



Sotheby's



Mercedes-Benz Classic

Press Information

25 November 2024

1954 Mercedes-Benz W 196 R With Streamlined Body: One of the World's Most Important Racing Cars to Be Auctioned in Stuttgart Through RM Sotheby's in Partnership with Mercedes-Benz Heritage

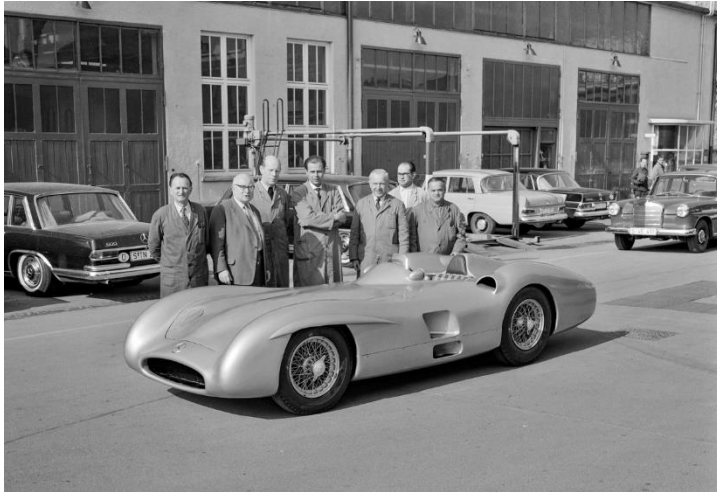
Offered in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz Heritage, this 1954 Mercedes-Benz W 196 R "Stromlinienrennwagen" with streamlined body holds the unique distinction of being driven by two of motor racing's best drivers, Juan Manuel Fangio and Sir Stirling Moss. Donated to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway by the Mercedes-Benz factory in 1965, this iconic W 196 R will be auctioned in an exclusive, standalone event in Stuttgart on 1 February 2025, through RM Sotheby's in partnership with Mercedes-Benz Classic.

- The first W 196 R with streamlined body ever offered for private ownership
- The car forms part of an outstanding collection from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum that will be sold by RM Sotheby's to benefit the Museum's collection and restoration efforts
- Chassis No. 00009/54 is one of four known complete examples mounted with the exquisite factory-built enclosed-fender "Stromlinien" coachwork
- Driven to victory at the 1955 Buenos Aires Grand Prix by future five-time Formula One Drivers' World Champion Juan Manuel Fangio
- Sir Stirling Moss achieved fastest lap at the 1955 Italian Grand Prix at Monza with today's streamlined bodywork
- Donated to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) Museum by Mercedes-Benz in 1965
- Now offered after years of fastidious care by the IMS Museum

Indianapolis, IN, 25 November 2024: One of the world's most historically significant racing cars, the 1954 Mercedes-Benz W 196 R Formula One "Stromlinienrennwagen", chassis number 00009/54, is to be offered in an exclusive standalone auction at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart on 1 February 2025. The car forms part of an outstanding 11-car collection from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum that RM Sotheby's will be offering via a three-auction series to support the Museum's collection and restoration efforts, and is being offered in close collaboration with Mercedes-Benz Classic. Experts from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach and the company's own archive are working on a manufacturer's expert report regarding the originality and authenticity of the vehicle.

Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH | Headquarters and Registry Court: Stuttgart, HRB No. 23165
Managing Directors: Marcus Breitschwerdt (Chairman), Bettina Haussmann, Peter Schoren, Alexandra Süß, Andreas Theel

* 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.



Few historic racing cars resonate as strongly as the famous Mercedes-Benz “Silver Arrows” that dominated Grand Prix racing in the immediate pre- and post-war era. They were admired for their advanced technology and spectacular speed. The W 196 R was developed to meet the new “up to 2.5 litre” regulations that applied from 1954, and it soon proved to be the car to win races in the hands of legends such as Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss.

The W 196 R features a straight-eight engine displacing 2,494 cubic centimeters and designed around a complex Hirth roller-bearing crankshaft. The fuel-injected powerplant was essentially two four-cylinder motors in unison, with two camshafts for each intake and exhaust. A jewel of an engine, it guaranteed reliable and smooth power delivery and was capable of producing **213 kW (290 hp)** after two seasons of development. Since the new 1954 formula specified few limitations to the coachwork, Mercedes-Benz concluded that a streamlined, aerodynamic body with enclosed wheels would optimize the car for high-speed courses, while an open-wheel body would be ideal for more twisting circuits.

The new Mercedes-Benz race cars made their highly anticipated debut at the French Grand Prix at Reims with a trio of the new W 196 R streamliners. Mercedes-Benz achieved a spectacular double victory: the driver team Juan Manuel Fangio, Karl Kling and Hans Herrmann came in 1st, 2nd and 7th, with Herrmann driving the fastest lap of the race. The race marked a resounding success for Mercedes-Benz on its long-awaited return to racing. Juan Manuel Fangio won the 1954 Formula 1 World Championship with the new Silver Arrow.

