



Mercedes-Benz Museum
Press Information
12 March 2024

Sculpture in bright red: The Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster

- A public favourite at the Mercedes-Benz Museum
- Numerous details testify to elegance and sublime craftsmanship
- Powerful supercharged engine and innovative suspension
- Debut of the 500 K 90 years ago, at the motor show in Berlin

Stuttgart. “Close-up” – the name of this series from the Mercedes-Benz Museum says it all. Each instalment tells a surprising, exciting or behind-the-scenes story, shining a spotlight on details of a vehicle, an exhibit or an architectural or design feature. In the spotlight this time: the Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29) in Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945.

No. 2/2024: Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29)

Spotlight: The 500 K Special Roadster is a superstar at the Mercedes-Benz Museum. What makes it so fascinating? It is an extraordinary automotive sculpture, whose elegance radiates effortlessly from the 1930s to the present day. This is where the best technology, highly elegant styling and a luxurious interior come together. Anyone approaching this bright red vehicle is mesmerised by its grandeur.

Highly exclusive: The Mercedes-Benz 500 K made its debut at the International Motor Show (IAMA) in Berlin from 8 to 18 March 1934 – 90 years ago. The luxury car was on display as a spectacular “autobahn courier”. The Special Roadster with recessed radiator was added to the model range in October 1934, as the eighth and most expensive body variant: its price was 28,000 reichsmarks. An exorbitant amount, for which you could easily buy a detached house in a prime location at the time.

Illustrious clientele: Celebrities from the worlds of culture, entertainment, business and politics purchased the 500 K – and at the same time enhanced their reputation with this vehicle. Presenting itself on the red carpet? One of the luxury car’s favourite pastimes.

The best of the best: The great effort that went into building the Special Roadster still amazes us today. Starting with the design. The bodywork with the large, elegantly curved wings and long bonnet was designed by stylist Friedrich Geiger. Today he would be called a designer. It gave the car the flair of the “Roaring Twenties”, which are still famous for their exuberance.

Mercedes-Benz Heritage GmbH | Headquarters and Registry Court: Stuttgart, HRB No. 23165
Geschäftsführer/Managing Directors: Marcus Breitschwerdt (Chairman), Bettina Haussmann, 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.

Cosseted: The interior is reminiscent of an elegant salon. The leather on the finely handcrafted seat upholstery and door panels almost “caresses” the driver and front passenger. Everything is colour-coordinated. The driver’s hands grip an ivory-coloured steering wheel. The eye is attracted to a dashboard with instruments that might have come from a watchmaker’s workshop.

Prestigious address: Many customers had individual wishes so the vehicles were produced as one-off examples under the direction of Hermann Ahrens in the special vehicle construction department at the Sindelfingen plant – the place to go for the best coachbuilding of the time. The “Sindelfingen bodywork” badge on the side of the Special Roadster is a testament of quality.

Top performer: Maximum effort was also expended beneath the bodywork. The M 29 supercharged engine of the 500 K is legendary. It delivers **74 kW** (100 hp) and **118 kW** (160 hp) with activated supercharger. The two-bladed Roots blower located upstream of the carburettor is activated by moving the accelerator pedal beyond a pressure point reached at the full throttle position (kickdown effect). This elicits the distinctive roar of the supercharger and the immediately noticeable increase in performance.

Innovation: The modern suspension of the 500 K, adopted from the Mercedes-Benz 380 (W 22), does full justice to the engine power. With its trapezoidal-link front axle and rear swing axle, the patented Daimler-Benz design was not only extremely progressive at the time, but quickly became a common feature of automotive engineering that is still valid today and used worldwide. The rear axle design allowed high speeds with excellent driving safety.

Additional space: The 500 K invites you to savour the details. What might the step on the rear mudguard be used for? Surprise – the Special Roadster is not a two-seater. The flap behind the interior opens up another bench seat, commonly known as the “mother-in-law’s seat”. The step makes entry easier.

Rarity: The 500 K was already rare in the 1930s. Only 342 examples of all body variants were produced between 1934 and 1936. It was immediately followed by the 540 K, whose engine had a larger displacement. Today both versions of the W 29 series are guaranteed top prices at auctions.

Manufacturer’s expert assessment: The Special Roadster in particular was so desirable that body shops from the 1950s onwards converted saloons or convertibles into “Special Roadsters” in the hope of increasing their value. Though of course, only original vehicles from Sindelfingen command the highest prices. The experts at Mercedes-Benz Classic can establish authenticity beyond any doubt.

Contacts:

Friederike Valet, +49 (0) 151 58 622 944, friederike.valet@mercedes-benz.com

Julia Löwenstein, +49 (0) 151 58 610 215, julia.loewenstein@mercedes-benz.com

The Mercedes-Benz Museum is open daily from Tuesday to Sunday, 9 am to 6 pm.

The ticket counter always closes at 5 pm.

Registrations, reservations and the latest information: Monday to Saturday from 9 am until 6 pm by telephone on +49 (0) 711 17 30 000, by email to classic@mercedes-benz.com or online at www.mercedes-benz.com/museum


Press photos and further press releases: media.mercedes-benz.com/content/classic

Further research and multimedia material: [mercedes-benz-archive.com/museum](https://www.mercedes-benz-archive.com/museum)

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Photos and videos

24C0029_001

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29) video. Drone flight through the space.

24C0029_002

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). View from the right.

24C0029_003

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Front view.

24C0029_004

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Open driver's door.

24C0029_005

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). View of the interior.

24C0029_006

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Open rear bench seat known as the “mother-in-law’s seat”.

24C0029_007

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Steering wheel.

24C0029_008

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Dashboard.

24C0029_009

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Dashboard, close-up of the speedometer and clock.

24C0029_010

Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Step to the rear bench seat.

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Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Rear end with spare wheel.

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Mercedes-Benz Museum, Legend Room 3: Times of Change – Diesel and Supercharger, 1914 to 1945. Mercedes-Benz 500 K Special Roadster (W 29). Close-up of the rear bumper.