



Mercedes-Benz Classic

Press Information

17 May 2023

Mercedes-Benz Classic presents automotive icons at Lake Como

- Exclusive classics take centre stage in Lombardy on the third weekend in May
- 100 years of Le Mans: The Mercedes-Benz 300 SL (W 194)
Le Mans winning car from 1952 takes part in the Concorso Villa d'Este
- One-two victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989: Sauber-Mercedes C 9 at Villa Erba
- Aerodynamics: Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner at the FuoriConcorso

Stuttgart. The setting, vehicles and dates speak for themselves: on the third weekend in May, Lake Como is the hub of the classic world. There, several events on 20 and 21 May 2023 will present vehicles that are rarely seen. Among them are highlights from the brand history of Mercedes-Benz, which stand for milestones in motorsport and aerodynamic development: the Group C racing sports car Sauber-Mercedes C 9 won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989 with a one-two victory. The Mercedes-Benz 300 SL (W 194) racing sports car achieved the same triumph in 1952. The Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29) was built as a spectacular one-off in 1938.

"I am delighted that selected vehicles from Mercedes-Benz history can be experienced at the automotive events on Lake Como. In the special ambience of Lombardy, these concours events continue a long tradition of such events since the beginning of the 20th century."

Marcus Breitschwerdt, Head of Mercedes-Benz Heritage

Marcus Breitschwerdt will also take part in the series of events. On Sunday, he will appear as a guest for a panel discussion on the importance of automotive museums at Villa Sucota. The focus will be on their role in society, the relationship between car manufacturers and private collectors, and visions for car museums in the future.

300 SL racing sports car (W 194) at the Concorso Villa d'Este

The Le Mans winning car of 1952 is a 300 SL racing car (W 194). It takes part in the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este. The racing car belongs to a private collector. After the Second World War, Mercedes-Benz made a spectacular return to racing with the W 194. The new racing car won in Bern, at the Nürburgring and at the legendary Carrera Panamericana in Mexico. There was an outstanding victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1952 with Hermann Lang and Fritz Rieß in car 0007 with starting number 21 and a blue border around the radiator grille. Second place went to Theo Helfrich and Helmut Niedermayr, also with a 300 SL racing car.

Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH | Headquarters and Registry Court: Stuttgart, HRB No. 23165
Geschäftsführer/Managing Directors: Marcus Breitschwerdt (Vorsitzender/Chairman), Bettina Haussmann, 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 "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 showrooms and from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH at www.dat.de.

The axles, transmission and base engine of the W 194 came from the Mercedes-Benz 300 (W 186) representation saloon. A completely new feature was a lightweight but very torsionally rigid roll cage. Because this was set high, the 300 SL could not be fitted with conventional doors. The Mercedes-Benz engineers came up with a solution in the form of the characteristic gullwing doors hinged on the roof. This and many other features were adopted from 1954 onwards by the 300 SL (W 198), the production sports car developed from the W 194.

Le Mans winner in front of Villa Erba

Villa Erba, not far from Villa d'Este on the eastern shore of Lake Como, presents the special exhibition "100 Years of Le Mans". Successful racing cars from various manufacturers from the history of the legendary 24-hour race can be seen here. In 1989, the Sauber-Mercedes C 9 Group C racing car achieved a spectacular one-two victory in Le Mans. In the car with the starting number 63, Jochen Mass, Stanley Dickens and Manuel Reuter won the most famous endurance race in the world. They were followed in second place by their teammates Mauro Baldi, Kenny Acheson and Gianfranco Brancatelli in the C 9 with starting number 61 – this vehicle is presented by Mercedes-Benz Classic at Villa Erba.

in 1988, Mercedes-Benz officially returned to international circuit motorsport in Group C. From 1989 onwards, the Sauber-Mercedes team also visually continued the legendary era of the Silver Arrows: for the first time, the C 9 was entered in the World Sports Car Championship with silver paint. The chassis was built by Peter Sauber in Hinwil (Switzerland), and Mercedes-Benz supplied the very reliable five-litre V8 engine M 119 with turbocharging. The power output was **520 kW** (720 hp). The Sauber-Mercedes team easily won the 1989 World Sports Car Championship with the C 9.

