



The Houston Star

MBCA Houston Section Newsletter

September
2004

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The Italian Mercedes-Benz

By Dennis Adler - from the November / December 1993 issue of "The Star".

The first of two Pininfarina concept cars built in 1955 and 1956 on the 300-series chassis was featured in our January/February issue. The body design of that 300b-based 1955 Coupe was far more complicated than this second version, completed a year later; while the bodybuilder's approach to both cars was very similar, the resulting designs are quite different.

Carrozzeria Pininfarina, established in 1930, has executed only four designs on post-war Mercedes-Benz chassis. The first was the 1955 300b Coupe; this Coupe is the second. (The third, a 1965 230SL, was featured in our November/December 1988 issue.

The so-far-undiscovered fourth is a purposeful-looking 300SEL 6.3 Coupe.) In August we had the opportunity to photograph both Coupes together at the Pebble Beach concours d'elegance—with Sergio Pininfarina on hand to describe these two significant Italian-bodied Mercedes-Benz models.

Signore Pininfarina, who succeeded his father as head of the international design firm in 1966, worked on both the 300b and 300Sc. When they were penned, Batista "Pinin" Farina still headed the Turin design firm. (The family surname was Farina; "Pinin" was the father's nickname. The business was Pinin Farina until 1961, when both family and company names were legally changed to Pininfarina.)

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message



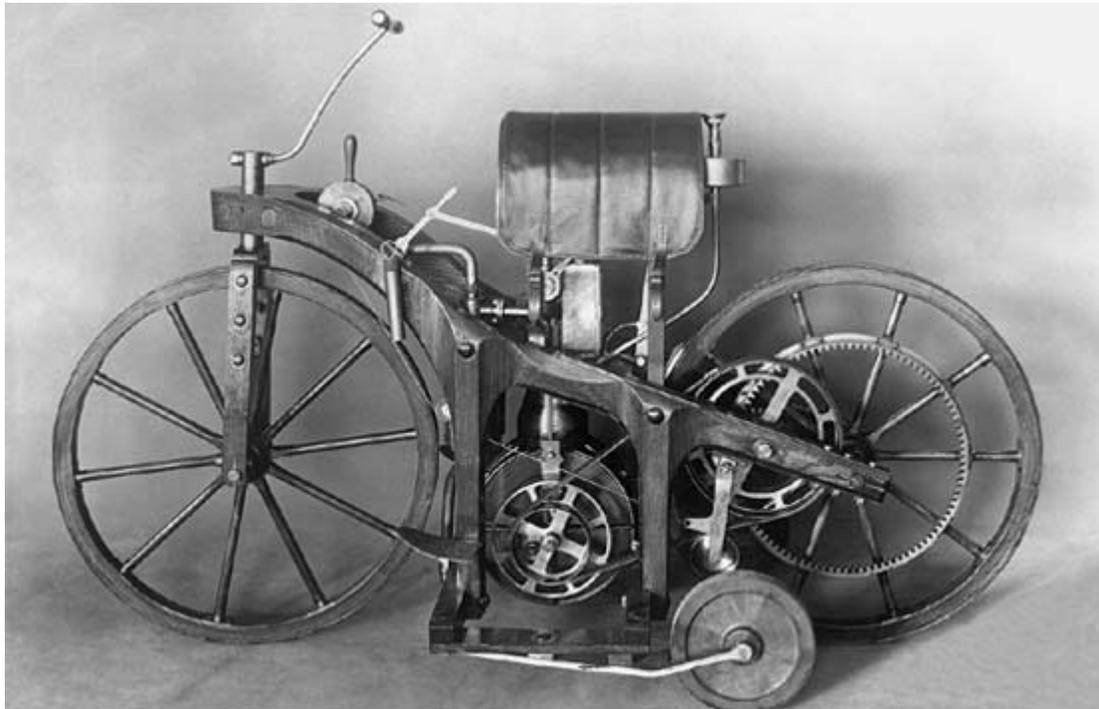
Well, it's been a slow month, the Texas heat makes outdoor events a less than pleasant situation, but hopefully the worst of the heat is over... So, it's time to start enjoying our cars and friends again!!!

Our next event which is coming up in just a few days is the Election Dinner on **Saturday, September 18th** at the Humble City Cafe in Humble (see page 8 & 9 for details). Followed by our Spring Autocross at Kingwood College on Sunday, October 10.

We wrap up the short term with the annual Oktoberfest at Texas German Autohaus on Saturday, October 16th. Since this will be the 10th year we've held this event at TGA, Hans Richter has informed me that he will make sure it's one to remember, and no one leaves until the beer is gone!.

The Holiday Brunch is still being worked out, but that's a ways off. So, let's get out and enjoy the slightly cooler weather and our old friends.

