



Mercedes-Benz

## 25 Years of the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center

### **Classic vehicle expertise has a name**

The Mercedes-Benz Classic Center is celebrating an anniversary: it opened its doors in Fellbach 25 years ago, in May 1993. Since then it has set standards as an unrivalled centre of competence for the utmost originality and authenticity relating to the brand's classic vehicles. Its services include works restorations, the supply of original replacement parts, the care of vehicle collections and support for the ClassicPartners.

Stuttgart. "The utmost originality!" – it was with this slogan that the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach near Stuttgart opened its doors 25 years ago, though it was then named the "Mercedes-Benz Oldtimer Center". On the 25th anniversary of the world-famous institution that is Mercedes-Benz Classic, this claim is as valid now as it was then. With its wide range of services, the Classic Center sets standards in the active preservation of classic automobiles bearing the Mercedes star. There has been a further Classic Center in Irvine/California since June 2006.

The main areas of activity include a comprehensive range of replacement parts and highly authentic works restorations of classic vehicles. The Center carries out such restorations both on behalf of private customers and for the vehicle trading arm of Mercedes-Benz Classic, ALL TIME STARS.

In addition the experts at the Classic Center take care of the 1,000 or so vehicles in the company's own collection, 160 of which are on display in the Mercedes-Benz Museum. Each year they also accompany press events with the collection's vehicles, as well as around 20 outstanding events in the international classics calendar: at highlight events such as the "1000 Miglia" or the Goodwood Festival of Speed, for example, the experts look after the historic vehicles, whether series production or racing cars, with a mobile workshop.

## **Press Information**

11 June 2018

Specialist knowledge works most sustainably when it is shared with selected and trusted partners. Since 2015, owners of classic vehicles bearing the Mercedes star have also benefited from the specialist “ClassicPartner” network, which receives advice and practical support from the Classic Center, and is provided with know-how by Fellbach: 25 car dealers and own-retail outlets in Germany make their expertise in more recent and older classics locally available to customers with sales, workshops and service.

Close cooperation between the Classic Center and the official brand clubs also ensures a good partnership. At present there are 80 recognised Mercedes-Benz clubs worldwide. Their more than 100,000 members are highly appreciated ambassadors for the Mercedes-Benz brand. The Classic Center supports them in the upkeep of their historical vehicles with information and replacement parts.

### **Authenticity is the standard**

The Classic Center continues to set standards, especially with its authentic works restorations. In recent years these have included technical masterpieces and automotive icons such as the prestigious Mercedes-Benz 600 models (W 100), the Roadster and Coupé variants of the 300 SL (W 198) and the “Pagoda” SLs of the 113 series.

Intense consultation with the Mercedes-Benz archives is essential for this many-faceted work, so as to achieve the greatest possible level of originality. On the one hand, this applies to the research work for restorations or the duplication of parts. On the other hand, the Classic Center and the archives work together closely when preparing reports on the originality of very valuable Mercedes-Benz classics.

Authentic replicas of vehicles by Mercedes-Benz and its preceding brands go another step further than works restorations. Highlights in this category include the Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29) presented in 2014. This one-off car built at the end of 1938, which was long thought to be lost forever, came back to life as an absolutely true replica following a highly demanding and complex restoration project under the aegis of the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center. Contemporary techniques, methods and materials are used during such projects. Key documents from the archives are the basis for ensuring that such vehicles can be resurrected.

## **Founded in the spirit of originality**

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The foundation of the Mercedes-Benz Oldtimer Center 25 years ago was nothing short of a sensation: “The time has come: Mercedes-Benz is the first automobile company to open its own Oldtimer Center,” a press release appearing on 19 May 1993 announced to mark the opening. It continued: “In this way the Stuttgart-based company is doing justice to the great brand tradition and the high esteem in which even older products bearing the Mercedes star are held.” In 1996 the centre of competence was given its present name, Mercedes-Benz Classic Center.

