



Mercedes-Benz Classic

Press Information

24 April 2024

Red racer restored: Mercedes Targa Florio racing car from 1924 returns to the road

- Extensive restoration of the legendary supercharged racing car after 100 years
- Overall victory and triple class victory in the 1924 Targa Florio
- Mercedes-Benz Classic to present the original racing car at international events in 2024

Stuttgart. 100 years after Mercedes' triumph in the legendary Targa Florio endurance race in Sicily on 27 April 1924, a Mercedes 2-litre racing car used at the time is returning to the road. Mercedes-Benz Classic has restored the vehicle from the company's own collection to the highest standards of authenticity. It will be presented at international events in 2024. The racing car with its characteristic red paintwork is a highlight in the 130 years of Mercedes-Benz motorsport.

“Mercedes made motorsport history with this racing car in 1924. A century later, the vehicle can now be seen in action again in its original condition – meaning that Mercedes-Benz Classic is making history. That's because something like this is only possible thanks to the combined expertise of the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre, the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive and a strong network of experts. This fascinating project makes the innovative strength of our company tangible – from its beginnings in 1886 to the future.”

Marcus Breitschwerdt, Head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage

Mercedes-Benz Classic accompanied the restoration of the Targa Florio racing car and its return to action – with extensive photo and video recordings.

- The documentary film will be released to coincide with the 100th anniversary on 27 April 2024. It can be found in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Web Special: <https://www.mercedes-benz.com/targaflorio/>
- Press photos of the complete restoration project and video footage: <https://mercedes-benz-archive.com/marsMuseum/de/instance/ko/Mercedes-2-l-Targa-Florio-Rennwagen.xhtml?oid=191293448>
- The Mercedes-Benz press kit on the media site contains numerous details and background information on the restoration project, the vehicle and the 1924 Targa Florio.

Victory in Sicily

In the early 1920s, the Targa Florio was a top event in European motorsport. It offered German companies an important opportunity because, after the First World War, they were initially excluded from participating in the European Grand Prix Championship. Mercedes took second place overall in 1921 and a privateer won in a Mercedes in 1922. In 1924, the brand came back to compete with a new racing car. This vehicle was based on

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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.

designs by Paul Daimler. Ferdinand Porsche, Technical Director and Chief Development Officer of Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft from April 1923 on, developed it to the point where it was ready to race.

The racing team travelled from Stuttgart to Sicily with four 2-litre competition cars on their own power. Mercedes entered three of these racing cars in the Targa Florio and Coppa Florio. One special highlight was the red paintwork, which was actually reserved for Italian vehicles: it was intended to prevent any potential interference by Italian fans during the race. German racing cars were usually painted white back then.

Mercedes works driver Christian Werner won the Targa Florio over a distance of 432 kilometres (four laps of 108 kilometres each) in the number 10 car, clocking a time of 6:32:37.4 hours. It was the first victory in the Targa Florio for a driver from outside Italy. Werner also led the team in a triple class victory for racing cars with a displacement of up to 2 litres. In the overall standings, Christian Lautenschlager (number 32) finished in 11th place, Alfred Neubauer (number 23) in 16th place. The Mercedes team received the Coppa Termini as the best factory team. Werner then put the icing on the cake: another lap was required for the Coppa Florio classification. The works driver from Stuttgart also won this contest after a total of 8:17:1.4 hours. His teammates finished 9th (Lautenschlager) and 13th (Neubauer).

Restoration with maximum authenticity

In 2022, Mercedes-Benz Classic decided to rebuild the original 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from the company's own collection as authentically as possible for the anniversary – in accordance with the high standards of a factory restoration. It is the vehicle in which Christian Lautenschlager completed the Targa Florio in 1924. Werner's winning car has not survived.

The removal of the racing car from the Mercedes-Benz Museum was followed by a meticulous inventory analysis and extensive search in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive – the brand's "memory". Original technical drawings and historical photos are crucial sources for the authentic restoration. The Classic Centre carries this out together with a network of experts.

Project highlights

- Repair of the supercharged engine: This includes welding work on the housing, reworking the original camshafts and restoring screw connections with hybrid threads typical of the time.
- Body work: The racing car, which was converted by a private customer in the 1920s, is restored to its original condition according to historical blueprints.
- Paintwork: Detailed analysis of small remnants of the original paintwork provides information about the colour scheme and method of painting in 1924. The racing car is repainted by hand using a brush and reconstructed linseed oil paint.

