

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Christophe Duchesne took his Mercedes SL on a 16,000km Can-Am road trip to Pebble Beach](#)

Lead

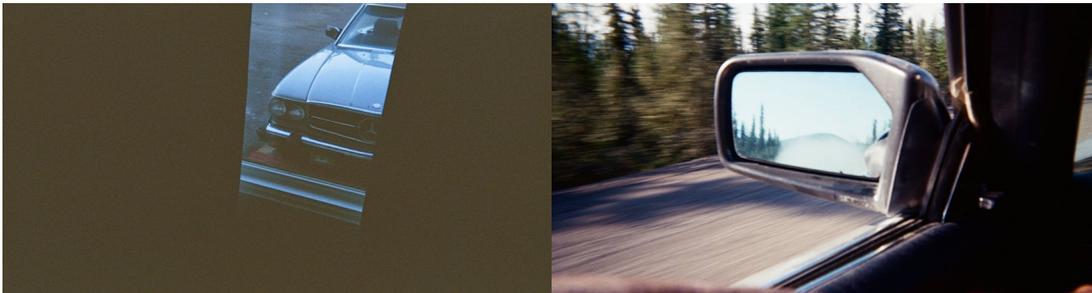
Think of your bucket list road trip, one that involves breathtaking views and unforgettable experiences, and now times it by four. That's exactly what Christophe Duchesne's embarked on in his trusty 250,000km Mercedes-Benz SL!



Road tripping across the West Coast of America is a once-in-a-lifetime dream for so many out there. The quirky characters along the way, the very occasional run-in with a state trooper, and enough 7-Eleven snacks to last a week, all in the name of making life-long memories and stories to tell the grandkids. That's what us Europeans envision when it comes to trips like this, anyway, but for Automotive Designer and Social Media Manager of [BorromeodeSilva](#), as well as being Chief Vibe Inspector of [Tutto Bene](#), and all-round smile-giver [Christophe Duchesne](#), his West Coast adventure started in the leafy suburbs of an entirely different country, Edmonton in Canada, to be exact.



Christophe's mission was simple: drive his family-owned Mercedes-Benz 380SL from his hometown of Edmonton heading as north as he possibly can towards The Arctic Ocean, only to then double-back and ride the West coast all the way to the sun-kissed fairways of Pebble Beach Country Club, ahead of a jam-packed week surrounding Monterey Car Week. The route, all 16,000 kilometres of it would be better suited to that of perhaps a high-speed sleeper train or private jet, but for Christophe, journeys such as these are all part of the fun, and one he'd ventured on enough times before, he could name the ten best stop-off points with complete ease.



And so, loaded up with the original Mercedes-Benz tool-roll, a trusty 35mm camera and several meetings to attend in California, Christophe set off on his adventure, the 380SL primed and ready for a few more thousand kilometres added to its already-impressive 250,000 on the odometer. Despite his previous excursions spanning West-bound across Canada's vast landscape of ever-changing mountain passes and deserted freeways, Christophe was keen to venture further North towards the Arctic Ocean, before heading along the Western edge that connects Vancouver with Seattle. As the kilometres ticked off, the big-bumpered SL took it all in its stride, the 3.8-litre V8 purring along, while still offering Christophe a spirited driving experience that combined the thrill of a sports car with the comfort and luxury Mercedes-Benz is renowned for.



The Arctic Ocean was within touching distance for Christophe and the three-pointed star drop-top, but the Merc's unwavering reliability was beginning to show signs of weakness. While much of the routes Christophe had chosen were perfectly suited to the SL's armchair-like suspension, a few gravel roads caused an issue with the exhaust, and Christophe needed to fix it, fast. Being heavily involved with renowned design house Borrromeo de Silva, his friends, colleagues and event organisers were eagerly awaiting his arrival into California, and so arriving late was not an option. With the SL's exhaust showing no signs of fixing itself, a roadside zip-tie fix was successful, and Christophe was able to continue his quest, now deep in the permafrost between the Ogilvie and Richardson mountain range.



What's key to remember at this point, is the fact Christophe is charging through this almighty road trip with no decked-out Ford Bronco in tow or support crew to take over when the going gets tough, he travelled with minimal tools, spare parts and just enough clothing to get by for a week or so, something which Christophe was eager to point out. While the sun beamed down during the daytime, the SL's MB-TEX leather soaking in the Vitamin D, at night the temperature plummeted, and Christophe was forced to wrap up in his thickest winter clothing.



The Arctic Circle was next in the SL's line of sight, when disaster struck. The cloud-like suspension of the R107 had called it quits, and Christophe found himself with ever-increasing rear suspension damage the more he soldiered on. Unable to fix it himself roadside, he found refuge in a quiet workshop, where Christophe was amazed to discover the owner had an MGB Roadster that was waiting for a restoration inside, the most unlikely of cars to see in what was a vast emptiness of anything automotive.



With a temporary suspension fix in place, but by no means running as well as the day it rolled out of Merc's factory, Christophe and the 380SL had some ground to make up. Unforeseen breakdowns and stops had meant he was behind schedule, and despite missing the eagerly awaited ISSIMI party during Car Week, Christophe cruised into Monterey feeling like he'd claimed victory at the Mille Miglia. He enjoyed all the sights, sounds and smells Monterey had to offer during this unforgettable week of car-themed heaven - including the launch of [BorromeodeSilva's Eccentrica restomod](#) at The Quail, a pit lane visit at Laguna Seca and a walk across the lawn at the Pebble Beach concours. The fact was, Christophe had completed the Miglia Miglia four times over during his commute, and had the same distance to cover all the way back to Canada only a few days later.



The long and winding journey back home was one spent nursing the SL, where thankfully the suspension issue had been fixed in Oregon, and mechanically it was ready to do the whole journey again. Christophe has spent his fair share of time behind the wheel of some of the world's coolest cars, from [Nardone's restomodded 928](#) to [Benedict Radcliffe's space-framed beach buggy](#), but after hundreds of hours behind the wheel of this R107, this is where he feels most at home.

Gallery

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