



Mercedes-Benz Classic

Press Information

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## Mercedes-Benz Classic Motorsport Newsletter 1/2024

Stuttgart. Mercedes-Benz, the oldest luxury car manufacturer in the world, has been active in motorsport for 130 years. The activities range from Formula One to rallies. This chapter in the company's history is correspondingly diverse. Here is a brief summary of some of the important anniversaries and milestones from motorsport history.

- 1899: Brilliant racing success on the Côte d'Azur with Daimler "Phoenix" 12 HP (125 years)
- 1994: Mercedes-Benz returns to the premier class of motorsport (30 years)
- 1924: Victory with supercharged Mercedes at the Targa Florio, Sicily (100 years)
- 1939: Spectacular racing car development for the Tripoli Grand Prix (85 years)
- 1984: Senna wins the Nürburgring opening race with 190 E 2.3-16 (40 years)
- 1994: Mercedes-Benz engine coup at the Indianapolis 500 (30 years)
- Birthdays: Jochen Neerpasch, Bernd Schneider and Ewy Rosqvist

### 21 March 1899 – 125 years ago

#### Brilliant success with Daimler "Phoenix" 12 HP racing car on the Côte d'Azur

- Emil Jellinek's racing car started under the pseudonym "Mercédès"
- Motorsport successes at the "Nice Week" assisted the marketing activities



Pre-premiere of a world-famous brand name: on 21 March 1899, Wilhelm Bauer started the 85-kilometre Nice-Magagnosc-Nice tour in a Daimler "Phoenix" 12 HP racing car owned by entrepreneur Emil Jellinek. He entered the car under the pseudonym "Mercédès", his daughter's first name. Bauer won the two-seater category. Jellinek, a successful Daimler car salesman, appreciated the marketing effect of race victories and demanded ever more powerful and technically advanced vehicles from DMG. In 1900, he provided the impetus for the development of the Mercedes 35 hp. Designer Wilhelm Maybach reacted: Long wheelbase, lower centre of gravity, high-performance engine and modern cooling revolutionised automotive engineering. At the same time, DMG and Jellinek officially agreed on the use of the Mercedes name as a product brand. The first Mercedes 35 hp was ready by

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\* Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official, specific CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the publication entitled "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" ["Guide on the fuel economy, CO<sub>2</sub> 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](http://www.dat.de).

the end of the year and, in March 1901, the high-performance vehicle dominated the “Nice Week”. Mercedes-Benz Classic will celebrate “125 years of Mercedes” in 2025.

[27 March 1994 – 30 years ago](#)

**Return after four decades: The star rose again in the premier class of motorsport**

- Mercedes-Benz was Sauber’s engine supplier for Formula One in 1994
- The brand had been continuously involved in the premier class of motorsport for 30 years



Sensation at the 1994 Brazilian Grand Prix in Interlagos: after almost 40 years, a Formula One racing car once again sported the Mercedes star at the front. The brand officially returned to the premier class of motorsport as the engine supplier for the Sauber-Mercedes C 13. Ilmor developed the engines in Brixworth, Great Britain. Mercedes-Benz held a 25 per cent stake in the company. The last time Mercedes-Benz racing cars won the Formula One World Championship was in 1954 and 1955. Peter Sauber used Ilmor engines in his Formula One debut season back in 1993. The Stuttgart-based brand signalled its support with the “Concept by Mercedes-Benz” lettering. The cooperation with Sauber ended after the 1994 season. Mercedes-Benz is still active in Formula One today. McLaren has been a Formula One partner since 1995, and the brand has had its own team since 2010. Mercedes AMG F1 won seven drivers’ and eight constructors’ titles from 2014.

[24 April 1924 – 100 years ago](#)

**Restoration of an original racing car commemorates the Mercedes victory in Sicily in 1924**

- Mercedes wins the Targa and Coppa Florio
- Red-painted Mercedes 2-litre racing car as camouflage for the German team



Victory in red: Christian Werner won the Targa Florio in Sicily with the Mercedes 2-litre racing car on 24 April 1924. Mercedes-Benz Classic now celebrates this with the restoration of an original racing car from the company’s collection by the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre. The Targa Florio endurance race had been held since 1906. The circuit with several thousand bends stretched from the sea to the mountains. In 1924, the total distance over four laps was 432 kilometres. There were five laps in the Coppa Florio. The winner, Christian Werner, took 6:32:37.4 hours with an average speed of 66.01 km/h. A total of three 2-litre racing cars designed by DMG chief engineer Ferdinand Porsche were on the starting grid. They delivered **92 kW** (126 hp) with a supercharger. Christian Lautenschlager and Alfred Neubauer followed in 10th and 15th place. All the vehicles were painted red instead of the typical German white. This was to avoid possible hostility from Italian fans.

