimog

**2 Climbing gear**

Also part of the vehicle collection: the caterpillar Unimog

**3 Test track**

Men turn into boys on Zappel’s private obstacle course with a water ditch and steep inclines. In the water: a U 1450

**4 Placard**

This is how Daimler-Benz advertised the universalist in the early 1950s.



how he first caught this bug: “After I graduated I journeyed through West Africa for six months with friends. From late 1981 to mid-1982 we travelled in a Borgward AD 522 and we often had to dig our way laboriously through sand dunes. A new U 100 once breezed past us with what seemed like the greatest of ease. That was the defining moment. It stoked my passion and enthusiasm for the Unimog.”

He bought his first 20 years ago, the second 13 years ago, and 10 years ago he was even lucky enough to be given the U 421 as a present: the platform vehicle had been standing in a field for years, where it had been rusting away in a terrible condition. Hildebrandt’s son Manuel helped with restoration and maintenance, which took a good six years, many hundreds of working hours and also swallowed

up a lot of money. “It was a labour of love,” says Rainer Hildebrandt.

The meeting between the Club President and collector Wolfgang Zappel has something of a family gathering about it: Zappel’s U 411, built in 1957, 30 hp, top speed of 53 km/h, is the predecessor - what you might call the older brother of Hildebrandt’s U 421, in which he has just covered and enjoyed the 80 kilometres. This creates a bond between them and the two men immediately hit it off. It goes without saying that their excursion in the platform vehicles takes them straight to Wolfgang Zappel’s unique collection, parked in a factory hall 36 kilometres away.

**To the altar in the U 1450**

Two of the rare Boehringer models are there, both around 70 years of age. The other vehicles include

Unimog models with a loading crane, snow shovel, several historic road-railers as well as Unimog vehicles from former military stocks. From construction year 1948 up to the 1990s.

“Unfortunately I no longer own the white U 1450 in which I drove my wife Martina to our wedding in 1993,” Wolfgang Zappel explains. “But we celebrated our silver wedding anniversary last year. So the Unimog turned out to be a good omen for us.”

Rainer Hildebrandt wants to know where he got all these gems, and Wolfgang Zappel answers: “I know someone who specialises in photographing historic, often exotic, Unimog models. He sometimes calls me up and says there’s an interesting vehicle up for sale. Then off I go and with a bit of luck I become its next owner.” His wife does not

always approve. But he says they have never had any serious arguments over it.

“I know what you mean,” replies the Club President, smiling. “Women and Unimog, that’s tricky territory.” He talks of a journey he went on across Switzerland with his wife last summer, covering 1,500 kilometres. The U 421 took them through valleys and over mountains and alpine passes. The heat in the cab was sometimes like “sitting on a hotplate”.

Rainer Hildebrandt still looks back on their Swiss travels with amusement: “‘Next time, you’re going on your own’ - that’s what my wife said once we were back home. But we’ll see if I can’t persuade her to come with me again.” His dream trip? He wants to go from Spain, where he once worked for Daimler-Benz, to the North Cape.

“A 4,000-kilometre rustic ride,” as he calls it. “I’d love to do that!” Meanwhile Martina Zappel tells an amusing story: “He even wanted me to agree to getting a Unimog bed - a load platform in the bedroom. As much as I love him, I refused. A Unimog bed? No thank you!”

The men then complete a few laps of Wolfgang Zappel’s private Unimog obstacle course with a deep water ditch and steep inclines. This is where grown men turn into daredevil youngsters.

In the afternoon Martina Zappel has an idea: “We’ll have an evening by the fire. Let’s go and fetch wood from the forest.”

The U 411 with its platform is the ideal mode of transport for this, too. And in the evening the three of them sit in front of the fire. This looks very much like the beginning of a lasting friendship. ♦



IMAGE BOTTOM RIGHT DAIMLER AG



# Looking for classics?

For the last year, Mercedes-Benz classic has expanded its marketplace to a whole eight pages. In collaboration with the Classic Trader online platform, our magazine now offers you a large selection of fascinating Mercedes-Benz classics

Under 50,000 euros



**180**  
12.1954 / W 120 / 500 km / €39,900

Green, grey-green fabric, tall radiator, 4 gears, antenna, wheel trim rings. Rest., cond. 1- German-Car.Net, 24848 Kropp, DE, +49 46248031931, +49 1512 3524361 → [classic-trader.com/mb139847](http://classic-trader.com/mb139847)



