



Mercedes-Benz Classic

Press Information

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Mercedes-Benz Classic Notes 1/2024

- 1954: World premiere of the 300 SL (W 198) and 190 SL (W 121)
- 1934: Mercedes-Benz 500 K (W 29) with supercharged engine makes its debut in Berlin
- 2004: Second SLK generation (R 171 model series)
- 1954: Mercedes-Benz 220 (W 180)
- 2004: Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG is a sports car in a class of its own
- Important service: Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts for first SLK (R 170 model series)
- Birthdays: Gottlieb Daimler and Bertha Benz

Stuttgart. Mercedes-Benz, the world's oldest car manufacturer, has been reinventing the car over and over since 1886. As it does so, the brand continually sets new standards, while also keeping pace with social change. The history of the company is correspondingly rich in events and stories. Here a brief summary of some of the important anniversaries and milestones from its history.

6 to 14 February 1954 – 70 years ago

Debut of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL (W 198) and 190 SL (W 121) in New York

- Mercedes-Benz delights the public at the International Motor Sports Show
- 300 SL (W 198): A super sports car derived from the racing sports car
- 190 SL (W 121): A luxuriously sporty compact roadster



Mercedes-Benz presented two new sports cars 70 years ago at the International Motor Sports Show in New York. The 300 SL “Gullwing” super sports car (W 198) and the sporty 190 SL touring car (W 121) thrilled the public. Both go back to an impulse from Maximilian E. Hoffman, Mercedes-Benz importer for the eastern USA. The design by Friedrich Geiger established the SL face of sporty Mercedes-Benz production vehicles. The 300 SL with its characteristic gullwing doors was derived from the 1952 racing sports car of the same name (W 194). It was launched in 1954 and would go on to become an iconic sports car of that century. The compact 190 SL roadster, presented in New York

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* Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official, specific CO₂ emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the publication entitled “Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO₂-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen” [“Guide on the fuel economy, CO₂ emissions and power consumption of all new passenger car models”], available free of charge from all sales outlets and from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH at www.dat.de.

as a pre-production model, followed in 1955. It became a particularly successful model on the North American market: by 1960, the 190 SL accounted for almost 18 per cent of all Mercedes-Benz passenger cars delivered to the USA. This confirmed the assessment of Maximilian E. Hoffman, who, in 1953, had suggested that the brand should transfer the fascination of luxurious sportiness into a compact roadster. The 190 SL was equipped with technology from the “Ponton” saloons of the upper mid-range (W 120). The 300 SL Roadster (W 198) presented in 1957 was also inspired by Hoffman.

[8 to 18 March 1934 – 90 years ago](#)

Mercedes-Benz 500 K (W 29) with eight-cylinder supercharged engine presented in Berlin

- Premiere at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition
- Powerful touring car of the absolute top class
- Modern suspension with trapezoidal-link front axle and swing axle at the rear



Mercedes-Benz presented the 500 K (W 29) as a powerful and sporty top-class touring car at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition (IAMA) in Berlin in March 1934. The vehicle, with an eight-cylinder supercharged engine, delivered **74 kW** (100 hp) and **188 kW** (160 hp) with the supercharger activated. The 500 K was aimed at those discerning customers who had been thrilled by the large-volume, high-performance vehicles of the Mercedes-Benz S series at the end of the 1920s. Its technical features included its modern chassis with front trapezoidal-link front axle and rear swing axle, while its top speed was 160 km/h. This speed corresponds to the all-important 100 mph mark, which only a few sporty production vehicles at the time were capable of reaching. A total of 354 examples of the Mercedes-Benz 500 K were built in the period up to 1936, many of them with elaborately customised bodies. Today, the sporty luxury car is one of the brand’s most coveted classics. The particularly enthralling 500 K Special Roadster version can be experienced in the Mercedes-Benz Museum, in Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945.

[4 to 14 March 2004 – 20 years ago](#)

Premiere of the SLK of the R 171 series at the Geneva Motor Show

- Second generation of the compact roadster with steel Vario roof
- SLK 55 AMG is the first Mercedes-Benz SLK with a V8 engine
- AIRSCARF and innovative rear window mechanism



The SLK of the R 171 series was presented to the public at the Geneva Motor Show from 4 to 14 March 2004. The first models to be launched on the market were the SLK 200 and the SLK 350.

