



The Houston Star

MBCA | Houston Section Newsletter

May
2012

www.mbca.org/houston

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2013 Mercedes-Benz SL 550: Super and Light

By: Arv Voss of Automotive Rhythms

The first street example of a Mercedes-Benz 300 SL – the “gullwing” made its world debut in 1954, attracting a host of notable celebrities to ownership of what was admittedly, not exactly the most comfortable, but certainly one of the most spectacular and beautiful automotive art forms available of its day. It was powered by what was the world’s first series-production four-cycle, 16-cylinder, 215 horsepower engine with gasoline direct injection. The car was capable of achieving a sensational 155 mph – not bad for 1954. The SL designation stood for “super” and “light.” The gullwing was produced for only three years and it has since become a highly sought after and prized collector car.

Given the 1950s popularity of open-top two-seat sports cars, Mercedes-Benz made the decision to produce an open variant of the 300 SL “Gullwing.” The 300 SL Roadster was launched as a 1957 model with 1858 produced through 1963. The Roadster was just as fast and powerful as the coupe, and was the first series-production Mercedes-Benz available with safety belts – it even featured disc brakes beginning in 1961.

Sixty years later, the legend continues with the entry of the 2013 Mercedes-Benz SL 550. No longer a ragtop, the SL 550 is a power retractable hardtop convertible. For the sake of comparison, the Mercedes team had several classic SL models on hand to drive during the national press launch in Bel Air, CA, following a drive in the new 2013 SL 550 from LAX to the hotel. My classic pick was a Red 1960 300 SL Roadster, that had undergone a complete restoration recently by the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center, which was available for sale for a mere \$800,000. Unfortunately, I left my checkbook at home. As gorgeous and collectible as it was, when factoring in the lack of power steering and power brakes, it really wasn't a dream to drive. It was certainly not up to the level of performance and luxury of the new 2013 SL 550 – nor was it expected to be. In its heyday however, it ranked highly in both categories.

(continued on page 4)

President's Message

Dear Club Members,

Last time I checked my calendar, I thought it was springtime. When I stepped outside the other day though, all I could feel was summer. That just comes with the territory of living in Houston though. As we transition into this period of hotter weather, we will also have more indoor events.

Our last outdoor events for a while will be the Spring Autocross (see page 8) and the Seventh Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together organized by yours truly. This year, I have reserved the pavilion at Fort Boggy State Park, so hopefully we can keep a little bit cooler than usual. Ice cold water will be on deck for sure! Check page 9 for more details.

Once we start to cool down again, it'll be Election Season for the Houston Section. If you are interested in volunteering with the Club as a Board Member or officer, please contact the club at mbca.houston@gmail.com. We always have openings available for enthusiastic and industrious volunteers to ensure that the Club runs like a finely oiled Mercedes-Benz.

Joseph Middleton | President | [Mercedes-Benz Club of America](#) | [Houston Section](#)

MBCA | Houston Section welcomes the following new members to the Club!

Welcome!

Felecia Jackson of Houston, TX

Peggy Lunsford of Houston, TX

Evelyn Makris of Houston, TX

John S. Parsley of Houston, TX

Willkommen!

MBCA | Houston Section thanks these loyal Club members

Scott Hamilton of Stowell, TX

James and Carmen Harris of Houston, TX

Philip Kamphius of Houston, TX

Thie Rossingh of Willis, TX

Fred Wagner of Houston, TX

John Wolf of Houston, TX

SL550 Review

(continued from page 1)

Despite the opinion and viewpoint of a certain buff-book journalist regarding the visual appeal of the new SL 550 who felt that the rear end was unnecessarily fattened for cargo, the front end high and bluff for pedestrian safety, with the grille and headlamps sitting on distinctly different planes. He even went so far as to rib a Mercedes employee that the car looked as if its front and back ends were designed by two different people. He further commented that it was quicker, lighter and more agile (finally an astute observation), but not better looking. This would be a clear indicator that he totally lacks good taste, if any at all.

In my opinion, the car is absolutely stunningly gorgeous and well proportioned. Obviously, today's vehicular requirements by both consumers and governmental safety czars dictate the final build elements of any given vehicle, so if it doesn't meet with everyone's design ideals – so what. The rear track is 3-inches wider and the entire car displays strong definitive character lines and sculpted effects from the broad, athletic nose, over the straked hood and along the strong shoulder lines past the sharply raked windshield.