**180 D**  
10.1957 / W 120 / 5,439 km / €32,500

UT graphite grey (190)/OT pearl grey (125), grey fabric, tall rad., 4 gears, sliding roof, 2 prev. owners, rest. HSExclusiv, 22529 Hamburg, DE, +49 40 56060525, +49 178 3681111 → [classic-trader.com/mb145812](http://classic-trader.com/mb145812)



**L 319 fire engine**  
1963 / L 319 / 10,988 km / €16,000

Ex-emergency vehicle, petrol, fire engine red, imitation leather, 4 gears, hose, additional signals. Oldtimerfarm, Molenaar, 9880 Aalter, BE, +32 472 401338 → [classic-trader.com/mb146342](http://classic-trader.com/mb146342)



**280 SE Coupé**  
01.1970 / W 111 / 33,000 km / €45,900

Black (040), black leather (241), auto, Becker, tinted glass, electric sunroof, 2 prev. owners, part rest., Dorian Sledz, 83000 Juskowo, PL, +48 502 699 898 → [classic-trader.com/mb152686](http://classic-trader.com/mb152686)

Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations



**280 SL**  
12.1982 / R 107 / 94,000 km / €34,500

Astral silver metallic (930), blue leather (252), auto, Becker, heated seats, 1 previous owner, private, 66117 Saarbrücken, DE, +49 681 589 2052, +49 173 604 8081 → [classic-trader.com/mb154419](http://classic-trader.com/mb154419)



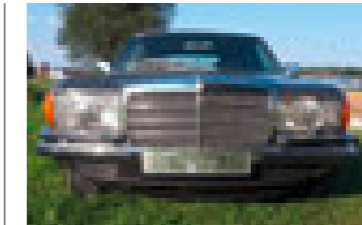
**280 SLC**  
06.1981 / C 107 / 114,000 km / €27,500

Silver-blue met. (930), blue velour (932), auto, Becker, steel ESR, P/S, C/L. 4 prev. own., part. rest., cond. 2+. Private, 40237 Düsseldorf, DE, +49 211 13950765, +49 179 6604199 → [classic-trader.com/mb149271](http://classic-trader.com/mb149271)



**450 SLC**  
06.1976 / C 107 / 158,000 km / €32,950

Anthracite grey met. (172), bamboo leather (204), (steel) ESR, A/C, CH re-import, 2 prev. own., orig. Automobile Ex., 91735 Muhr, DE, +49 9831 8809834, +49 170 5646000 → [classic-trader.com/mb146003](http://classic-trader.com/mb146003)



**450 SEL 6.9**  
08.1977 / W 116 / 144,350 km / €42,200

Anthracite grey met. (172), moss leather (206), alloys, Becker Mexico, A/C, rear headr., P/S, C/L, 2 prev. own., orig., no rust, cond. 2, private, 86720 Nördlingen, DE. → [classic-trader.com/mb151251](http://classic-trader.com/mb151251)



**560 SEC Straman-Cabriolet**  
07.1990 / C 126 / 136,000 km / €44,000

Astral silver metallic (735), blue leather, blue softtop, automatic A/C, many special features, Wolfgang Lachermund, DE, +49 7941 940612, +49 151 2103202 → [classic-trader.com/mb143396](http://classic-trader.com/mb143396)



**200 E**  
05.1991 / W 124 / 55,399 km / €9,500

Blue-black met. (199), grey fabric (068), 4 gears, ABS, alloys, Becker, tinted w., electric tilting/sliding roof, P/S, C/L. 2 prev. own./family, orig. Miriam Engels, 14169 Berlin, DE. → [classic-trader.com/mb150099](http://classic-trader.com/mb150099)



**E 36 AMG Estate**  
1993 / S 124 / €26,900

Black (040), green "Wimbledon" leather, auto, AMG, Becker, tinted glass, A/C. Wagen12, 73441 Bopfingen am Ipf, DE, +49 7362 9237256, +49 171 5895185 → [classic-trader.com/mb149884](http://classic-trader.com/mb149884)

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50,000 –  
100,000  
euros

**300**

06.1954 / W 186 / GBP 82,000

Black (040), brown leather, 4 gears, ivory-coloured steering wheel, whitewall tyres. 1 previous owner, rest., excellent. Santiago Posada, 110221 Bogotá, CO, +57 310 8079659