[7 May 1939 – 85 years ago](#)

**Double victory in its only race: The Mercedes-Benz W 165 won the Tripoli Grand Prix**

- Development of the V8 racing car with 1.5-litre displacement in just eight months
- Double victory for Mercedes-Benz by Hermann Lang and Rudolf Caracciola



85 years ago, only vehicles complying with the 1.5-litre Voiturette formula were allowed in the Tripoli Grand Prix. This was intended to prevent the dominant German Grand Prix racing cars from winning. But Mercedes-Benz rose to the challenge. The W 165 with a 1.5-litre V8 engine was built in just eight months. The racing car weighing 905 kilograms with a full tank of fuel resembled a scaled-down version of the 3-litre W 154 monoposto. The 166-kilogram engine was also related to the latter's V12 power unit. The W 165s gave their opponents no chance in the race. Rudolf Caracciola drove the full distance in his car with short gear ratios. As previously determined by racing manager Alfred Neubauer, Hermann Lang made a quick pit stop to change tyres and, with longer gear ratios and therefore a higher top speed, won the race with a lead of almost one lap over his brand colleague.

[12 May 1984 – 40 years ago](#)

**Race of champions: 20 Mercedes-Benz 190 E 2.3-16 cars opened the new Nürburgring**

- Ayrton Senna wins ahead of Niki Lauda and Carlos Reutemann
- The “sixteen-valve engines” were largely from standard production



A thrilling race between 20 Nürburgring champions in 20 identical sports cars: it was with this exciting concept that the new Nürburgring celebrated its opening 40 years ago, and the new Mercedes-Benz 190 E 2.3-16 with sixteen-valve engine its market launch. The illustrious driver line-up for the contest organised by Mercedes-Benz included numerous Formula One world champions and Le Mans winners. The largely standard sport saloons were equipped with the “R-package” for racing use: This included Recaro seats, six-point seat belts, rollover bars, a shorter rear axle with matching speedometer, a smaller 380-millimetre steering wheel and an open exhaust. The then little-known Brazilian Ayrton Senna won the race ahead of Niki Lauda and Carlos Reutemann. Senna went on to become Formula One World Champion in 1988, 1990 and 1991. His 190 E 2.3-16 from the inaugural race at Nürburgring in 1984 is now part of the Mercedes-Benz corporate collection.

[29 May 1994 – 30 years ago](#)

**Engine sensation: Al Unser Jr. won in Indianapolis with the Penske-Mercedes**

- The Mercedes-Benz 500 I engine was only used once
- It was successfully kept secret until the first training session



With a vastly superior Mercedes-Benz engine in the PC 23 racing car, the Penske team won the Indianapolis 500-mile race in 1994. The coup began when team boss Roger Penske discovered a loophole in the engine regulations: engines with a bottom-mounted camshaft and a boost pressure of 1.86 bar were permitted in order to facilitate American designs with engines that were, in principle, close to series production. The rule makers failed to realise that a perfect racing engine can also be built in this way. British engine manufacturer Ilmor developed the 3.4-litre Mercedes-Benz 500 I engine in great secrecy. This was because Penske feared a sudden change in regulations if his plans became known. With a power advantage of several hundred hp, the Penske-Mercedes was unbeatable and Al Unser Jr. won easily. The regulations were changed after the race, so this engine was only used once.

### Birthdays

- 85 years ago – **Jochen Neerpasch** was born in Krefeld on 23 March 1939. The former Porsche works driver was the racing manager at Mercedes-Benz from 1988 to 1992. During this time, the Sauber-Mercedes won several titles in the World Sports Car Championship and the Le Mans 24-hour race in 1989. On his initiative, the “Sauber Mercedes Junior Team” was founded in 1990 with the young racing drivers Michael Schumacher, Karl Wendlinger and Heinz-Harald Frentzen.
- 60 years ago – “Mr DTM” **Bernd Schneider** was born in St. Ingbert on 20 July 1964. The racing driver competed in the Group C World Championship and in Formula One, achieving his greatest successes with AMG-Mercedes in the DTM. Between 1986 and 2008, he competed in 236 DTM races, celebrated 43 victories and won Europe’s most important touring car championship in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2006.
- 95 years ago – **Baroness Ewy von Korff-Rosqvist** was born on 3 August 1929. Between 1962 and 1964, the rally driver competed in numerous international competitions as part of the Mercedes-Benz works team. The women’s team Ewy Rosqvist/Ursula Wirth celebrated its greatest success in 1962, with overall victory in the Argentine Grand Prix in the Mercedes-Benz 220 SE (W 111).

