



The HoustonStar

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**December
2009**

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FALL AUTO CROSS 2009

I've often heard that in Texas a dare is a legal binding contract. I'm sure some of you will recall that after the last autocross I dared the skies to open up this time and boy did they ever!!! After waiting for 8 years to have a rainy day autocross I finally got my wish... and it was everything I hoped it would be. We started off the day with a lot of clouds and a lot of cars parked in our way, but thanks to the campus police at Lone Star College we soon had the lot to ourselves.

This was without question the largest attendance of any autocross I've handled with the club, 20+ drivers with a wide variety of cars and a lot of spectators. To top the top day off, my long sidelined 230SL was raring to get a piece of that track.

As the course was being laid out we were treated to a very nice BBQ lunch, which seems to be a tradition now... Amazingly the rain came and went at all the right times. We began the runs on a new untested course layout which I enjoyed, it had a nice combination of tight turns and slaloms to keep us slipping and sliding all over the place.

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President's Message

President's Message,

Hi M-B enthusiasts,

On behalf of the Board of directors I want to wish you all a

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

and a

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**

Damon Stith
Houston Section

When the final scores were tabulated it was no surprise that John Stone took 1st place in Class A (MB 8 cylinders) with his E55; his time was 56.61 seconds. Second place in Class A went to Dennis Nunn in his E430 with a time of 61.20 seconds. Third place went to Dr. Garcia in his SL500 with a time of 71.01.



Class B (MB 6 cylinders) was my class and my '66 230SL was happy to sacrifice her new tires for her first place with a time of 60.08 seconds. Second place went to Harry Simeonidis in his '68 280SL with a time of 64.49 seconds. Third place went to Gunter Sundag in his SL320 with a time of 65.31.

Class C (MB 4 cylinders) saw Chuck Wyatt taking First place in his C230K with a time of 60.16 seconds, followed by Joseph Middleton in his 300D with a time of 71.44 seconds, and Rex Smalley in Third place in his C230.



Class D (Non-MB's) was a HUGE group with a Corvette, two Caterham 7's, a Jaguar E-type, Porsche's, a Camaro, Nissan GTR and several others. First place went to Ken James in his Caterham 7 with a time of 53.02 (the fastest of the day), with Second place going to Red Ankrum in his Nissan GTR with a time of 57.75 seconds and James Flowers in his Porsche Caymen bringing in Third place with a time of 57.77 (2/100th's of a second later!).



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FALLAUTOCROSS

Despite (or perhaps BECAUSE of) the rain, the event was one of the best autocrosses we've had in terms of both attendance and sheer levels of fun. We had good food and good driving along with good friends.

I'd like to thank not only the good people at Lone Star College for their continued support of our club, but also all of the members that help with the task of laying out the course and helping to make the event happen, with a special thanks to Damon Stith and Irene Trudell for handling to timing and essentially running the event so I could finally get a chance to drive!!!



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Parts Rep.



Hitler Mercedes 770K to be sold

Roy Spencer, editor MercedesHeritage.com

Germany's Der Spiegel online has revealed plans for six of the Nazi Party's parade Mercedes 770s to be sold as a package to a Russian investor. Included in the deal is an armor-plated 1935 Mercedes 770A Kompressor Cabriolet believed to have been used to shuttle Adolf Hitler through throngs of adoring Germans leading up to and during WW2.

This deal, brokered by German classic car dealer Michael Frohlich, is said to be worth well north of \$15m, with the Hitler limousine expected to bring over \$6m alone. Connecting the car to Hitler required careful study of historical photographs and revealed the 770 carrying number plate: 1A 148461 was clearly shown in photographs with Hitler aboard. Further evidence of the Fuhrer's connection was provided by a log book noting the car being delivered to the "Fuhrer and Reich Chancellor."

Establishing the Hitler connection to any 770 has been murky business over the years. In 1973, a 770K was erroneously represented to have been the parade limousine of Adolf Hitler and was sold at auction for \$153k, a record auction price for an automobile at the time.