Mike Haney
President - Houston Section



Didn't know Daimler made a Motorcycle? He invented it in 1885!!! This is the "Einspur" (single track) also known as the "bone crusher" for it's solid wooden wheels and lack of suspension.

(Cover Car Continued)

"My father was the boss!" says Sergio, gesturing with a broad swing of his right hand to the sky. "He was responsible for every design. However, you must understand, no one person designed a car at Pininfarina. They were created by teams which brought ideas to my father for approval. Yes, in the end he was responsible for every detail; we had to get his final say on everything."

Production Relatives

Looking at the 1955 and 1956 Pininfarina Coupes, you might think that their coachwork predicted that of the 1956-59 220S and 1959-60 220SE Coupes. Some similarities are undeniable, but given the time required to design and produce a new car, the 220s were undoubtedly on the drawing board well before the Italian cars ever existed.

Farina's interpretation of the sporty, two-door coupes was distinctively different in appearance from Mercedes-Benz 300Sc designs available in 1955, and you have to wonder where his inspiration for this design came from.

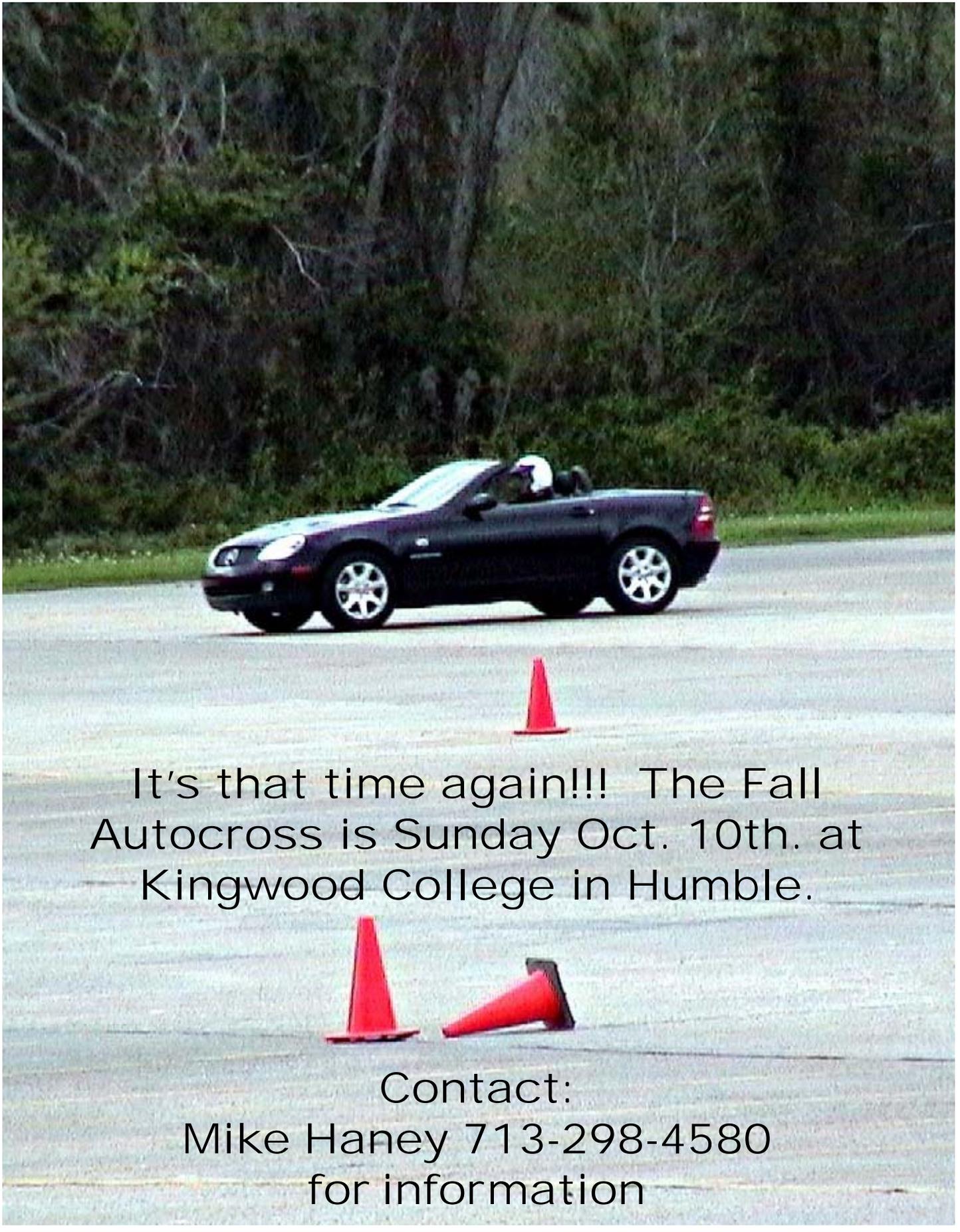
"Always my father and myself had great respect for the Mercedes-Benz tradition and for the Mercedes-Benz prestige." Sergio stops to make his point very clear. "This was one of the rare occasions when you design an automobile to express your feelings. To pay a compliment. Mercedes-Benz was one of the most famous, most noticed European firms, so you can understand how important it was for us to make a special design on this famous chassis."