→ [classic-trader.com/mb140684](http://classic-trader.com/mb140684)



**220 S Coupé**

1959 / W 180 / € 70,000

Dark grey, red leather, 4 gears, Becker Europa, r/h mirror. US version, 3 prev. own., part. rest. Schiebler Scandinavia, 26193 Saxtorp, SE, +46 70 7658904

→ [classic-trader.com/mb141414](http://classic-trader.com/mb141414)



**220 SE Coupé**

07.1960 / W 128 / 26,870 km / € 69,500

White, red leather, 4 gears, Becker, ivory-coloured steering wheel, r/h mirror. US version, rest. Pyritz Classics, 60386 Frankfurt a. M., DE, +49 172 5300287

→ [classic-trader.com/mb142296](http://classic-trader.com/mb142296)



**220 SE Coupé**

1963 / W 111 / 33,647 km / € 57,900

Dark green (268), new cognac leather, ivory-coloured steering wheel, r/h mirror, rest. Private, 72622 Reutlingen, +49 172 7271798, +49 172 1799029

→ [classic-trader.com/mb147043](http://classic-trader.com/mb147043)



**450 SLC 5.0**

06.1979 / C 107 / 61,500 km / € 76,490

Silver green met. (861), bamboo velour (904), auto, tinted glass, E/W, A/C, C/L. Collectors edition. +49 176 30903062, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**SL 320 designo**

07.1996 / R 129 / 64,030 km / € on request

designo variocolor (green-blue), black-anthracite designo leather, auto, rear seats etc. Collectors edition. +49 176 30921281, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**SL 320 Ed. "Mille Miglia 2000"**

05.2000 / R 129 / 55,700 km / € 69,890

Brilliant silver met. (744), black nappa leather (231), auto, A/C, one of 12, collectors edition.

+49 176 30921275, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)

Over  
100,000  
euros

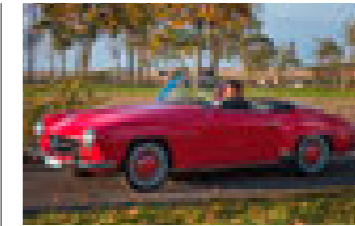


**300 S Coupé**

03.1954 / W 188 I / € on request

Light green, dark green leather, 4 gears, Wendler windscreen, radio, SSR. 3 prev. own., restored. Steenbuck, 21376 Gödenstorf-Lübberstedt, DE, +49 4175 802020

→ [classic-trader.com/mb140676](http://classic-trader.com/mb140676)



**190 SL**

07.1956 / W 121 / € 138,000

Fire engine red (534), black leather, whitewall tyres, 30 years family-owned, restored, condition 2, private, 12526 Berlin, DE, +49 162 4155888

→ [classic-trader.com/mb154345](http://classic-trader.com/mb154345)



**300 SL Roadster**

10.1959 / W 198 II / 600 km / € on request

Light ivory (658), natural-coloured leather (1068), 4 gears. Concours edition. +49 176 30903062, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**280 SE 3.5 Coupé**

07.1971 / W 111 / 250 km / € 395,890

Middle blue met. (396), grey leather (246), 4 gears, Becker Grand Prix, E/W, A/C. Concours edition. +49 176 30921275, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**280 SE 3.5 Cabriolet**

07.1970 / W 111 / 2,000 km / € on request

Papyrus white (717), black leather (241), auto, Becker, A/C. US version, 2 prev. owners, Concours edition. +49 176 30903062, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**280 SL**

06.1970 / W 113 / 600 km / € 284,490

Horizon blue (304), dark blue leather (245), auto, Becker, coupé roof, P/S. US version, Concours edition. +49 176 309 21275, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**Daimler motor coach, replica**

03.1886 / 1 cylinder / 462 cc / 0.8 kW (1.1 hp) / € on request

Historically the first four-wheeled vehicle to be powered by a running combustion engine. Replica, purely an exhibition piece, 2 gears. Concours edition. +49 176 30903062, alltimestars@daimler.com

→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)

Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations

In this issue:



