



The Houston Star

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

**May
2010**

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Annual Bluebonnet Run

The 2010 Bluebonnet Run started with plenty of fog, at least where I'm driving from. I could barely see the lane markings on the way to our meeting location from my house in Sealy, and I was thinking this was not good. Right before we got to Hempstead, there was a single car accident that could be assumed was caused by the fog. Driving down 290 towards Hwy 6, it finally completely cleared up! Whew. You could look back and clearly see the fog that we had just emerged from - it was that thick. Richard even thought that was smoke as you could still clearly see it from the Gander Mountain parking lot.

The day turned out to be perfect. The drive was uneventful, though we did manage to somehow lose 1 car on the way. They let me know that even though they lost us, they continued on and still made a day of sightseeing, so not all was lost for them. Along the way up 290, the Trudells insisted on passing me up, just showing me what that diesel could do. Although her car has 440,000 thousand miles, it can scoot along just fine and there's no smoke coming from the tailpipe. It looks great, sounds perfect, and I'm sure will continue for many more miles.

The flowers were plentiful, though few were actually Bluebonnets. There was plenty of Indian Paintbrush flowers cont'd on page 6

President's Message

Hi Mercedes Enthusiasts,

With the summer months fast approaching I dread the ever increasing phobia of will my air conditioning work when the button is depressed and will it see me through another miserable heat exhaustive summer in Houston. As luck would have it my trusty W126 (a.k.a The Tank) has always come thru and kept me cool during this abnormal sweltering period. Of course now that I'm writing this my belt will snap or my compressor will simply leap from under the hood and walk to the corner store never to return. Saying all that, the board is working on putting together a summer (indoors) event. Send your suggestions to anyone on the board (bowling?) of events to cool down while the heat is on.

Up coming events Keels and Wheels May 1-2-10. Also that same Saturday if you do not wish to go out of town, Cars and Coffee at uptown square between 8-10am. Following in June 5, our annual run to Centerville with Joseph Middleton keeps growing every year with more regions driving to participate.

Remember to stay cool.

Happy Motoring,

Damon Stith
Houston Section

A Bespoke 300C Station Wagon Binz creates a one-off Adenauer

Photography from Pawel Litwinski/Gooding & Company courtesy of automotivetraveler.com

(Editors note: We print this excellent article in its entirety by Rich Truesdell as a follow-up to this car's recent sale by Gooding & Company.)

In 1956, Mrs. Caroline Folke enjoyed a tri-coastal life with homes in Paris, New York and Palm Beach, Florida, and that year, she walked into the New York City Mercedes-Benz dealership with a most unusual request: a new station wagon. While this is a rather commonplace order today, no such car was available in the Mercedes-Benz lineup during the 1950s. This was far from a standard model, however, Mercedes-Benz dealerships in the 1950s were eager to please, especially as they were selling expensive product during challenging times for the company.

Sourcing a Coachbuilder

After some clever research, a new 300 C sedan was ordered and, according to various accounts, it was shipped directly from Stuttgart to the Binz coachworks company in nearby Lorch – one of the few remaining custom coachbuilders in Germany. Known for constructing ambulances, hearses and other commercial vehicles on smaller Mercedes-Benz chassis, it was a fitting task to create an exclusive station wagon for Mrs. Folke.



The only 300 C Station Wagon in existence? Likely so. Mercedes-Benz tapped their commercial body builder Binz to fulfill unusual special order.

According to famed Mercedes-Benz restorer Bob Hatch, the Binz craftsmen most likely removed the entire roof, as well as the standard bodywork, from the front doors back. A one-piece roof panel was then cleverly fabricated, as was a new rear section complete with a handsome wagon tail, folding rear seats and two-section tailgate. To create a seamless fit, the original rear doors were substantially modified and exquisite vent windows were incorporated to allow for reasonable ventilation.

Sumptuous interior features traditional station wagon features - split rear seat and fold down back rest - within a very non-traditional wagon candidate.