When Mercedes-Benz designers saw the first car in 1955, Sergio says, they felt complemented. "They were happy to see our contribution."

Contrasts

Interestingly, of the two cars, the first is Sergio's favorite. "The headlights on the first coupe were more finely integrated than they were on the 195 model. The second car was also much smaller [built on a 2,900-mm chassis]. The Sc demanded a shorter roofline and a different type of backlight [rear window] treatment. It did not have the long, flowing lines of the 1955."





It's that time again!!! The Fall Autocross is Sunday Oct. 10th. at Kingwood College in Humble.

Contact:
Mike Haney 713-298-4580
for information

Several weeks later I received a factory blueprint for the W194 car that had been given to him by Rudolf

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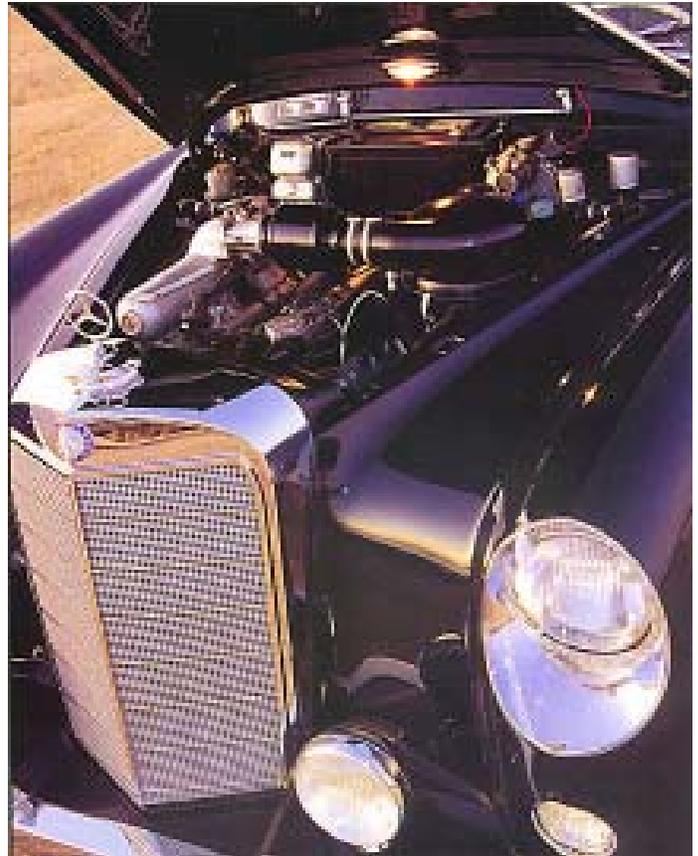
(Cover Car Cont.)

The two cars indeed form a contrast with one another. In many respects the Sc is far more graceful on the shorter wheelbase than the 300b appears on the long 3,050-mm chassis. The Sc is also more in line with the styling of the 1957 220S Coupe, which has a similar roofline, rear window, and rear fender design. The Pininfarina treatment in these areas, however, is arguably more elaborate in its use of curves and chrome accents. Its elegantly notched rear pillar shape was carried on for the 1960s 220, 250, and 280 coupes.

As to which of the two 300 coupes is the more attractive, that is purely a matter of personal taste. The 300Sc's grille is decidedly more imposing than the 300b's narrower sedan-style grille. Based on what was behind those grilles, performance is simpler to delineate. Although their inline six-cylinder, three-liter engines are similar, the lighter, fuel-injected, 175-hp 300Sc is much more energetic than the carbureted 300b, which makes 50 hp less.

Feature Car

After being displayed at the Turin auto show, this 300Sc was ultimately bought by a collector in Switzerland, who kept it until 1989. The coupe was purchased that year by American collector Thomas Taffet, who had the car shipped to Seattle. Staff from Scott Restorations took delivery there and drove it 1,200 miles to Van Nuys, California to begin their year-long restoration. Fred Kriz, Los Angeles Section, who owns the 1955 300b Coupe, purchased the Sc version while it was at Scott's, giving him a unique pair of one-off Pininfarina coupes.





