



The Houston Star

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**August
2009**

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WE'RE GOING GREEN !

BEGINNING WITH THE SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER WE WILL BE MAILING LINKS TO THE ONLINE FULL-COLOR VERSION OF THE HOUSTON STAR NEWSLETTER TO OUR MEMBERS USING THEIR EMAIL ADDRESSES FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE'S DATABASE. THE EMAIL ADDRESSES WILL BE THOSE YOU PROVIDED TO MBCA WHEN YOU JOINED THE CLUB, IF YOURS HAS CHANGED RECENTLY OR NEEDS TO BE ADDED, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.mbca.org/> & UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION. WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY SEEING THE NEWSLETTER IN FULL-COLOR AND THAT YOU WILL APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE YOUR MBCA EXPERIENCE WHILE REDUCING COSTS AND HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT.

President's Message

Hi everyone,

Stuff happens. There you are traveling down a familiar stretch of highway keeping your car in the lane which we were well instructed when all of a sudden a piece of road debris comes flying up from another car heading straight for yours. Your pulse quickens, your mind races deciding what the best plan of avoidance there is, your senses follow wanting to swerve left or right (depending if the next lane is occupied), but there are vehicles too near to maneuver. You go to apply your brakes but that might cause the unaware driver behind you to slam his brakes indicative of a chain reaction. And then that object makes contact with your newly waxed unblemished paint. Your first thought is, why me? The next is strangle the driver of car from whence it originally came. Knowing it's illegal to do the latter, you just sigh and continue to you destination praying it's not as bad as it seemed or sounded only later to find out it is.

This has I'm sure happened to most of us driving on any public road. The problem can be non-existent if those hauling loads make sure they're securely fastened, tires are thoroughly checked out (especially 18 wheelers) and safe enough not to break down and to keep the recommended distance behind the car in front of us (not going to happen). The other line of defense is installing a clear bra to your vehicle. I know it may seem this is geared more towards lowly sloped front ends, but there are several applications out there that will fit your respective vehicle to help with occurrences like these. I had one put on the little car when I purchased it and it's already saved me thousands of dollars in repairs and repaint not to mention the originality of the car. You can access the Internet for several manufacturers of these products; I have a 3M clear bra on mine. I can go on for awhile about these, but I won't bore you with details and let you discover which application is best. You can also consult your dealer to learn more about these. I've a friend with a new Corvette who wasn't so lucky with being on the receptive end of a shredded tire making contact with his car's hood. A clear bra would've eliminated the damage to the cars paint and his frustration. He's now going to purchase one. Now, if we can fix that front windshield thing. If you've ideas, let me know.

We have good news for the conservationists out there wanting to see less paper being used in our more supported Internet driven times. We are going green with the emailing of our newsletters starting in September. We'll have hard copies just in case our initial venture doesn't go according to plan. I ask that all our members, if we don't have your email addresses, to please send them to us so we may add you to the list. If you're not sure if we have your email, send it to me at damstith@yahoo.com and I'll forward it to be added to the newsletter mailing list.

Events coming up:

—Election Dinner: 9/19/09 The White Flamingo in Spring, TX Saturday evening. Please see this newsletter for details.

—Oktoberfest: 10/17/09 at TGA, Hans always throws one of the most attended events of the year. Don't miss it.

—Autocross 11/15/09 Kingwood Community College (same place and time)

—Holiday Brunch 12/6/09, more on that later...

Happy Motoring,

Damon Stith
Houston Section

MEMBER'S CARS

(This is a series of articles that will appear a few times a year in our Newsletter and is just a compilation of stories and experiences while being a Mercedes Benz owner. I hope you find them interesting - Editor)

MB Tales and Tire Marks from Tomball, Texas

Six years ago began what was to become a love affair with a C230 Sport Coupe. Before this machine, I was driving a '98 Limited Edition Saturn SC2. The two cars have a lot in common. They were both 2 door sport coupes, both were 4 cylinders, both were well-engineered automobiles. That's right; this particular Saturn was a good example of American automotive engineering. In fact, when Saturn first began, their engineering and production of the Saturn product line had very good quality and reliability. Our 1992 SL2 was a pleasure to drive, it had great performance and was probably one of the safest of all American build small cars when they were introduced in 1992 (I sold the 92 SL 2 with 385,000 miles on it with one rebuild on the engine and never touched the suspension or transmission. (Remarkable isn't it, who would think Detroit could accomplish such a thing?) For example, the 5-speed transmission was not designed after existing transmissions. This one used roller bearings which is quite unusual for a standard transmission. I never heard of a standard transmission requiring Automatic Transmission fluid before and the silly thing had a spin on filter like an oil filter. Not bad innovative thinking. However, this good old car was aging and with 106, 000 miles I knew there was about 94,000

miles left before an engine rebuild would be necessary.