Buyers' guide for the W 126  
p. 68-74



**260 SE**  
07.1989 / W 126 / 146,000 km / €9,800

Astral silver met. (735), black fabric (071), auto, ABS, tinted glass, E/W, rear head restr., centre armrest, C/L, pristine, preserved, private, 13189 Berlin, DE.  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb146787](http://classic-trader.com/mb146787)



**280 S**  
1983 / W 126 / 60,299 km / €15,900

Champagne met. (473), date velour (954), auto, Becker, tinted glass, E/W front, el. seats, steel ESR, A/C, centre armrest, Classic Park, 5283 VK Boxtel, NL, +31 411 605 000  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb135425](http://classic-trader.com/mb135425)



**420 SE**  
01.1990 / W126 / 76,000 mi / GBP 19,250

Nautical blue met. (929), grey vel. (968), RHD, el. tilting/sl. roof, A/C, 1 prev. own., orig., very good. Graeme Hunt, W8 6JP London, UK, +44 20 79378487, +44 7860 827272  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb136313](http://classic-trader.com/mb136313)



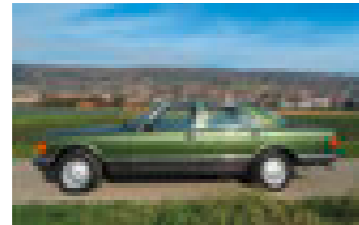
**420 SEL**  
01.1986 / V126 / 129,958 km / €16,900

Astral silver met. (735), blue vel. (972), ABS, el. tilting/sl. roof, A/C, J re-import, very good. Sloetjes Classic, 7091 DP Dinxperlo, NL, +31 315 651767, +31 611 967689  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb109556](http://classic-trader.com/mb109556)



**500 SE**  
12.1990 / W 126 / 35,200 km / €27,251

Arctic white (147), blue velour (962), airbag, alloys, E/W, el. seats, A/C autom. 1 prev. owner, orig. Stahlwerk Automobile, 13055 Berlin, DE, +49 30 30361328  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb148675](http://classic-trader.com/mb148675)



**280 SE**  
06.1981 / W 126 / 108,500 km / CHF 14,500

Cypress green met. (876), cream leather (235), auto, Becker, tinted glass, E/W, A/C, C/L, 2 prev. own., orig., Touring Garage, 8165 Oberweningen, CH, +41 44 856 1111  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb147978](http://classic-trader.com/mb147978)



**280 SE**  
08.1982 / W 126 / 35,500 km / €47,890

Thistle silver met. (881), Siena leather (237), 4 gears, tinted glass, steel ESR, E/W, A/C, C/L, Collectors edition, +49 176 309 212 75, alltimestars@daimler.com  
→ [mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars](http://mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars)



**300 D turbo diesel**  
02.1982 / W 123 / 204,569 km / €7,900

Silver-blue met. (930), grey leather (238), auto, alloys, tinted glass, el. seats, steel ESR, autom. A/C, centre armr. Hofman Leek Classic, 9351 PV Leek, NL, +31 594 516604  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb115606](http://classic-trader.com/mb115606)



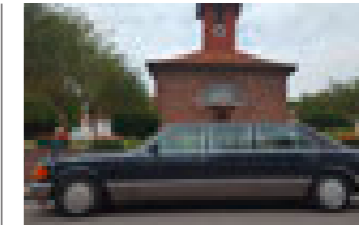
**500 SEL**  
5.1983 / V 126 / 75,500 mi / €19,995

Thistle silver met. (881), cream leather (255), RHD, E/W, steel ESR, A/C, 3 previous owners, orig., beautiful. Private, W91 Y207 Rathcoffey, IRL, +353 87 2481479  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb142437](http://classic-trader.com/mb142437)



**500 SEL**  
12.1984 / V126 / 50,000 km / €19,900

Thistle silver met. (881), dark olive velour (956), Becker, E/W, steel ESR, A/C, 1 previous owner, orig., Klassiker Handel, 01099 Dresden, DE, +49 351 6524748, +49 171 3510216  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb134672](http://classic-trader.com/mb134672)



**Schulz 500 SEL (elongated)**  
10.1984 / VV 126 / 120,000 km / €65,000

Dark blue (904), grey leather (278), A/C, further optional extras. 2 previous owners, conversion. Horst Mucha, 34233 Fuldataal, DE, +49 172 567 8098  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb143044](http://classic-trader.com/mb143044)