Referring to the occasional inhabitant of 770K with plate #1A 148461 as "that s*** Hitler," Frohlich remarked that brokering this infamous 770 disgusts him and was certainly one of his more unusual transactions. Historically, cars with Nazi connections are traded quietly and are rarely shown in public due to the understandably strong emotions they elicit. Some of Frohlich's other sales have included John Lennon's Mercedes 600 and Charlie Chaplin's Bentley S3.



Setting the Nazi connection aside for a moment, we must recognize the Mercedes 770 as the pinnacle of prewar automobile technology (particularly the series 2 cars constructed from 1938-1943) and extravagance. Constructed in two series from 1930-1943, the cars were favored by heads of state, some more notorious than others.

That the most well known examples of such a grand series of Mercedes automobiles are connected with this dark era of history has undoubtedly pained Mercedes-Benz for decades. For some, however, they are eminently collectible and sell for significant price multiples of similar 770s lacking the grim historical connection.

When first contacted by Der Spiegel to comment on this deal, I wondered whether this wealthy Russian had the courage to crush the Hitler car to further extinguish the memories of this bleak, forgettable era. After a moment's consideration I realized that would be an unnecessary loss of an example of one of Mercedes' finest series of motorcars. Such is the conundrum of any collectible connected to the Nazi era. We will celebrate the glorious 770 series soon with a proper article and no mention of any of the car's ignominious owners.

Mercedes-Benz Says China to Pass U.K. as No. 3 Market Next Year

By Bloomberg News

Nov. 23 (Bloomberg) — Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz expects China to surpass the U.K. as its third-biggest market next year with its sales growth in the Asian country outpacing the overall auto market.

Nationwide auto sales will like rise by as much as 15 percent next year, Mercedes-Benz China head Klaus Maier said today at an auto show in Guangzhou. The automaker's China sales this year will probably rise 65 percent to 65,000 cars, he said.

Mercedes expects sales in China to only lag behind Germany and the U.S. next year, helped by growth that has put China on course to pass Japan as the world's No. 2 economy. Bayerische Motoren Werke AG, the world's biggest luxury-car maker, also announced plans for a new China plant earlier this month.

"We are always confident that this market will continue to grow, especially in the luxury-car segment, as we believe the Chinese economy will continue to grow," said Bjorn Hauber, general manager for sales and marketing at Mercedes-Benz China.

Sales of Mercedes cars rose 55 percent in China in the first 10 months of this year to 50,700, making it the nation's fastest-growing luxury-vehicle brand.

The company expects its cars sold in China to be evenly split between imports and locally made models by the end of next year, Maier said. At present, 70 percent are imported.

Daimler Chief Executive Officer Dieter Zetsche said this month he expects Mercedes to overtake BMW in China "soon." China is the world's biggest market for Mercedes-Benz's S-Class model.

**ARE YOU TOO
OLD TO DRIVE
THIS CAR?**



HOLIDAY BRUNCH

Everyone has enjoyed our Holiday Brunch at Café Rabelais the last few years. By popular demand, we're going back again this year! We hope you will join us for this special event to celebrate the holidays on Sunday, December 6 beginning at 11:00 a.m., including the famous Houston Section gift exchange! Café Rabelais is a small French bistro located at 2442 Times in Rice Village and they have prepared a special menu just for us.

Appetizer:

Baked Brie

Choice of:

Chestnut Bisque with Crème Fraîche

CeleryRoot Rémoulade

Entrée Choices:

Beef Filet with Blue Cheese and Bordelaise Sauce

Salmon Filet with Hollandaise Sauce

Pork Tenderloin with Prunes and Port Reduction

Dessert Choices

Chocolate Mousse

Strawberry Tart

Your choice of coffee or iced tea is included in the \$35.00 per person cost. Vegetarian meals are available upon request and a child's dinner (under 12) will also be available for \$12.00. Please include your choices along with your check. We must have your confirmation by November 30.



Seating is limited to the first 50 people who RSVP to Damon Stith (832-265-6044 or damstith@yahoo.com). For questions on the brunch contact Damon or Buzz Werner.

SUNDAY BRUNCH AND SUNDAY MATINEE THEATER (MAKE IT A TWOFER)

Note: RSVP with payment required for ticketing purposes.