When I took my wife's C320 in for service, I spotted what appeared to be some butt ugly cars with some really neat paint jobs. I quickly dismissed them and continued to take care of our immediate concern of getting the C320 serviced and be back on our way. I went into the showroom to drool on the upholstery of an AMG SL55 when a salesman asked what I was doing. I mentioned that sometime soon, I would need to replace my daily driver with a newer car. He told me about a C230 Kompressor Sport Coupe that was just moved to the used car lot and asked if I would like to take



a test drive. I never pass up an opportunity to drive a new car, so out we went. To make a long story longer and a lot less interesting, I signed the papers and drove out with a Mercedes Benz that cost about the same as a Toyota Celica GTS. And with the same power! Here's a shot of both of them and the 4 door has a good look at the rear tail lights of the Kompressor, because that is all that C320 will ever see!!

(continued on page 9)

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4.6 million kilometers One Greek Taxi

Mercedes Only Website

On September 29th, 2004, Greek taxi driver Gregorios Sachinidis from Thessalonica handed over his 1976 Mercedes-Benz 240D to the Mercedes-Benz Museum Collection. Having covered more than 4.6 million kilometers - roughly 2.8 million miles - this "Stroke Eight" is the Mercedes-Benz with the highest recorded mileage known to date.

Driving a distance greater than 184 trips around the globe has made the definitive statement about the longevity of Mercedes-Benz automobiles. Mercedes-Benz taxis have been permanent features of both German and international urban landscapes. In Germany, every second taxi is a Mercedes-Benz. In Greece, one outlasted them all.

Mr. Sachinidis bought his car in Germany in 1981 with 220,000 km on the clock, before driving it back to Thessalonica, where it entered 24-hour cab duty until July 2004. During those 23 years, the owner rotated two spare engines in with the car's original motor a total of 11 times.

Mr. Sachinidis sent a letter to Prof. Jürgen Hubbert, Member of the Board of Management of DaimlerChrysler AG, thanking him for the excellent service Mercedes-Benz had afforded him over the years. Having received a visit from representatives of the Mercedes-Benz Museum Collection, Mr. Sachinidis decided to hand the car over to the Mercedes-Benz Museum.

Highlighting the reception in Germany, the president of DaimlerChrysler Hellas, Dr. Alexander Paufler, presented Mr. Sachinidis with a key for a new C200 CDI to be picked up upon his return to Greece.

The Mercedes-Benz Classic High Mileage Award is presented to owners whose vehicles have logged 155,000 miles or more. Each award includes a traditional Star and Laurel badge which can be affixed to the radiator grille of your Mercedes, as well as a handsome display certificate and formal presentation folder.



