



Mercedes-Benz

Project Retro Rallye

Press Information

Mercedes-Benz Classic turns a vintage classic into a period rally car – in front of the camera

2 April 2019

This year Mercedes-Benz celebrates the anniversary “125 Years of Motorsport” – a perfect opportunity to transform a luxurious 1969 Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) into a furious rally racer, following the example set by the legendary racing car icon, the red Mercedes-Benz 300 SEL 6.8 AMG, which was successful in Spa-Francorchamps in 1971. You can follow the process in a series of twelve short videos on YouTube.

Stuttgart. For the first time ever, Mercedes-Benz Classic and their classic car trading ALL TIME STARS has opened the doors to a workshop, a place not normally accessible to people who are not part of the company. The team aims to increase the appeal of classic cars amongst a younger audience with this unconventional build and, in doing so, inspire others to do the same. Because anyone who works on old cars already knows that things never go according to plan. And this is exactly what “Project Retro Rally” is about: showing the true project car life, and all the delays and surprises classic fans face.

The classics experts from Stuttgart are being supported by Car Throttle, which is one of the biggest online communities for cars. The main presenter Alex Kersten gets his hands dirty with Mercedes mechanics Karl-Heinz Mayer and Marcel Genkiger as they work on the honorary predecessor to the S-Class, a Mercedes-Benz 280 S from 1969. The rally car transformation took place at the Mercedes-Benz Classic partner dealership, Wilhelm Jesinger KG in Esslingen (near Stuttgart). And it’s important to mention that the classic 280 S wasn’t ruined in any way during the process; all modifications were period correct,

certified by TÜV, and can be reversed at any time without a trace. This concept for a video series is extensive and completely unique:

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- Starting from 1 March 2019, two episodes are released every Friday at 5 pm, and will total twelve episodes. One on the Car Throttle channel (<https://www.youtube.com/CarThrottle>), as well as a supplementary “Behind the Build” episode on the Mercedes-Benz channel (<https://www.youtube.com/MercedesBenzTV>). The last two episodes will be uploaded on 5 April 2019.
- The YouTube-playlist with all episodes published to date: <http://mb4.me/PRR-YT>.
- Exhibition of the finished rally car in the foyer of the Mercedes-Benz Museum until 7 April 2019.
- The car will be offered for sale after the last episode by the Mercedes-Benz Classic dealership ALL TIME STARS: <http://www.mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars>.
- Support in the car’s conversion by the mechanics of the Mercedes-Benz ClassicPartner dealership Wilhelm Jesinger KG in Esslingen, as well as the experts in sport chassis H&R, and motor racing safety cages bodytec.
- Participation in the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019.

Alex walks us through getting to know the luxury saloon and talks us through the 160 point check of ALL TIME STARS. The first eight episodes of the series concentrate on the build of the car, which includes a lot of time pressure because the start of the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019 is just around the corner. But, as is always the case with bolts that have held pulleys to crankshafts for over 50 years, they refuse to budge, no matter what the script says. What’s more, countless hours are later spent trying to figure out why the car won’t run properly. It’s then during the installation of a new H&R suspension and a bodytec roll cage, as well as problems with the leaking rear axle, that the team throw away the script and decide to show all the nitty gritty truth to prove that no corners have been cut in the build process.

This is what the daily grind in the workshop really looks like. That's why it's so fascinating to witness the true craft and creativity of all those involved, particularly in the face of technical difficulties and delays. Thanks to this honest and detailed documentary, the audience can get a true sense of the build, enabling them to reproduce such a vehicle. The parts used are released and shared online every week.

And now, a little spoiler: the team worked perfectly together and were successful! In episodes nine and ten, the finished car gets put through its paces in testing to make sure that it's tough enough for the ensuing torture that Alex will be putting it through during the different stages of the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019, which you can see in the final two episodes. This unfiltered project is the first of its kind, and the transformation of this affordable classic into a rough rally vehicle will inspire young mechanics and enthusiasts in equal measure.

The parties involved

The Mercedes-Benz Museum (www.mercedes-benz.com/museum) in Stuttgart brings its history and anecdotes related to the connection between technology and everyday life as well as between contemporary history and popular culture to life. More than 160 vehicles of every kind are the protagonists in a unique building from the architectural perspective. They represent the core of the permanent exhibition in twelve rooms with a total area of 16,500 square metres. This unique world can be discovered in two tours, following the narratives of "Myth" and "Collection". The Mercedes-Benz Museum is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9 am to 6 pm. Latest information available by phone on +49 (0)711 17-30000 or [online](http://www.mercedes-benz.com/museum).

ALL TIME STARS (<https://www.mercedes-benz.com/alltimestars>) offers Mercedes-Benz classic cars directly from Mercedes-Benz Classic. From the legendary 300 SL Gullwing hand the Fintail and to the W 116 S-Class and W 124 Series. With ALL TIME STARS these dreams come true.

Autohaus Wilhelm Jesinger KG (<https://www.jesinger.mercedes-benz.de>):

The Mercedes-Benz ClassicPartner in Esslingen (near Stuttgart) has been operational round the clock for Mercedes-Benz since 1922. As a competent partner for the divisions cars, vans and trucks, also a large portion of the more than 130 employees also take care of the customers' classic vehicles.

Car Throttle (<https://www.carthrottle.com>) was founded by Adnan Ebrahim in 2009, from his University bedroom in London. Frustrated with the lack of car content for a new generation of car fans, he set out to build "Top Gear for the Facebook generation". Every month the company in London and New York reaches more than 200 million automotive enthusiasts worldwide via social media.

H&R Spezialfedern GmbH & Co. KG (<https://www.h-r.com>) transfers know-how from international motorsport for the development and production of springs, shock absorbers, stabilizers, wheel spacers and sport and thread chassis for road legal cars.

bodytec Fahrzeugtechnik GmbH (www.bodytec-gmbh.de): The company was founded in 1994 and is mainly occupied with work for renowned automobile manufacturers in the field of motorsport, and with the development and production of safety cells for them. Individual solutions for private customers are also created.

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High-resolution photos and additional press releases are available at:

<https://media.daimler.com>

Current film and photo material:

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

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

Captions:

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At the finish in Monte Carlo: The team around the Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye" after the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019.

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Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye", shoot at Autohaus Wilhelm Jesinger KG.

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Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye" during the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019.

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Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye" during the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019. Main presenter Alex Kersten (right) with mechanic Karl-Heinz Mayer.

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Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye" during the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019. Main presenter Alex Kersten (left) with mechanic Karl-Heinz Mayer.

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Mercedes-Benz 280 S (W 108) "Project Retro Rallye" at the finish of the AvD-Histo-Monte 2019.