**300 SD turbo diesel**  
1983 / W 126 / 159,873 km / €12,500

Light ivory (823), date leather (254), auto, alloys, tinted glass, el. seats, centre armrest. KennisCars, 5555 XE Valkenswaard, NL, +31 622 420766  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb127802](http://classic-trader.com/mb127802)



**300 SE**  
03.1986 / W 126 / 183,300 km / €12,900

Champagne met. (473), Brazil fabric (073), auto, E/W, A/C, radio, P/S, C/L. 3 prev. owners, orig. Arnold Classic, 31867 Lauenau, DE, +49 5043 4343398  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb143597](http://classic-trader.com/mb143597)



**380 SE**  
1981 / W 126 / 55,693 km / €15,900

Lapis blue met. (932), blue leather (232), auto, tinted glass, front E/W, rear head restraints, radio. Classic Park, 5283 VK Boxtel, NL, +31 411 605000  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb130734](http://classic-trader.com/mb130734)



**560 SEL**  
7.1990 / V126 / 139,000 km / €22,500

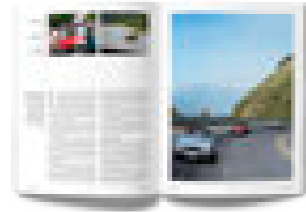
Blue-black met. (199), black leather (261), Becker CD, electric tilting/sliding roof, stainless steel exhaust etc. 4 previous owners, orig. Peter Atkins, 81679 Munich-Bogenhausen, DE, +49 152 5617 1115  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb148254](http://classic-trader.com/mb148254)

Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations

Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations



In this issue:



Ecuador C 123 (on the right, at rear)  
p. 50-57



**200 D**  
1981 / W 123 / 201,500 km / €9,900

Wheaten (681), date fabric (034), 4 gears, centre armrest, radio, mirror on right. KennisCars, 5555 XE Valkenswaard, NL, +31 6224 20766  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb108291](http://classic-trader.com/mb108291)



**240 D**  
07.1977 / W 123 / 300,000 km / €7,500

Colorado beige (470), MB-Tex tobacco (103), auto, Becker, steel ESR, A/C, P/S, C/L. US re-import, 3 previous owners. Private, 95326 Kulmbach, DE, +49 1514 3107923  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb147078](http://classic-trader.com/mb147078)



**240 D**  
04.1977 / W 123 / 47,000 km / €15,900

Colorado beige (470), moss fabric (006), 4 gears, tinted glass, P/S. From original owner, orig. Car Loft Sports, 5323 Ebenau, AT, +43 662 854070  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb130525](http://classic-trader.com/mb130525)



**300 D**  
02.1977 / W 123 / 374,755 km / €7,900

Light ivory (623), MB-Tex tobacco (103), auto, E/W, A/C autom., cruise control. US re-import. Hofman Leek Classic, 9351 PV Leek, NL, +31 594 516604  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb115583](http://classic-trader.com/mb115583)



**300 D**  
1979 / W 123 / 105,000 km / €9,500

Anthracite grey met. (172), MB-Tex parchment (105), Series 1, 4 gears, Becker, tinted glass, E/W, C/L. Paolo Campari, 43126 Parma, IT, +39 335 6485856  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb87264](http://classic-trader.com/mb87264)



**300 D turbo diesel**  
02.1983 / W 123 / 324,962 km / €6,900

Sand beige (444), MB-Tex henna red (157), autom., E/W, steel ESR, A/C auto, radio, P/S. US re-import. Hofman Leek Classic, 9351 PV Leek, NL, +31 594 516604  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb115534](http://classic-trader.com/mb115534)



**200**  
04.1982 / W 123 / 62,000 km / €10,900

Pastel grey (740), black fabric (031), 5 gears, tinted g., E/W, luggage nets, P/S, C/L. 2 prev. own., orig. Mercedes-Benz G. G. E., 91170 Viri Chatillon, FR, +33 164 864222  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb125252](http://classic-trader.com/mb125252)



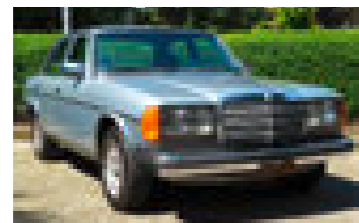
**230 E**  
11.1981 / W 123 / 165,021 km / €22,990