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ANNUAL CENTERVILLE RUN

The Houston Section of MBCA has been invited to attend the Fifth Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together. The meet will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 in Centerville, TX with lunch at Woody's Smokehouse, and a Show and Shine at Fort Boggy State Park. A caravan of cars going to Centerville from Houston will meet in the parking lot of the Cracker Barrel located at 14765 North Frwy (located on the southbound I-45 feeder road just south of Airtex Dr.). The cars will assemble towards the rear of the Cracker Barrel parking lot near the hotel at 9:45 am and will depart at 10:15 am for a 12:00 noon arrival in Centerville. If you wish to have breakfast at Cracker Barrel or at the neighboring Whataburger, you can arrive earlier than 9:45 am, just be ready to pull out at 10:15 am. There will be reserved parking and a BBQ lunch in a room reserved especially for the group at Woody's Smokehouse located on the northbound side of I-45 in Centerville. After lunch, the group will head 4 miles south on Old Highway 75 to Fort Boggy State Park for a show and shine. Park entry is **FREE**. After the show and shine, awards will be handed out based on People's Choice for the best vintage model (pre-1980), best 1980s model, best 1990s model, and best 2000s model. For all inquiries regarding this meet, including RSVPs, please contact Joseph Middleton at 713-828-4303, or via e-mail at "Jmiddle122 at aol dot com."



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Technical Q & A

Question: My car is a 1989 560SEL. I've noticed two new symptoms lately and they seem to have started around the same time. First, the car has become quite difficult to start when cold. Second, the ABS light comes on when running. My mechanic replaced the cold start injector, and although it seems to have gotten somewhat better, it still isn't nearly as easy to start when cold as it used to be. Before I spend any more money on parts/diagnosis, I was wondering if you had any idea what could be causing these two symptoms and if you think they are related. Thanks.

Answer: That sounds very much like the Over-Voltage Protection (OVP) relay. It's located in the engine compartment between the two firewalls next to the fuse box. It will be a silver rectangle with a cap on top and a fuse (or two) inside the cap. Try replacing the 10A fuse (or fuses) first, and if that doesn't solve your problems, replace the part. The reason I say "fuse" or "fuses" is because they had both one-fuse and two-fuse designs. You will most likely find the two-fuse variety when buying a new one, and it is acceptable to replace a one-fuse OVP with a two-fuse one. Good luck!

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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and also many fields of Pink Evening Primrose that were on our route. Apparently we were a bit early for the Bluebonnets, so it seems that it's harder to guess when they will be out than it seems. It was also a bit lacking of flowers in the College Station area, which is where I was really expecting a large amount of flowers, but I can claim ignorance on that as it was my first time ever in College Station.

Lunch was had at the Vintage House Restaurant at the Messina Hof Winery. As always, from what I've heard from those that have been there before, the service was great, the scenery was even better, and the desert was just awesome. Especially the super chocolaty cake that my 10-year-old son had (I got lucky and he couldn't finish it all). As hard as it was, they did allow us to select from the open menu, while some restaurants like to limit large parties to a subset of the menu so they can have an easier time in the kitchen. As we were only 16 total there, I guess it wasn't that much an issue for them. We were also the first party there as we got there fairly early.

Following our lunch, we all departed ways to different drives that suited everyone. Since I had never been in College Station, I went to Texas A&M to see what that was like as it is close to me. My son is only 10, but time flies. Pretty soon, it will be time for the next Bluebonnet Run. Hopefully we'll see more of you out there for a nice country drive with us, and exercise those Mercedes engines while enjoying the scenery and camaraderie of fellow Mercedes Benz owners.



A view from the helm. Standard 300c appointments here with the exception of aftermarket AC unit. Introduced in September 1955, the 300c offered an optional Borg-Warner 3 speed automatic transmission - an essential addition to an otherwise highly opulent luxury sedan. Sumptuous interior features traditional station wagon features - split rear seat and fold down back rest - within a very non-traditional wagon candidate.

Other unique modifications made for the wagon were 190 SL rear taillights (standard items being too large), polished, un-painted wheel covers and a unique livery of medium gray over red leather. The finishing touch for Mrs. Folke's wagon was the application of diagonal stripes, painted from the leading edge of the chrome belt molding to the lower rear edge of the door. The colors chosen were red and blue, to match her yacht club burgee. Upon completion, the one-off wagon was assigned Binz serial number 3.