At every stage, the Classic Centre experts and external partners preserve the original substance as much as possible. For example, traces of past body modifications remain visible under the historically correct paintwork. Very sensitive original components are conserved. For example, a faithful reproduction of the steering wheel from 1924 will replace the original for the car's outings in the anniversary year.

In April 2024, the racing car completed its first drive following the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Untertürkheim. This is where the vehicle was built in the racing workshop 100 years ago. And it set off from there in 1924 on its journey to Sicily, which ended with one of the greatest successes in the 130 years of Mercedes-Benz motorsport history.

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Further research and multimedia material: mercedes-benz-archive.com/museum

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



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Captions

24C0131_001

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Driving shot of the commissioning after the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz Untertürkheim plant, April 2024.

(Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D832046)

24C0131_002

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Driving shot of the commissioning after the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz Untertürkheim plant, April 2024.

(Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D832042)

24C0131_003

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Commissioning after the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz Untertürkheim plant, April 2024. Exterior photo from front right. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D832036)

24C0131_004

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Commissioning after the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz Untertürkheim plant, April 2024. Close-up of the dashboard with an authentic reproduction of the steering wheel for driving in order to protect the delicate original. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D832048)

24C0131_005

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Commissioning after the restoration – on the test track at the Mercedes-Benz Untertürkheim plant, April 2024. Close-up of the

engine compartment. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D832052)

24C0131_006

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Ola Källenius, Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG (right) and Marcus Breitschwerdt, Head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage, during commissioning of the racing car after completion of the restoration project.

24C0131_007

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Marcus Breitschwerdt, head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage (left) with project manager Andreas Häberle at the steering system during the restoration in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center. (Photo signature from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D828216)

24C0131_008

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Vehicle after restoration at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre in Fellbach. Exterior photo from front. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831971)

24C0131_009

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Completion of the restoration work at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre in Fellbach. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831725)

24C0131_010

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. "Marriage" of body and engine at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre in Fellbach. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831478)

24C0131_011

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. "Marriage" of body and engine at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre in Fellbach. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831480)

24C0131_012

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Engine on the test stand. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831463)

24C0131_013

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Engine on the test stand. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831455)

24C0131_014

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Authentic reconstruction of the original paintwork by Volker Lück, cabinetmaker and restorer. February 2024. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D830175)

24C0131_015

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Authentic reconstruction of the original paintwork by Volker Lück, cabinetmaker and restorer. February 2024. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D830184)

24C0131_016

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Paint analysis by restorer Dr Gundula Tutt. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D829652)

24C0131_017

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Paint analysis by restorer Dr Gundula Tutt. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D829648)

24C0131_018

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Work on the engine in collaboration with Dieter Braun. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D828167)

24C0131_019

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Work on the engine in collaboration with Dieter Braun. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D828209)

24C0131_020

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Body work in collaboration with MCW Carrosserie en Wagenbouw, Netherlands. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D827191)

24C0131_021

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Body work in collaboration with MCW Carrosserie en Wagenbouw, Netherlands. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D827231)

24C0131_022

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Original steering wheel from Christian Lautenschlager's vehicle. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D828217)

24C0131_023

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Research of original photos in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D828884)

24C0131_024

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Research of original documents in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archive. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D831719)

24C0131_025

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Removal from the Mercedes-Benz Museum's banked curve for restoration. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D784585)

24C0131_026

Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car from 1924. Removal from the Mercedes-Benz Museum with the crane system in the atrium for restoration. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D784620)

24C0131_027

Targa Florio on 27 April 1924. Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car with the number 32 – driven by Christian Lautenschlager during the race. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: R573)

24C0131_028

Targa Florio on 27 April 1924. Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car with number 32 – driven by Christian Lautenschlager with co-driver Wilhelm Traub. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 1975M500)

24C0131_029

Targa Florio on 27 April 1924. Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car with number 32 – driven by Christian Lautenschlager with co-driver Wilhelm Traub. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 3133)

24C0131_030

Targa Florio on 27 April 1924. Mercedes 2-litre Targa Florio racing car with the number 10 – driven by the eventual winner Christian Werner. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 3308)

24C0131_031

Targa Florio 1924. Photo at the Untertürkheim plant of Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft before departure to Sicily. At the wheel from left to right: Max Sailer, Christian Werner, Alfred Neubauer, Christian Lautenschlager. Otto Salzer (far right) drives a modified 4.5-litre Grand Prix racing car from 1914. Mudguards and official number plates are mandatory when travelling on your own power. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 3135)