Thistle silver met. (881), black fabric (031), 4 gears, Becker, C/L. 1 prev. own., rest. Iglhaut-Classico, 97340 Marktbreit, DE, +49 9332 503221, +49 1516 1372945  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb135247](http://classic-trader.com/mb135247)



**230 E**  
06.1983 / W 123 / 138,500 km / €7,450

Thistle silver met. (881), cream fabric (055), 4 gears, SSR, P/S, C/L. Zech Automobile, 41238 Mönchengladbach, DE, +49 2166 9981410, +49 172 2029066  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb78083](http://classic-trader.com/mb78083)



**300 D turbo diesel**  
06.1983 / W 123 / 354,240 km / €9,950

Silver-blue met. (930), MB-Tex blue (152), auto, E/W, steel ESR, auto, A/C, US re-import, orig. Lettow Automobile, 27574 Bremerhaven, DE, +49 471 36661, +49 172 5336661  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb107208](http://classic-trader.com/mb107208)



**200**  
07.1979 / W 123 / 125,700 km / €11,500

Classic white (737), black fabric (001), Series 1, 4 gears, tinted gl., steel ESR. I re-import, orig. Autosalon Isartal, 82065 Baierbrunn, DE, +49 89 74424460, +49 172 8625125  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb127558](http://classic-trader.com/mb127558)



**200**  
10.1979 / W 123 / 23,131 km / €18,900

Golden brown (476), cream fabric (035), Series 2, 4 gears, Becker, tinted glass, SSR, P/S, I re-import, 2 prev. own., orig. Private, 6020 Innsbruck, AT, +43 664 2025220  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb144964](http://classic-trader.com/mb144964)



**280 E**  
05.1981 / W 123 / 330,500 km / €6,900

Dark blue (904), blue fabric (032), auto, ABS, trailer coupling, steel ESR, P/S, C/L. 5 previous owners, orig. KR Suevia, 73760 Ostfildern-Kemnat, +49 171 5325031  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb123149](http://classic-trader.com/mb123149)



**280 E**  
10.1982 / W 123 / 247,000 km / €9,700

Thistle silver met. (881), dark olive fabric (056), auto, Becker, centre armrest, P/S, C/L. Cond. 3. Private, 51643 Gummersbach, DE, +49 170 8303666  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb143839](http://classic-trader.com/mb143839)



**280 E**  
03.1983 / W 123 / 103,500 km / €21,900

Champagne met. (473), cream fabric (055), auto, centre armrest, SSR, C/L, complete service booklet. 1 prev. own., orig. Herbrand Classic, 47800 Krefeld, DE, +49 2151 4419409  
→ [classic-trader.com/mb148747](http://classic-trader.com/mb148747)

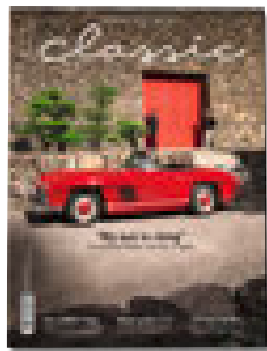
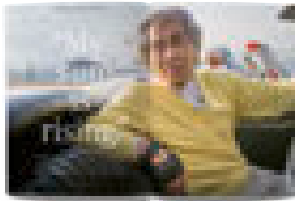
Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations

Prices for vehicles from countries which do not use euros may be subject to currency fluctuations

WRITE TO US

**Shimpei Kitsukawa, Honorary President of the Mercedes-Benz Club Japan:**

“Together with your team we went on a two-day drive across Shikoku island, gathering many fond memories along the way. We were very impressed by your reporters’ professionalism, and the cover story exceeded our expectations. Mercedes-Benz classic magazine uses soft, matt paper, not the glossy material used by other publications. It has a high-quality look and feel. I like it very much”

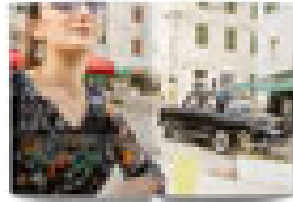


**Mercedes-Benz classic, issue 3.2018**

**GENERAL**

I have been receiving the Mercedes-Benz classic magazine for some years. I find it a real pleasure, time and again! When I read the last issue (3.2018) I just had to write in to say thank you. You manage to convey the love of Mercedes-Benz cars in the very best way – through the life of the people who own and treasure them. The photography in the magazine is just fantastic. Each photo has relevance: I really do believe that this is the best photography in the entire automotive magazine business. I have never seen such thoroughly good material in any other magazine.