The 265 kW (360 hp) SLK 55 AMG would follow at the end of the year as the top-of-the-range model – the first SLK with a V8 engine. The R 171 model series continued the successful concept of the first SLK of the R 170 model series as a compact and easy-to-handle sports car. One of its main features was the Vario roof made of steel. Within a few seconds, the roadster could be transformed into a coupé. One of the technical innovations in the R 171 model series was the innovative AIRSCARF headroom heating system, which Mercedes-Benz launched in the SLK. A new mechanism increased the boot capacity when the roof was open: the rear window rotated around the transverse axis as it was closed, with the result that its curvature faced upwards once it had been lowered. The new V6 engines with four-valve technology and single-plug ignition also made their debut in the SLK 350.

[11 to 21 March 1954 – 70 years ago](#)

The Mercedes-Benz 220 (W 180) is presented at the Geneva Motor Show

- Modern “Ponton” saloon with six-cylinder engines
- New top product from the brand
- Efficient common parts concept with the “Ponton” four-cylinder saloons



The new “Ponton” six-cylinder saloons celebrated their premiere at the 24th Geneva Motor Show (11 to 21 March 1954). The luxury-class vehicles of the W 180, W 105 and W 128 model series set standards in their segment with their state-of-the-art technology. The four-cylinder models of the W 120 model series, with a wheelbase that was 170 millimetres shorter, had already been launched on the market the year before. All vehicles were based on a sophisticated common parts concept, as an efficient way of offering an extensive passenger car range. The Mercedes-Benz 220 was characterised by a self-supporting body in pontoon form, the so-called “three box design”. The passenger compartment merged into almost cuboid vehicle sections at both front and rear. The wings were fully integrated into the body. Compared to its predecessor of the same name in the W 187 model series, the Mercedes-Benz 220 “Ponton” was lighter and more streamlined. While the double wishbone axle with subframe concept at the front originated from the W 120, the rear axle was a new design: for the first time in a series-produced Mercedes-Benz passenger car, the single-joint swing axle with low pivot point developed for the W 196 Formula One racing car was used. This significantly increased driving safety and comfort.

[30 April 2004 – 20 years ago](#)

Presentation of the Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG

- The top-class sports car celebrated the brand’s successes in the DTM
- The high-performance vehicle of the 209 model series was limited to 100 units
- Impressive performance values on the racetrack, too



The 2003 season of the German Touring Car Masters (DTM) was an extremely successful one for Mercedes-Benz: Bernd Schneider won the title for the fourth time. The brand celebrated this with the CLK DTM AMG Coupé of the 209 model series, which was presented on 30 April 2004. Limited to 100 units, the top-class sports car with a newly developed suspension and aerodynamics that had been optimised in the wind tunnel delivered **428 kW** (582 hp). It cost 236,060 euros. Its AMG 5.5-litre V8 engine was the second most powerful power unit in the brand's passenger car range at the time, after the engine of the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren super sports car. The maximum torque of 800 newton metres was available at 3,500 rpm. The high-performance coupé accelerated to 100 km/h in 3.9 seconds and had a top speed of 320 km/h (electronically limited). The CLK DTM AMG offered high-tech engineering from the world of motorsport and a look very similar to that of the CLK racing touring cars. Features included automatic transmission, automatic climate control, an on-board computer, the ESP® electronic stability programme and an oval steering wheel upholstered in buckskin. On the famous north loop (Nordschleife) of the Nürburgring, the CLK DTM AMG was only two tenths of a second slower than the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren, and even outperformed it on the short circuit of the Hockenheimring.

Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts

Several thousand replacement and wear parts for Mercedes-Benz SLK models of the R 170 series

- Focus on components with functional and driving relevance
- Spare parts for the characteristic Vario roof
- Originality and value retention



In 1994, 30 years ago, Mercedes-Benz presented two concept cars. They paved the way for the first SLK (R 170). A purist roadster was displayed at the Turin Motor Show from 22 April to 1 May 1994. From 6 to 16 October 1994, the sports car then appeared at the Paris Motor Show with its characteristic Vario roof. The SLK of the R 170 series was built from 1996 to 2004, with a total of 311,222 units being produced. Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts now stocks several thousand replacement and wear parts for the first SLK. Components with functional and driving relevance are a particular area of focus. These include parts for the characteristic Vario roof, such as the hydraulic cylinder (order number A 170 800 00 72, 274.61 euros), hydraulic pump (order number A 170 800 08 48, 601.41 euros) and the front section (order number A 170 790 04 40, 1,037.40 euros) and rear section (order number A 170 790 05 40, 1,365.00 euros). The complete range extends from body parts such as the front left wing (order number A 170 880 01 18, 297.16 euros) to details such as the "KOMPRESSOR" badge for the front side (order number A 170 817 03 15, 38.62 euros). All prices quoted are net prices and are subject to VAT. Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts for maintenance and repair keep a classic car in its original condition and help to

preserve its value. Further information and parts search under: <https://teilesuche.mercedes-benz-classic.com>