Today's SL 550 draws its irresistible force from a 4.6-liter DOHC, 32-valve, twin-turbocharged and intercooled V8 with direct injection, that makes 429 horsepower at 5,250 rpm while generating 516 pound feet of torque in a range from 1,800-3,500 rpm. The engine is mounted longitudinally up front, and connects to a seven-speed automatic transmission with a manual shift mode that gears power to the rear wheels.

(continued on page 5)



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SL550 Review

(continued from page 4)

During the National press launch, I was given the opportunity to pilot a Mars Red 2013 SL 550 with a Premium Black leather interior featuring white piping and Black Ash polished wood trim elements. The base price was set at \$105,500 but after factoring in the Black Premium leather; Premium 1 Package with rearview camera, PARKTRONIC with Active Parking Assist, Active ventilated front seats, AIRSCARF, Active multi-contour seats, Hands-free access, power trunk closer and Keyless-Go; the Driver Assistance Package with Distronic Plus with re-Safe Brake, Active Blind Spot Assist and Active Lane Keeping Assist; Magic Sky Control; wood and leather steering wheel; analog clock; illuminated door sills; 19-inch 5-twin-spoke alloy wheels; and destination and delivery charges, the final price as tested came to \$119,315.



A brake hold feature is activated by tapping the brake a second time, and adaptive damping is standard fare. Active body control and spring preload ensure consistency in ride quality and comfort.

Acceleration is incredibly impressive, rocketing the car from 0-60 mph in 4.5 seconds with a top speed that is electronically limited to 130 mph. Push it hard into corners and it behaves with amazing and predictable stability. Other SL models are in the pipeline to appear in the near future for those who desire higher levels of performance, but they will come with an even higher price tag and they will be beyond the capability of all but the advanced and more accomplished drivers.

I had but one complaint with the SL 550 - it was with the exhaust note – it was pleasing, but for my taste, it could use a more raucous and melodious V8 rumble. Regardless, it comes across as a stellar grand sport touring car.



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Parts Rep.

Mercedes Benz New "Baby CLS": A Possible Entry Level Game Changer?

By: The Dallas Benz Guy



The Mercedes Concept Style Coupé (CSC) made its debut on Monday at the 2012 Beijing Auto Show. Rumor has it that new model is a preview of the upcoming CLA 250 compact sedan, which was confirmed for production at the show by Mercedes CEO Dieter Zetsche.

Zetsche described the new CLA, inspired by the success of the CLS and due on sale next year, as the "rebel." "It is the avant-garde sibling that strives to be bold and different, to establish a strong non-conformist identity and to even show a bit of attitude," revealed Zetsche. "The Concept Style Coupé is expressive and powerful in its design. We are staking our claim very clearly here. This is the model against which sporty vehicles in the executive segment will have to measure themselves in future."

Being billed as a junior CLS, the CLA will sit below the C-Class on price and features in the future line-up. Based on the CSC's dimensions the new entry-level sedan will be about 2 inches longer, almost 5 inches wider and close to 2 inches lower than current the C-class. The CSC is 182.5 inches long, 74.4 inches wide and 55 inches tall. Based on Mercedes' new MFA platform (Mercedes Frontwheel Architecture) FWD, it has a 106.25 inch wheelbase — 2 inches shorter than the C-class but the same as the A-class.

Once in production the CLA is rumored to offer the same turbocharged 2.0-litre, 211hp, four-cylinder engine as displayed in the CSC with choices of standard front-wheel drive or optional four-wheel drive. Transmission variations will include a standard six-speed manual or the same seven-speed dual-clutch unit as the CSC as an option.

While Mercedes is quick to point out that the CSC is a "one-off" show car, sources with access to the final look of the CLA confirm that its styling is pretty close to the expected production car. Among some mild changes expected, the CLA will adopt less flamboyant bumpers, altered headlamp graphics (the CSC's headlamps glow red in standby mode), more conventional exterior mirrors, pull-out door handles and smaller tires than the 21-inch versions displayed on the CSC.