It is not only organisationally but also spatially that expertise relating to the classic vehicles of the brand was brought together: the then Oldtimer Center was housed in a former factory in Fellbach near Stuttgart. The disused production shops offered enough space to accommodate both replacement parts expertise and the special restoration and maintenance skills for classic automobiles. The former Mercedes-Benz Museum workshop was integrated into the Classic Center.

The impulse for the foundation was given by Max-Gerrit von Pein, then manager of the Mercedes-Benz Museum on the site of the Untertürkheim plant, who had general responsibility for preserving and maintaining the company’s traditions. In the press release, von Pein is quoted as saying that the first proposals for the Classic Center date back to as far as 1979.

The initial focus was particularly on original replacement parts, as interest in classic vehicles was already growing continuously at that time. In Germany from the early 1970s to 1993, the population of lovingly cared-for automobiles which are over 20 years old increased more than ten-fold. During this period, the demand for original replacement parts for older and more recent classics increased in the same proportion. It was precisely this demand that Mercedes-Benz met with the Classic Center.

The specialists know exactly which replacement parts are required for which historical model series. When producing the relevant documentation, they also work together with the recognised brand clubs. The replacement parts can be ordered via all Mercedes-Benz own-retail outlets and dealerships, and are usually delivered overnight. Over the last 25 years the range of parts has been continuously expanded. Today, via the Mercedes-Benz Parts Centre in

Mercedes-Benz Museum GmbH, Mercedesstrasse 100, 70372 Stuttgart, Germany  
A Daimler Company

Germersheim, the Classic Center offers around 66,000 different replacement and wearing parts for classics.

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Decisions are also quickly taken to reproduce important parts when they are no longer available. This is done according to the high standards which Mercedes-Benz imposes on the manufacturers with respect to the originality and authenticity of all components. The Classic Center also repeatedly has original replacement parts reproduced for very rare and valuable model series such as the supercharged models of the 1930s or the 300 SL (W 198).

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High-resolution photographs and more press releases:

<https://media.daimler.com>

The latest film and photo material:

<https://mercedes-benz-archive.com/marsMuseum>

Multimedia archive and search system:

<https://mercedes-benz-publicarchive.com>

**Caption:**

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The expertise of the former Mercedes-Benz Museum workshop was also incorporated into the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach founded in 1993. Photo from 1989.

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Classic vehicle expertise of worldwide renown: the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach near Stuttgart opened its doors in Fellbach in 1993, though it was then named the Mercedes-Benz Oldtimer Center. Photo from 1993.

2005CLCENTER49

Classic vehicle expertise of worldwide renown: the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach near Stuttgart opened its doors in Fellbach in 1993, though it was then named the Mercedes-Benz Oldtimer Center. Photo from 2005.

**Works restorations**

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The Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29) was built in 1938, as a one-off by the special vehicle department at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Sindelfingen. Following its restoration and reconstruction to the original condition, the car was brought back into the public eye by Mercedes-Benz Classic in mid-2014. In May 2014, measurements in the wind tunnel in Stuttgart-Untertürkheim revealed a sensational  $C_d$  figure of 0.36.

2010DIG0987

Works restoration of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL racing sports car (W 194) with chassis number 2 of 1952. In 2011 this oldest existing Mercedes-Benz SL was subjected to a full restoration at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center. Numerous original components were reprocessed in the course of this, including the seat bases and upholstery materials.

### **Care of collectors' vehicles at events**

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Mille Miglia 2017. Stage from Brescia to Padua, 18 May 2017. The Mercedes-Benz Classic Center caring for a 300 SL "Gullwing".

2005CLCENTER61

The Mercedes-Benz Classic Center team during a pit stop made by a supercharged Mercedes-Benz touring sports car.

### **Partnership**

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The network of specialists in the Mercedes-Benz ClassicPartner scheme offer know-how that has grown over generations. The ClassicPartners are also supported by the Classic Center with its unrivalled expertise. Photo from 2017.