

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Amazing in Anthracite: is this the best specification for a Mercedes-Benz 300 SL?](#)

Lead

Let's face it, every Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing is a special piece of automotive artistry, but this wonderful example available at Axel Schuette Fine Cars might just be the nicest we've ever come across...



Meeting your heroes can be a truly daunting experience. No matter just how special motoring icons are, they aren't without their flaws. Take the Lamborghini Countach, for example, a car that was spattered on bedroom walls all over the world, but its awful turning circle, and almost impossible-to-navigate reverse gear will leave a lasting effect on the driving experience. Sure, a small issue when you're driving an icon, but there are some classics that blow any imperfections into significance, and even fewer that have no imperfections whatsoever. One of them is the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing, a car built for perfectionists, by perfectionists.

After Mercedes-Benz had dominated Grand Prix racing during the 1930s, and was promptly restarted during the 1950s, chief designer Rudolph Uhlenhaut wanted to create a tubular spaceframe to work in conjunction with the company's straight-six engine, taken from the drop-top 300S. Mercedes took the car racing in 1952, which proved a success, even up against the more powerful and race-exclusive Jaguars and Ferraris of this golden era of racing. Following this, Mercedes-Benz worked tirelessly to bring that on-track glory to the everyday driver, and so in 1954, the W198 300 SL was born, and the motoring world has failed to create a better-looking car since. At least in our humble opinion, anyway.



While many were snapped up by Hollywood stars, this fine example left the factory in November of 1956 and was sent on its way to Mercedes-Benz Distribution of New York, where it enjoyed two owners before heading back to its homeland of Germany in 1978. The 300 SL was, and if you're brave enough, still is one of the best grand tourers ever made. Weighing 1,500 kilos, it isn't exactly the lightest of sports cars, but Mercedes-Benz's engineers knew just how to bring a healthy kick of power should you need it. Its fuel injected M198 straight-six engine was a masterclass in refinement and durability, producing an impressive 215 horsepower. Just to further enhance the longevity of the engine, the 300 SL's mechanical fuel pump would continue to inject fuel into the engine between the ignition shut-off and the engine shutting off entirely, where this fuel would wash away the oil film, ensuring the issue of oil dilution, excessive ring wear, and scouring of the cylinder walls would be minimised.



Production of the coupé continued until 1957, making this Anthracite Grey example one of the later models. Finished to a wonderful standard both inside and out, this example has been maintained within Dr. Räker's famous collection, parked alongside numerous Porsche rarities. According to Axel Schuette's research, the documentation encloses a photo showing the Gullwing in its original colour of Light Blue. It was then given a complete overhaul in the early 2000s, before hopping to various countries with new owners at each, before arriving back in Germany to be fully prepared for sale. A highlight of this 300 SL has to be the interior, which has been finished in a stunning deep tan leather with striking green tartan inserts, a nod to the 722-toting 300 SLR of Sir Stirling Moss. In addition to the unusual interior, this example comes complete with a two-piece luggage set designed for the car, as well as a unique Zimmer wooden steering wheel

Of the mere 1,500 Gullwings and 1,858 Roadsters that were built over a pretty lengthy period (considering the costs involved with manufacturing such a car) this well-documented example presents a fantastic opportunity to acquire a true jewel in Mercedes-Benz's history!

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