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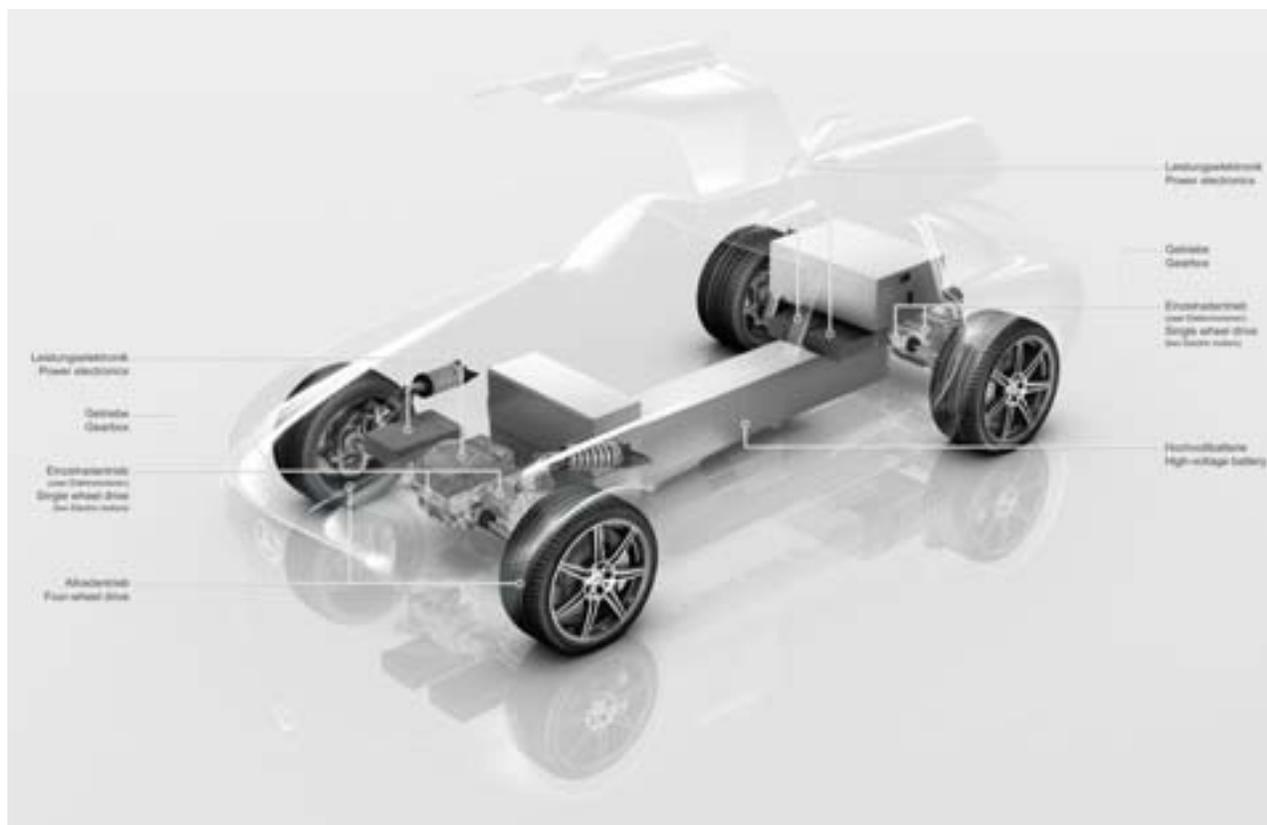
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FULL COLOR Online:

<http://mbca.org/houston/star.htm>

Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG electric-drive to get 526-hp

egmCarTech Posted: July 16, 2009



Earlier this week, you may have thought that the report about a plug-in hybrid Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG was just a wild rumor coming out of Europe. Well, it's true and Mercedes-Benz released official details on the upcoming Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG with electric-drive, scheduled to debut in 2015.

Mercedes-Benz says that power will come from four-electric motors with a combined output of 392 kW (526-hp) with a maximum torque of 880 Nm (649 lb-ft). Each electric-motor is positioned near the wheels with a transmission on each end to get the power to the wheels. Somehow the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG with electric-drive is as quick as its V8 gas-guzzling sibling managing a 0 to 60 mph time in just 4 seconds.

"With the SLS AMG with electric drive, we wanted to redefine the super sports car. For us, it is not just about responsibility. We attach just as much importance to excitement and classic AMG performance," says Volker Mornhinweg, Chief Executive Officer of Mercedes-AMG.

With 2015 a while away, Mercedes-Benz has a lot of time to stay true to its claims.

Technical Q & A

Editor's note: This month we continue a technical Q & A. If you have a question or a problem related to your Mercedes please contact Saleem Durvesh at 281.883.3792 or Saleem@JohansenUSA.com. Each month Saleem will post responses to your questions.

Question: I drove my Mercedes S420 from Chicago to Dallas. Outside temperature was 80 degrees in Chicago when I started the trip and air conditioner was working fine. When I reached Dallas in the morning, air conditioner still worked. During the afternoon when temperature went close to 100 degrees, it quit working. It started working late in the evening. Seems like it is related to ambient temperature when it exceeds 95 degrees, air conditioner quits working. Compressor does not come on. I put one can of R134a refrigerant and it made it worse. Any idea what is going on?

Answer: I experienced similar problem when I was in the middle of the desert and my car's air conditioner quit. I called my friend, a mechanic who has 30 years of experience working on Mercedes and he suggested adding some refrigerant. This made the situation worse. I noticed that when the compressor came on, refrigerant pressure went over 65 PSI and compressor quit. It would cycle for 3 to 5 seconds only. I removed some refrigerant and noticed that cycle time went to 10 seconds. Finally I removed enough refrigerant that when compressor came on, it did not exceed 45 PSI and air conditioner started working properly. Later on I learned that when cars from cooler climate come to warmer climates, their air conditioners develop similar problems.

My apologies for not completing the answer I started last month. I felt this was more appropriate due to the weather we are having in Texas.