The inside cabin of the CSC has an upgraded interior borrowed from the latest A-class which forgoes a center console-mounted gearlever in favor of a column-mounted shifter with a mix of suede, leather, carbon fiber, and metallic accents. Fluorescent yellow accents are used for seat piping, contrast stitching, and the jet-engine-inspired air vents. The backlit vents change color depending on the selected temperature -- red for warm, blue for cool, and yellow at mid-range to match the other bright interior accents. The suede headliner surrounds a large, panoramic sunroof.



While the production version of the CLA will have a five-seat layout, the CSC concept car features a four-seat arrangement with the individual rear seats divided by a center console and could be an option on the final production models. The center stack is also similar to the A-Class with the audio controls placed in the middle, while the climate controls and the COMAND control knob sit below. Younger buyers should have no issue navigating the next-generation COMAND infotainment system, which Benz says will focus on cloud computing. That means apps and system updates will run "over the air" (OTA) via a mobile phone connection. Benz's future COMAND system is expected to mimic smartphones, and should definitely resonate with younger customers.



Read more at: <http://thedallasbenzguys.blogspot.com/2012/04/mercedes-benz-new-baby-cla-possible.html>

Spring Autocross 2012

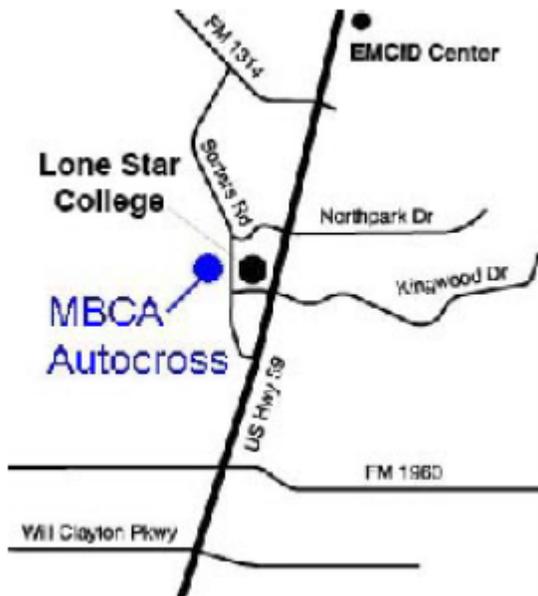
It's almost time for one of MBCA | Houston's most anticipated events...
Spring Autocross 2012!



Family Fun!



Good food!



Most of all, good tire screeching fun!

The autocross will be held on Sunday, May 27 at Lone Star College-Kingwood. Drivers should arrive by 12:30pm for lunch and a pre-event briefing, and the event begins at 1:00pm. Bring your family and lawn chairs and enjoy a BBQ lunch and some hands on automotive fun! Cost is \$10 per driver. Helmets will be provided, or you can bring your own helmet. To RSVP with the number of guests in your party, and/or for more information, contact Mike Haney at mhaney@3dtriad.com, or at 713-298-4580.

Seventh Annual Statewide Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together

It's almost time for the **SEVENTH** Annual Texas Mercedes-Benz Get Together! If you've attended this meet in the past, then you'll already know that it's always a fun time, and I hope to see you again this year! If you have not attended this meet before, why not make this year your first time to attend? The meet will be held on Saturday, June 2, 2012 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 Freeway (located on the southbound I-45 feeder road just south of Airtex Dr.). We will have our pre-departure assembly in the rearmost portion of the Cracker Barrel parking lot near the Guesthouse Inn & Suites 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 with the group at 10:15am. 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 State 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 713-487-8197, or via email at editorjoseph@gmail.com



Technical Q & A with Ali Durvesh

Question: The clearcoat on the black moulding just below the windows on my 2007 GL is coming off. It looks really bad considering the vehicle isn't that old. How can I fix this?

Answer: The easiest way to fix your problem is to purchase new moulding pieces and have your local dealer or mechanic replace them, or replace them yourself. Another option would be to have a body shop repaint the moulding pieces for you.

If you have any questions, please send your requests to the *Houston Star* or contact me directly. I can be reached at ali.durvesh@gmail.com.



There are many reasons you have a passion for Mercedes-Benz.

This is the place to indulge them.