If you have not sent your RSVP for Main Street Theater's Sunday Matinee performance of The Last Night of Ballyhoo following our Holiday Brunch at Cafe Rabelais, there may still be time. You should RSVP per instructions at bottom of page 9 in our November newsletter <<<http://www.mbca.org/houston/star/nov.pdf>>> as soon as you read this.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity.

Don't take my word for it. The following quote is from one of the reviews I read (all of them were overflowing with praise):

"I cannot think of a better way to spend the holidays than by attending and being inspired and moved by Main Street Theater's beautiful and meaningful production of The Last Night of Ballyhoo.....this play has "HUGE HIT" written all over it!"



EVENT DETAILS:

What - Sunday Matinee Performance of The Last Night of Ballyhoo by Alfred Uhry

Location - Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd (just West of Cafe Rabelais) 713-524-3622

Date - Sunday, December , 2009

Curtain Time - 3:00 PM (Plan on being there about 2:30 PM)

Cost - \$10.00 per person, paid in advance. Please RSVP with your check for \$10.00 made payable to Mercedes Benz Club, Houston and addressed to Richard Wilkins, Continental Center, 1217 Prairie, Houston, TX 77002. Any RSVP received after November 27 will be iffy, as Sunday Matinees are often well subscribed and this promises to be an excellent play. Main Street Theater is a small and intimate theater with seating for less than 100 patrons, so we should secure our tickets early. Questions? - Call Richard at 713-227-6603.

Mercedes Marketplace

'82 Mercedes 300CD turbo diesel coupe



60K miles, Auto transmission, 5 cylinder, Brown w/Palomino interior. My car for the past 25+ years, it has been well cared for and is reliable, economical, and in excellent condition. Must be seen to be appreciated.

\$6500.00

Call Gail Morrison 713 468-7776 or 713 201-5804 for an appointment.

1995 S320 LWB sedan



For Sale:

1995 S320 LWB sedan with only 97,000 well-maintained miles. Body and interior in great shape, and all systems are functional. Maintenance records and all manuals go with car. My daily driver and favorite vehicle, but retirement forces sale. **\$6300 OBO.**

832-444-9545

1967 Mercedes 600



This car was reportedly originally owned by the President of Dole Pineapple. Unfortunately I do not have any documentation.

Due to the varied unexpected turns life has taken, it has not been run for about 8 years, and we are thinking about finding a new owner. I had stopped using it because the drive shaft carrier bearing was noisy. I purchased the bearing, but never got around to having it installed.

The car has the optional cooler/armrest between the front seats. The upholstery is black leather.

According to published information (Robert Nitske), M-B only made 138 units in 1967. I have seen where the 600 is going for up to \$35k. I am asking \$28K or a reasonable offer.

Bob and Gail Supina 281-239-8583

Technical Q & A

Question: Hi, I have a 1983 Mercedes 300D with 243,000 miles. On a trip to Dallas recently the car began hesitating and losing speed on hills at highway speed. At first I thought it was the cruise control but it even did it without using the cruise control. What could be causing this and how much of an expense will it be to fix it?

Thanks, Steve.

Answer: Hello Steve, it sounds like your fuel filter is getting clogged up. On your car there are 3 fuel filters: a prefilter and main filter under the hood and a screen on the bottom of the fuel tank. The two under the hood are easy to replace and you can do it yourself with a phillips screwdriver. These are the ones which usually go bad. If that doesn't solve it you can replace the tank screen. A tip if you do that is to have as little fuel as possible when you do it since the contents of the tank will come out when you remove it. Whenever you replace a filter you must prime the system to remove any air.

I hope this helps solve your problem. Feel free to email me if you have any further questions.

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



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Moving?

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

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

Going green

Remember if your email has changed from that which you gave to MBCA when you joined or you just want to make sure you receive the future electronic editions send your preferred e-mail address to damstith@yahoo.com.

2009-10 Upcoming Events

Christmas Brunch
Afternoon at the Theatre
December 6

Bowling Tournament
January TBA

Casino Trip
March 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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