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Club Election Set For September 18, 2004

The Election Dinner will be held at the Humble City Café in Humble Texas at 6:30 PM on Saturday September 18, 2004.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this event. You will enjoy an evening of good food, drink, and camaraderie and participate in the election of Officers and Directors to serve your Club in 2005. The Club is still in need of Directors and you can be nominated/elected at the meeting. Isn't it time you take a more active role in the Club?

The Humble City Cafe (vintage 1914) is steeped in history, a renowned eating establishment, known for its country cooking, with antiques and arts/crafts on site. It is easily accessed at 200 East Main Street (281-319-0200) in downtown Humble. Proceeding north on the recently expanded highway 59, pass Will Clayton Parkway (Airport) exit and immediately exit on the Frontage Road. Continue on the Frontage Road to Main Street (Denny's) and turn right on Main Street for about three blocks (just past the railroad tracks) to the Café. Traveling east on FM 1960, cross highway 59, immediately take the first right exit, turn right (behind Bennigan's) on Bender, proceed to the third signal light and turn left on Main Street, go about three blocks (just past the railroad tracks) to the Café.

The menu will feature your choice of sirloin strip, chicken cordon blue or blackened catfish fillet. Salad, potato, vegetable, tea/coffee and fruit cobbler are yours at only \$20.00 per person (including gratuity). A cash bar (beer/wine) will start at 6:30 PM with dinner at 7:00 PM. Please RSVP (Marvin Boyd 281-360-1766 or Mike Haney 713-298-4580) with name(s) and entrée selection. Payment will be collected at the door.

Mr. Tom Ott, owner of the Humble City Café, will enlighten us on the history of the Humble Texas area, including the discover of the Humble oil field by Humble Oil Company, later Exxon and Exxon Mobil and the history of the Humble City Café building. Mr. Steve Lippert, General Manager of Mike Smith Autoplex 2000, the Mercedes-Benz agency in Beaumont, will present an insight on new Mercedes-Benz models arriving on the scene and other MB chat.



IT'S ELECTION TIME AGAIN!!! JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL ELECTION DINNER TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH AT THE HUMBLE CITY CAFE IN HUMBLE, TEXAS.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO TOSS YOUR OWN HAT IN THE RING. WE WILL BE NOMINATING AND ELECTING OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE COMING YEAR.

DETAILS TO YOUR LEFT! (DYSLEXICS SEE PAGE 8) ;-)

Mercedes Marketplace Featured Car



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Mercedes Marketplace

For Sale: Silver 1982 Mercedes 300 SD 60,000 miles on engine, Rebuilt transmission \$3,500. Call Fred @ 281-359-6255 (8-6) [04/04]

For Sale: 1996 SL 320, Nonsmoker, extra hardtop, beautiful moonstone grey metallic, 8 speakers, 6-CD changer, all records, maintenance up-to-date, garaged at work and home. Purchased in Houston from Mercedes dealer. I am beginning to do a great deal of traveling and don't need this for an airport car. \$20,995. 713-334-1566 or fincommco@aol.com. [03/04]

For Sale: 2001 Mercedes-Benz SLK 230 Kompressor Convertible. Sport package with all options, including 6-disc CD changer. 17,400 miles. White with black interior. Excellent condition throughout. Warranty. \$30,269 OBO. Call Richard at 713-629-2105 or 713-850-9399. [03/04]

For Sale: 1971 280SE 3.5 Coupe Black w/red leather interior, std. transmission, new A/C, new Blaupunkt Aspen SQR27 AM/FM cassette radio & speakers, original radio available, new leather seats, head rests and center arm rests, new weather stripping on doors & trunk, NO RUST, complete records, excellent mechanical & appearance. Supurb driver. Photos and additional information available on request. \$23,000. Call 325-947-5094 [05/04]

For Sale: Set (2) rear tail lights for 2000 S-Class (220) sedan. Call Ron 713-882-4283 [05/04]

For Sale: 1972 Mercedes 450SL, 99k miles, cream with dark brown interior. New soft-top, and hardtop has a winch storage system. Interior and dash is all original. Great condition and fun to drive. \$14,500 obo. Call Jennifer @ 281-425-6955 (evening) or jschubert@houston.turbocare.com [06/04]

For Sale: 2001 SLK 320. Silver / Charcoal Interior. This car is in New Showroom condition w/ 8,500 mi. Kept in temp. controlled garage. Loaded, custom cover, 6-disc changer, 100k transferrable warranty. \$34,500. Call: Shelton (281) 346-1261 x101 or 281-599-0856 (evening) [07/04]

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2004 Calendar of Events

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Election Dinner at Humble City Cafe

October 10th

Fall Autocross - Kingwood College

October 16th

Annual Oktoberfest Tech Session @ Texas German Autohaus

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