Join us at StarFest® 2012

Hosted by the MBCA Desert Stars Section

September 28 - October 3, 2012 in Phoenix, Arizona



For More Information:

Visit www.starfest2012.com

or contact Rick Stacio at

rstacio@desertstars.org



More Than a Car. We're a Community.™

Mercedes Marketplace

2001 Mercedes-Benz CLK320

2001 Mercedes CLK320 Convertible (W208 Chassis) is finished in Brilliant Silver Clearcoat Metallic. Original Paint, no accidents. All the body panels are straight with no major dents/dings. This car was purchased by my mother about 4 years ago as a gift to herself for beating cancer. She typically drives her W126 every day, and the CLK only gets driven on the weekends. This car only has 58,700 miles on it.

16" Mercedes Benz Aluminum wheels, finished in factory silver, wrapped in a Matching Set of Goodyear Eagle LS H-Rated tires, the tires have less than 5,000 miles on them, and have plenty of tread left.

The black power fabric top opens and closes normally. The top is in great shape, and the car has always been garaged when not used.

The engine is the 3.2L 18 valve, Single Overhead Cam (SOHC) V6 (M112 - E32) with 218 hp. The engine starts and runs flawlessly. This engine is mated to a smooth shifting 5 speed automatic transmission. There are no leaks, funny noises, or fluid consumption. Car runs and drives great. The brakes work fine with no problem, no warpage, and no fading. Stops are straight and squeak free. The suspension is tight, squeak free and the car drives straight. We recently installed a brand new Interstate Battery (located in trunk), next to the full sized spare tire, which has never seen the ground.

The interior is finished in grey leather. Driver and passenger power seats both work fine with no problem with over tilt/slide for access to rear passengers. All power everything works. Dual zone climate control works fine with no problems at all. Nice condition inside for a 10 year old car. There is a trunk mounted CD changer.

The car has two keys, one original key as well as a new style chrome key.

This car hasn't seen the shop for anything since we owned it (except a flat repair) and I believe my mom has driven the car less than 5000 miles in the three years that she's had it. Texas Registration and Inspection are current.

Asking \$11,000 and entertaining all reasonable offers.

Email: weschain@gmail.com



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\$14,900

Contact: Lou Foster (281) 450-4599 or (936) 582-6061



1960s era Mercedes-Benz parts for sale

* Set of 4 MB factory original alloys (14 X 6) with 195/70R14 Kelly Metric 600's mounted (<2000 miles).

They include the center hub covers and correct wheel nuts.

They are ready to bolt on and go - complete and great "driver" condition.

No damage to the metal (curb rash or otherwise).

I had been using these occasionally on my 280SL until I sold her. \$600.

* Original steering wheel in black. Removed from 1968 280SL, but will fit many 1960's cars. Great condition, but not perfect. \$400 OBO.

* Kangol 2-point seat belts and mounting hardware Black, no damage, but appear used. \$400 OBO.

* Service manuals for cars between 1958 and 1969 (Big Blue Book). Different books (cover different topics). \$130 together.

* Rubber door seals for W113 - both L&R. \$60

Will send photos upon request

Contact sctripp@comcast.net

Hardtop for 1983 380SL or similar model

Selling a dark green hard top with an ivory headliner that I no longer need (a long story). Very good condition. I am very flexible regarding price, i.e., make me an offer.

Contact: Joe Fischer at: joe.fischer-vbj@sbcglobal.net or (713) 850-1128.

1983 Mercedes-Benz 380SL



For Sale

1983 Mercedes Benz 380SL above avg.,
both tops, blue w/grey leather **\$12,000**

713-557-2741



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Are you moving?

To change your address, visit the MBCA website at:
<http://www.mbca.org>

Let's keep in touch!

If your e-mail address has changed from that which you gave to MBCA when you joined, or if you just want to make sure you receive future newsletters, send your preferred e-mail address to editorjoseph@gmail.com, or update your info at:
<http://www.mbca.org>

2012 Upcoming Events

Spring Autocross 2012
May 27

Texas MB Get Together
June 2

Board of Directors Meeting

July 3

Board Meetings are **open to ALL MBCA | Houston Section members**. Board Meetings are held every 1st Tuesday of odd numbered months at 5:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at Mercedes-Benz Greenway (3900 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77027), **unless otherwise noted**.

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