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As an internationally active company, Mercedes-Benz counts equal opportunities, diversity, openness and respect among its fundamental convictions. We show this in the way in which we think, act and communicate. In principle, all the terms selected of course include all genders and identities.

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## Captions

24C0005\_001

Daimler “Phoenix” 12 HP racing car. Photo from Nice Week 1899. Wilhelm Bauer (at the wheel) won the 85-kilometre Nice-Magagnosc-Nice tour with the vehicle on 21 March 1899. Leaning against the vehicle is Hermann Braun, Emil Jellinek’s chauffeur and mechanic. A racing car bearing the name “Mercédès” appeared for the first time in 1899. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 2001DIG68)

24C0005\_002

Wilhelm Bauer, foreman and racing driver at Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft. Portrait photo. Bauer drove to success with a Daimler “Phoenix” 12 HP racing car in the Nice-Magagnosc-Nice tour in 1899. A racing car bearing the name “Mercédès” appeared for the first time in 1899. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 19706)

24C0005\_003

Sauber-Mercedes C 13 Formula One racing car of 1994. Next to it are racing drivers Heinz-Harald Frentzen (left) and Andrea de Cesaris (start number 29). Racing driver Karl Wendlinger withdrew from the season after a serious accident when training for the Monaco Grand Prix. Mercedes-Benz officially returned to Formula One as Sauber’s engine supplier in 1994. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A94F1206)

24C0005\_004

Sauber-Mercedes C 13 Formula One racing car of 1994. Racing driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix, 27 March 1994. Mercedes-Benz officially returned to Formula One as Sauber’s engine supplier in 1994. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A94F1032)

24C0005\_005

Mercedes 2-litre racing car of 1924. Photo before the restoration from 2023 to 2024 in the racing curve of the Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 7: Silver Arrows – Races and Records. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D784568)

24C0005\_006

Mercedes 2-litre racing car in the 1924 Targa Florio. Car with start number 10 of the eventual winner Christian Werner, taken during the race. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 3308)

24C0005\_007

Mercedes-Benz 1.5-litre Grand Prix racing car W 165. Action shot during the Tripoli Grand Prix on 7 May 1939. Car of eventual winner Hermann Lang with start number 16. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 32604)

24C0005\_008

Mercedes-Benz 1.5-litre Grand Prix racing car W 165. Action shot from the left of the Classic Insight “125 Years of Motorsport” on 5 April 2019. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D596020)

24C0005\_009

Mercedes-Benz 190 E 2.3-16 sport saloon (W 201). Photo from the inaugural race of the new Nürburgring in 1984, car of eventual winner Ayrton Senna. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 84F108)

24C0005\_010

Mercedes-Benz 190 E 2.3-16 sport saloon (W 201) from the inaugural race of the new Nürburgring in 1984. Action shot from 2019, taken from the car of runner-up Niki Lauda. On the front left, car of winner Ayrton Senna. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D618683)

24C0005\_011

Indianapolis 500-mile race on 29 May 1994. Pit stop of the Penske-Mercedes PC 23 with the superior Mercedes-Benz 500 I racing engine. Al Unser Jr. won the race with this vehicle. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A94F937)

24C0005\_012

Mercedes-Benz 500 I racing engine. The Penske-Mercedes PC 23 racing car powered by this superior engine won the Indianapolis 500-mile race on 29 May 1994. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A51306)

24C0005\_013

Jochen Neerpasch, Mercedes-Benz racing manager from 1988 to 1992. Photo from 1990. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A90F905)

24C0005\_014

Bernd Schneider, Mercedes-Benz racing driver and DTM champion in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2006. Photo from the award ceremony of the DTM race on the A1 Ring in Austria on 9 September 2001. Schneider started from pole position, drove the fastest lap and won the race. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive: D24186)

24C0005\_015

Ewy Rosqvist, Mercedes-Benz rally driver from 1962 to 1964. Portrait photo with Mercedes-Benz “Tailfin” racing touring car from the 1960s. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive: U19681)