Trotting The Globe

Legend has it that Mrs. Folke was so fond of her splendid wagon that she had it shipped by air from home-to-home as she would travel! Years later the car was sold, eventually coming to the attention of Bill Patton, a car collector from Orange County, California. It remained with him for many years before being sold to collector Charlie Crawley. In Mr. Crawley's care, the car was repainted in its current shade of midnight blue, a striking complement to the red leather interior.

Conversion to a wagon entailed an entirely new roof, specially fabricated clam-shell rear hatches and 190SL tail lights. A most elegant wagon.

Restoration by Hatch & Sons

Approximately ten years ago, the unique wagon caught the eye of its current caretaker, a collector with an interest in one-offs, fascinating designs and quality craftsmanship. After having purchased the 300 C, it was sent to renowned Mercedes-Benz specialist Hatch & Sons, who were commissioned to

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complete a partial restoration. What ensued was the removal of the engine and interior, a thorough engine bay detailing, a mechanical rebuild and an interior restoration. Once completed, the magnificent Mercedes-Benz was shown, for the first time in many years, at the Amelia Island *Concours d'Elegance* where it was well received. Over the past decade it has benefited from the attentive care of its owner who has lovingly looked after and enjoyed this remarkable piece.

Traditional Coachbuilding at its Best

This one-off station wagon is surprisingly architectural in its features, a masterpiece of modern coachbuilding and German workmanship. The interior is magnificent and a superb example of the quality and attention to detail that typifies this car. The wood grain surrounds the cockpit and extends across the dashboard, on the doorsills around the flush-fitting chrome window frames and even surrounding the windscreen. The instruments and hardware are also impressive in their quality and spectacular in design, and the front compartment is generously equipped with a Becker Mexico radio, in-dash clock and an optional air-conditioning system, a necessity in the humid Palm Beach climate where Mrs. Folke regularly spent time. The passenger compartment and luggage area are similar in their deluxe appointments (wood grain door caps, storage nets and rich leather) and are meticulously finished with chrome hardware and thick carpets. Inside and out, the car remains in marvelous condition and is sure to impress the most discerning set of eyes.



Comprehensive body-on restoration by Hatch & Sons included engine out restoration of engine bay and ancillary systems.

A 300 of unusual grace, style and distinction, this custom Binz-bodied wagon is a prize for Mercedes-Benz collectors as well as those who appreciate rare and unusual designs. It will amaze the crowds at high-end concours and Mercedes-Benz club meets and is still quite capable of acting as an exclusive

town car, just as Mrs. Folke imagined it would back in 1956.



An impressive presence on the road ferrying its occupants and supplies to the summer house. This wonderful 300 sold at Gooding & Company's Amelia Island auction 2010 for \$242,000.

Written by Rich Truesdell

Bluebonnet Run

Editor's note. Due to technical difficulties the remaining pictures of the Bluebonnet Run could not be entered here. I will put them in the next Newsletter.

Mercedes Marketplace

1985 300D Turbo Diesel

One Owner

I have all the maintenance records on it.

Less than 115,000 total miles with original paint.

It has been garaged at home and work for the entire 25 years.

Asking price \$7,500.

Roger Blakeney

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Mercedes-Benz models for sale

1984 500 SEL, 155,000 miles, \$3000 OBO.

1986 190E 2.6, 235,000 miles, \$2500 OBO.

Call: 832-453-9698

1983 Mercedes-Benz 380SL

Pristine. Red with red hard-top and black soft-top. Natural leather. **53,500 original miles**. TOTALLY ORIGINAL with exception of dealer-installed double timing chain. Absolutely no body work or rust. Always garaged and regularly serviced, all/most records. Purchased in 1994 from second owner with 39,000 miles. New Michelin tires, spare never out of trunk. A/C converted to non-FREON refrigerant.

As original as minor repairs will permit. New Alpine radio purchased, but not yet installed. The black soft-top is original and has totally clear plastic window. The hard-top is removable. I can provide a rack for vertical storage of the top. I also have a new, high-quality car cover. **Asking \$18,000**. Call: 713-850-1128.



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 See more at: <http://www.pcube.biz/Cars/MB600.html>



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2010 Upcoming Events

Keels and Wheels
May 1-2

Cars and Coffee
May 1

Centerville Run
June 5

Board of Directors Meeting

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

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.

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