540 K Streamliner (W 29) at the FuoriConcorso

In Como itself, on 20 and 21 May, there will be a fairly young event that is also highly attractive, the FuoriConcorso, founded in 2019. Very close to the city centre, the 2023 event is themed "Aerodynamic". On the extensive grounds of the Villas Grumello, Sucota and Olmo, selected cars demonstrate the development of aerodynamics over the decades. A star here is the Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner.

The one-off car, which can reach speeds of up to 185 km/h, embodies the great efforts made by Mercedes-Benz for optimum aerodynamics in the 1930s. It was delivered to the tyre manufacturer Dunlop for high-speed tyre testing in June 1938. Its eight-cylinder engine with a displacement of 5.4 litres produces **132 kW** (180 hp) with a compressor. Mercedes-Benz Classic rebuilt the vehicle in 2014 as part of an authentic reconstruction. The drag coefficient measured afterwards is $c_d = 0.36$. That is an excellent value for a 1930s car.

Exclusive tradition

The history of automotive beauty contests on Lake Como dates back to 1929. This is when the international Concours d'Elegance "Coppa d'Oro Villa d'Este" was held for the first time. The competition was initially organised by the Automobile Club of Como, the Grand Hotel Villa d'Este and the Spa Committee. In Germany, too, automotive beauty contests, for example in Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden, thrilled the public at the same time. The prize-winners often included vehicles from the still young Mercedes-Benz brand. It was founded in 1926 when Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft merged with Benz & Cie. to form Daimler-Benz AG.

Contacts:

Peter Becker, +49 (0) 176 30 909 790, peter.becker@mercedes-benz.com
Frank Scheibner, +49 (0) 160 8 680 266, frank.scheibner@mercedes-benz.com
Julia Löwenstein, +49 (0) 151 58 610 215, julia.loewenstein@mercedes-benz.com

Enquiries by email to classic@mercedes-benz.com or online at
www.mercedes-benz.com/classic

Press images and more press releases: group-media.mercedes-benz.com

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



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Captions

23C0148_001

Mercedes-Benz poster by Hans Liska for the brand's one-two victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL racing car (W 194). The winning car with the starting number 21 is shown, driven by Hermann Lang and Fritz Rieß. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 00012174)

23C0148_002

Mercedes-Benz 300 SL racing car (W 194). Start of the 24-hour race in Le Mans in 1952. In the middle, the vehicle of Hermann Lang and Fritz Rieß with the starting number 21. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 55461)

23C0148_003

Mercedes-Benz 300 SL racing car (W 194). Photo from the 24-hour race in Le Mans in 1952. Vehicle of Theo Helfrich and Helmut Niedermayr with starting number 20 (the later runners-up), followed by the vehicle of Karl Kling and Hans Klenk with starting number 22. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 55462)

23C0148_004

Sauber-Mercedes C 9 Group C racing car. Photo from the 1989 Le Mans 24 Hours, won by Sauber-Mercedes with a one-two. Car of the later runners-up Mauro Baldi, Kenny Acheson and Gianfranco Brancatelli with the starting number 61. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 89F590)

23C0148_005

Sauber-Mercedes C 9 Group C racing sports car. Photo from the 1989 Le Mans 24 Hours, won by Sauber-Mercedes with a one-two. From left to right: Car of the eventual winners Jochen Mass, Manuel Reuter and Stanley Dickens (starting number 63), car of the eventual runners-up Mauro Baldi, Kenny Acheson and Gianfranco Brancatelli (starting number 61) and car of the eventual fifth-placed Jean-Louis Schlesser, Jean-Pierre Jabouille and Alain Cudini (starting number 62). (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: A90F550)

23C0148_006

Sauber-Mercedes C 9 Group C racing car. Photo from the 1989 Le Mans 24 Hours, won by Sauber-Mercedes with a one-two. Pit stop of the car of the later runners-up Mauro Baldi, Kenny Acheson and Gianfranco Brancatelli with the starting number 61. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 89F587)

23C0148_007

Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29). Authentically reconstructed vehicle from 2014. Studio photo from front left. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 1726885)

23C0148_008

Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29). Wind tunnel measurement of the authentically reconstructed vehicle in 2014. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: D129904)

23C0148_009

Mercedes-Benz 540 K Streamliner (W 29). Drawing from the year 1939. (Photo index number in the Mercedes-Benz Classic Archives: 1979M17)