As always, if you have questions, please send your requests to the Houston Star or contact me directly. I can be reached at Saleem@JohansenUSA.com or call me at 281.883.3792.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gerald Hodge
Mike Larremore
Hiram McMahan
Olga Zenda Rider
Calvin Robinson Jr.

(Continued from page 3) After 170,000 miles and 6 years of flawless driving experiences, the little car has exceeded my expectations of reliability and comfort. I drive over 100 miles a day and this machine has never let me down. In fact, the only things replaced outside of normal wear and tear (suspension bushings and brakes) were two alternators. Now for the interesting part, I have averaged 29 mpg over the last 170,000 with a combined average of 40% in the city and 60% on the highway. Coupled with this, there is never a shortage of horsepower as the supercharger makes it think it is a V6, even though it is an inline 4. The 5 speed automatic transmission is extremely efficient and delivers optimum performance under any type of driving conditions.



There have been occasions that the car proved surprisingly strong in autocross competition. Here we are at the MBCA Kingwood Autocross getting ready to stage for the second run at the cones (one of the Houston Chapter's Past Presidents gave me the nickname of "Cone Killer" - can you see it??) It has run seven times with seven first place finishes. This fall the little car will take part in a track day with over 180,000 miles on it. Most likely we will be the slowest on the track, but who cares? It's the thrill of getting up to speed and letting it do what it was designed to do, cruise at over 100 MPH and yet feel like its only going 60. Its reliability has been great, and proves to match or surpass my 92 SL2 Saturn, which was surprisingly quick with over 385,000 miles. One mechanic

told me that the 1.8 inline 4 Kompressor is a brick and I believe him. For example, the factory-installed timing chain is still in there and for that matter, so is everything else.

I owe the continued enjoyment of driving this Mercedes to Texas German Autohaus (TGA), who have taken over the maintenance on the machine since it went out of warranty. I find that Hans Richter and his staff are more like friends and they make every effort to make sure that the little car lives up to my expectations. This is one exceptional car, and the hatchback design actually has more cargo carrying capability than our C350. Having moved two households, the little car is a real workhorse. I have put in more than the recommended carrying weight, and it never even hesitated to deliver more than enough power to get the job done.

Driving home from work with the panoramic sunroof back on a warm day makes it feel reminiscent of a dive in a roadster like my old 67 Alfa Romero Duetto (wish I still had it even though it is Italian). With the top back, the abundance of fresh air, doing seventy on a noisy highway, one can still hear the radio. Here's another hint. With the sunroof back one does not even feel any stiff breeze that would cause havoc with a lady's new hairdo. Having driven this car in 5 and 8-hour stints, one does not even feel tired. The adjustable seats help make this possible but the darn thing is just plain comfortable under any driving conditions and at any speed it is capable of.

In summary, the C230 K is a great little car that even though short on cylinders like its other Mercedes Benz siblings, still delivers more than enough power, its handling is very good, and the road manners are typical Mercedes Benz. What I didn't count on is that the cost of maintenance is close to that of an American car, and that makes owning one of the best engineered driving machines in the world a real pleasure giving its owner a true sense of pride of what only Mercedes Benz can offer.

PERSONALIZED CERTIFICATE

Posted by MERCEDES ONLY

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The certificate also makes an ideal personal gift of lasting value as the owner's name is recorded for posterity in the order books of the Corporate Archives. Generations to come will have a list of these fortunate Mercedes-Benz owners.

A certificate may be purchased by presenting proof of ownership (government-issued title). For more information, contact the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center at 1-866-MBCLASSIC.

http://www.mbusa.com/media/downloads/main/heritage/Classic_Certificate_Application.pdf

Mercedes Marketplace

1985 Mercedes TD-T-300 Turbo Diesel

161K miles, Auto transmission, 5 cylinder, White exterior/Navy interior. Runs well. The interior and body are in excellent condition. Very clean. One owner; Sun roof; low mileage on tires; Garaged in Houston since purchase. \$5000. Call Louise or Bob 713-664-6706.



'82 Mercedes 300CD turbo diesel coupe



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Moving?

In order to change your address, go to the web site of the MBCA at:

<https://www.mbc.org/mbca/addchange.htm>

Want to know about events in a more timely manner?

For improved communication: If you desire to receive reminders and updates regarding Section events electronically please send your preferred e-mail address to service@danngo.com.

2009 Upcoming Events

Election Dinner
September 19

Octoberfest
October 17

Fall Autocross
November 15

Christmas Brunch
December 6

Bowling Tournament
January TBA

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 PM of 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months at the Mercedes-Benz Greenway dealership 2nd Floor Conference Room

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