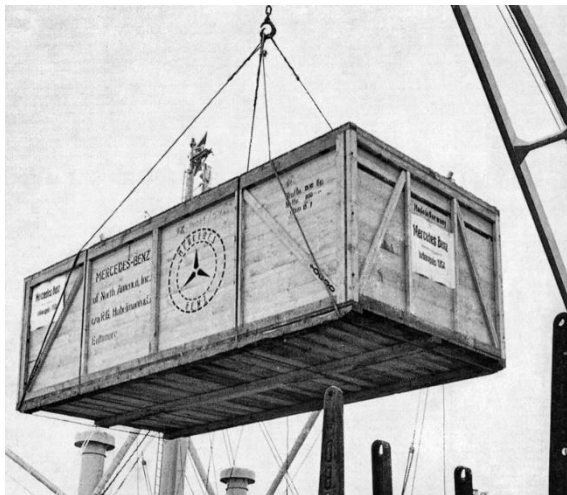


Chassis No. 00009/54 in competition:

For the 1955 season, the W 196 R was further developed to remain as competitive as possible. The engine was improved in numerous aspects, including the addition of a new intake manifold. The decision was made to run the open-wheel grand prix bodies for almost all of the 1955 races, while improvements and updates resulted in an approximately 70-kilogram reduction in weight over its predecessors. The race team also recruited Stirling Moss to join their stable of drivers.

The Formula Libre Buenos Aires Grand Prix on 30 January 1955 would mark the first race for this car, chassis number 00009/54, fitted with an open-wheel monoposto body and piloted by Juan Manuel Fangio. Fangio earned pole position and eventually proved victorious in the race conducted over two heats.

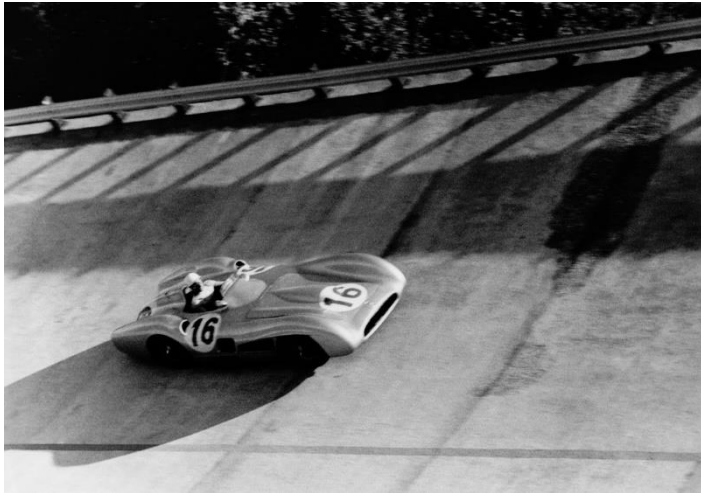
By 1955, Italy's Monza circuit had been rebuilt with a new high-speed bank that has since become legendary in motorsport. For the Italian Grand Prix, it was decided that chassis number 00009/54 should be fitted with the streamlined body for the first time in the 1955 season, and driven by Stirling Moss. Fangio secured pole position in a similar car, with Moss 2nd on the grid at the start. Moss took the lead from Fangio in the ninth lap of the race, but would eventually finish 7th after encountering some mechanical difficulties. Significantly, the Englishman registered the fastest lap of the race in chassis number 00009/54, clocking a time of 2:46.900 at an average speed of 215.7 km/h.



At the conclusion of the 1955 Formula One season, Fangio captured his second Formula One Drivers' Championship in a row, with Moss finishing 2nd, sealing the W 196 R's legend status in the process.

The W 196 R's pedigree was now unimpeachable. In two seasons, the W 196 model family—which included its racing sports car variant, the two-seat 300 SLR (W 196 S)—had won three championships in two different racing series. In 12 appearances at Formula One points events, the W 196 R had won a commanding nine times, and it won two additional non-points races, totaling 11 victories in 14 starts.

In 1964 chassis number 00009/54 was earmarked to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum and was officially donated to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Foundation on Sunday, 30 May 1965. For almost six decades, the W 196 R has been fastidiously stored and maintained by the IMS Museum, occasionally being invited to attend important exhibitions, such as the 1996 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, the 2003 Canadian International Auto Show, and the grand re-opening of the redesigned Petersen Automotive Museum in December 2015. Although the car has appeared at prestigious shows, including most recently as part of the Mercedes-Benz display at the 2024 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, the car has never been submitted for judging at concours events.



A true motorsport icon, 00009/54 is one of only four known complete W 196 R chassis to be mounted with the magnificent factory-built streamlined coachwork at the conclusion of the 1955 season. The racing car represents only the second W 196 R ever offered for private ownership, and the first example offered with the streamlined coachwork. It is presented in its proper Monza livery from the 1955 Italian Grand Prix, and documented with a trove of period materials.

For more information on our collaboration with the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the vehicles available for auction, click [here](#).

About the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum represents more than a century of motorsports history and is driven by its mission to celebrate and preserve the history behind the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indianapolis 500. Since 1956 when the IMS Museum first opened, it has brought to life the innovation, thrill, and cultural significance of motor racing the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. What began with only 12 cars on display has become one of the world's premier collections of racing automobiles and artifacts – with more than 55,000 exhibits and over 150 vehicles. The IMS Museum ignites curiosity, sparks discovery, and embraces tradition.

About RM Sotheby's

RM Sotheby's is the world's largest collector car auction house by total sales. With over 40 years of proven results in the collector car industry, RM's vertically integrated range of services, from auctions (live and online) and private sales to estate planning and financial services, coupled with an expert team of Car Specialists and an international footprint, provide an unsurpassed level of service to the global collector car market. RM Sotheby's is currently responsible for six of the top ten most valuable motor cars ever sold at auction.

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About Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH

"Heritage creates future" – committed to this guiding principle, Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH, as a wholly owned subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz AG, is responsible for the entire range of historical topics relating to the brand with the star. Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH consists of the four organizational units Mercedes-Benz Museum, Mercedes-Benz Classic Center, Mercedes-Benz Archives & Collections and Mercedes-Benz Classic Club Management.

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