Birthdays

- 190 years ago – Gottlieb Daimler was born on 17 March 1834 to a family of bakers in Schorndorf, near Stuttgart. After training as a gunsmith, the technically gifted student attended the Stuttgart Polytechnic with the help of a scholarship. After holding various management positions in the mechanical engineering industry, he set up his own business in 1882 and worked with Wilhelm Maybach in Cannstatt on the development of the high-speed combustion engine. In 1886, this powered the motorised carriage, the world's first four-wheeled automobile. Daimler died in 1900.
- 175 years ago – Bertha Benz was born on 3 May 1849 as Bertha Ringer. The courageous and far-sighted wife of Carl Benz played a key role in making his invention of the automobile a success. The young woman was already an important support to the engineer during their engagement. As a partner on an equal footing, she later promoted his development in practical terms: in 1888, Bertha Benz and her sons Eugen and Richard embarked on history's first long-distance automobile journey. The mobility pioneer died in Ladenburg in 1944.

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Captions

24C0002_001

International Motor Sports Show in New York, 6 to 14 February 1954. Presentation of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL "Gullwing" (W 198, front) and the 190 SL (W 121, partly obscured directly behind). (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 61995)

24C0002_002

International Motor Sports Show in New York, 6 to 14 February 1954. Presentation of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL "Gullwing" (W 198, centre) and the 190 SL (W 121, behind). (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 62043)

24C0002_003

Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29) from 1936 in the Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. The 500 K is presented at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition (IAMA) in Berlin, 8 to 18 March 1934. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D577526)

24C0002_004

International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition (IAMA) in Berlin, 8 to 18 March 1934. Presentation of the Mercedes-Benz 500 K (W 29) with eight-cylinder supercharged engine. Exterior shot from the front right of the body version hand-built in Sindelfingen as a “motorway courier” on the exhibition stand. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 2002DIG44)

24C0002_005

Mercedes-Benz SLK of the R 171 model series. The second generation of the compact roadster with steel Vario roof was presented at the Geneva Motor Show from 4 to 14 March 2004. Exterior shot from the left during operation of the Vario roof. The rear window, which swivels around its transverse axis, is clearly visible. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 00145107)

24C0002_006

Mercedes-Benz SLK of the R 171 model series. The second generation of the compact roadster with steel Vario roof was presented at the Geneva Motor Show from 4 to 14 March 2004. Driving shot from the front right. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 00199908)

24C0002_007

Mercedes-Benz 220 (W 180). The “Ponton” saloon with a six-cylinder engine was presented at the Geneva Motor Show from 11 to 21 March 1954. Title page of the sales prospectus from March 1954.

24C0002_008

Mercedes-Benz 220 (W 180). The “Ponton” saloon with a six-cylinder engine was presented at the Geneva Motor Show from 11 to 21 March 1954. Exterior view from the front left. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 68621)

24C0002_009

Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG of the 209 model series. The top-class sports car was presented on 30 April 2004 and celebrated the brand’s successes in the DTM. Driving shot from the front right. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D690290)

24C0002_010

Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG of the 209 model series. The top-class sports car was presented on 30 April 2004 and celebrated the brand’s successes in the DTM. Driving shot from the left, with racing driver Klaus Ludwig at the wheel. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 00168487)

24C0002_011

Mercedes-Benz SLK of the R 170 model series. Graphical representation of the function of the Vario roof. Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts offers numerous replacement and wear parts for the R 170 model series. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: C96F1141)

24C0002_012

Mercedes-Benz SLK 200 of the R 170 model series. Driving shot from the left. Mercedes-Benz Classic Genuine Parts offers numerous replacement and wear parts for the R 170 model series. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A96F1290)

24C0002_013

Gottlieb Daimler, 17 March 1834 to 6 March 1900. Portrait photo from around 1890. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 19779)

24C0002_014

Bertha Benz, 3 May 1849 to 5 May 1944. Portrait photo from 1870, the year of Bertha Ringer's engagement to Carl Benz. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 30969)