**Beyers Oosthuizen, Paarl, South Africa**



**IN THE STAR-STUDED VILLAGE**

The November 2018 issue of Mercedes-Benz classic includes a story called “In the star-studded village”. You report on the small Croatian town of Imotski and that its proportion of Mercedes-Benz vehicles is higher than anywhere else in the world. Perhaps you could also describe the municipality of Lohberg in the Bavarian Forest as a “star-studded village” – not because of cars, but because of its Unimog vehicles. In 1997 the Unimog-Club Gaggenau declared that we had the highest proportion of Unimog vehicles in Germany, and probably in the whole world, too. Might that also be worth reporting on?

**Josef Billig, Lohberg, Germany**

**Answer from the editorial team**

Dear Mr Billig, thank you for your interesting suggestion. This does indeed sound very intriguing and could well be the source of a good story for one of our coming issues!

Incidentally, in this issue we have a lavishly illustrated article about the Unimog-Club Gaggenau on our Community pages (from p. 76).

*Your opinion is important to us!  
Please send your readers' letters by post or email to*

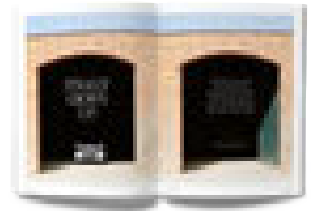
*Daimler AG  
Mercedes-Benz classic magazine  
HPC 000/0736  
70546 Stuttgart, Germany*

*[classic.magazin@daimler.com](mailto:classic.magazin@daimler.com)*

**ADVERTISING**

I received *Classic* issue 3.2018 today, and of course I read it straight away. Your articles are great. I do have one objection, though: advertising is okay, but when I don't want it I remove it. However, I could not remove these ads as they were integrated into the magazine. Is this really necessary? The advertisement on the last page is an integral part of the magazine, which I think is appropriate in this case. But the high-gloss advertising right in the centre doesn't fit with this publication. But as always, I'm already looking forward to the next issue.

**Ulrich Zettier, Ahaus, Germany**



**20 YEARS OF SMART**

I have been reading your magazine since the very first issue, and I always look forward to receiving my own copy hot off the press. The article entitled “Finally grown up!” in the previous issue, about twenty years of smart, prompts me to write to you, since I had to smile when I read: “159,000 kilometres – a proud figure for a car”. My “Baby-Benz” (190 E) will be getting its ‘H’ registration plates this spring, and shortly afterwards it will have clocked up 400,000 kilometres. It provides sterling service every day, summer or winter. Please continue giving all Mercedes-Benz classic fans photographic and emotional treats in your magazine.

**Daniel Maiwald, Creußen, Germany**



**Reader Jörg Simon from Meinerzhagen, Germany asks:**

“I have a W 124 and am interested in whether it is possible to retrospectively obtain vehicle documentation which details information on workshop visits and other maintenance work.

I have the maintenance booklet, but the first owner and the former workshop no longer have any documents.

Later on, the vehicle was registered in the Netherlands and also serviced at Mercedes-Benz. It would be great if you could help me, and if not, at least it was worth a try”

### **Dr Thomas Giesefeld answers**

Many business documents are destroyed after around 10 years. Thereafter, they are no longer available as a source of information. At the time of the W 124 there was no digital service report that could be of further help here. Once Mercedes-Benz classic cars leave the final inspection of their well-documented production, their whereabouts and change of ownership are no longer directly pursued.

By now, more than 50 million vehicles have been produced by Daimler AG and its predecessor companies, and it would understandably be impossible to keep track of these vehicles' further life journey – their “auto-biography” so to speak – in a centrally managed and comprehensive way. But this is exactly what many classic car fans are interested in, especially since they know that their Mercedes-Benz was once configured in detail by the first customer

and is usually like no other car down to the smallest of details. Mercedes-Benz classic car fans are interested in more than just the technical characteristics; they are particularly interested in the individual experiences and stories down through the generations. And it is of course understandable that they would like to have all of this documented.

This question is also important because a complete documentation greatly contributes to value creation. Still, a maintenance booklet will give our reader Jörg Simon information on previous services. A vehicle for which the first customer has archived the original delivery invoice and all following documents for later owners will have a higher value than a vehicle with unknown history but otherwise in the same condition – even though the latter, for example an imported restoration object, has its very own brand of appeal. ♦



### **Dr Thomas Giesefeld**

has been the historical-journalistic consultant for Mercedes-Benz classic magazine since 2002. He has collected Mercedes brochures since childhood, drives nothing other than the brand with the star and has owned a total of 25 Mercedes-Benz cars since 1982.

### **Responses to our last issue**

Many of the letters received in response to our last issue were from readers wishing to locate classic cars they once owned. Another popular letter topic was nomenclature, with readers wishing to know more about Mercedes-Benz series and model designations.

Do you too have a question for our expert? Write to: [classic.magazin@daimler.com](mailto:classic.magazin@daimler.com)





**Alex Iwan** grew up in Germany, Africa and Indonesia. The art collector now lives in Düsseldorf, where she heads a lifestyle agency. Among other things, she also writes her popular, much-discussed Daimler blog: [blog.daimler.com](http://blog.daimler.com)

“Genuine adventures in western Africa, which loom even larger than life when recounted decades later”

Mäuschen, Hajo, Bubu and Schorschi have finally found one another again. After sixty long years, the four Germans are back together, just like in the old days in Africa - thanks to this column! These men, one of whom is my father, are old-school heroes in my book. Fearless men with a zest for life who knuckle down to things and are ready, willing and able to undertake just about anything.

Programmed with this hero gene, they left Germany to work in Africa. They met by mere chance in Monrovia in the early 1960s, where they lived and worked, in part as colleagues at Mercedes-Benz, but all at least as thirsty for adventure and foolhardy as the guys in the film *Ocean's Eleven*. Genuine adventures in western Africa, which loom even larger than life when recounted decades later. For me, these are stories from another era.

These are not great heroic deeds, but for those special living conditions you really did need an extra helping of courage in your everyday life. The difference between life on the River Elbe and life in the bush is much greater than the mere distance in kilometres. However, it all became much more tangible in the next

west African stage of life - and I was there, too. My father was sent to Nigeria to develop a truck plant for Mercedes-Benz in Enugu, in the former state of Biafra, but without Mäuschen, Hajo and Bubu; they had long since dispersed in all directions.

So why was he a hero? No water, no electricity, but nevertheless a production line. Lots of voodoo, not much Stuttgart. Lots of adventure, not a lot of home.

One day, Dr Ibeabuchi visited my father. The doctor wanted to open a hospital, but there was a problem: without electricity, there could be no hospital.

I remember how father organised the electrical circuitry with great effort in his spare time, and I remember my mother and myself helping out in the hospital on the weekends. What my father achieved back then now seems like a true heroic deed and something we were able to support him in, at least a little bit.

Perhaps it really is the little things that happen every day with little or no fuss that pump adrenaline into the veins of unsung heroes. This is just one of the many good feelings I associate with Mercedes-Benz to this day. ♦

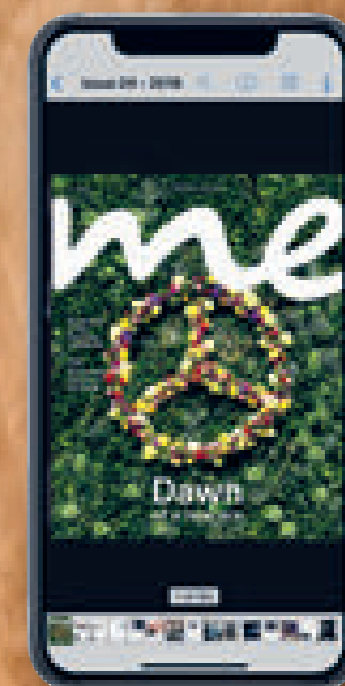
*Preview* The next issue of Mercedes-Benz classic will be available on 19 July 2019.

ILLUSTRATION JULIA PELZER

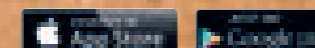
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\* Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Happy View Day/Preview  
Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday + Sunday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**SIHA**  
AUSSTELLUNGEN PROMOTION GMBH  
VERANSTALTER / ORGANISER

Artist: Alfredo De la Marfa, [www.cckunst.de](http://www.cckunst.de)

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