

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This Mercedes 300SL Gullwing is a cyan-coloured bird of paradise](#)

Lead

We're so used to seeing Mercedes-Benz 300 SL 'Gullwings' in silver that when this cyan-coloured example emerged in the Classic Driver Market - seemingly coinciding with the arrival of the summer - we simply had to send our photographer Rémi Dargegen to investigate...

Mercedes-Benz revealed the production 300 SL 'Gullwing' alongside the similarly styled 190 SL at the 1954 International Motor Sports Show in New York. The glitzy occasion came just six months after the board had gratuitously succumbed to the American Mercedes agent Max Hoffman's tireless pleas for a sports car to offer his well-heeled clientele. Derived from the successful purpose-built 300 SL racing cars, the 'Gullwing' proved immediately popular, despite its eye-watering 29,000 DM price tag. To put that into perspective, the Mercedes 170 Vb was on sale at the same time for a mere 7,900 DM.

A conservative palette



We wonder if it was the aforementioned price tag that caused so many customers to order their cars in the standard metallic silver. A whopping 530 (or 39%) of the 1,400 Mercedes 300 SLs built were delivered in this colour - that's some 27% more than white, which was the second most popular colour. Towards the end of the car's production in 1956 and 1957, customers became more adventurous in their colour choices. In addition to ten standard colours, [Mercedes](#) was able to offer special orders for almost any shade imaginable. These included a light ivory, an ivy green and a 'Moonstone' grey, among many others.

Time and a place



Personal preference dictates that, regardless of whether a car is in wonderfully original condition, has been lovingly maintained or is fabulous to drive, colour is still arguably the most pivotal factor while buying a car. We are largely guided by our tastes and characters when it comes to colour, and it's often all too easy to follow the crowd in the quest for understatement. As the old saying goes, there's a time and a place for everything, and with summer giving us a tantalising taste of things to come, we think [this cyan-coloured Mercedes 300 SL 'Gullwing'](#) currently for sale at [DPM Motors in Monaco](#) is perfect.

The original special-order shade (officially called 'Ice Blue' and believed to be unique) is in your face, to say the least, yet actually flatters the sensuous and graceful shape of the 300 SL's body remarkably. We can't recall seeing a 'Gullwing' in this colour before - it's a little flatter and a little brighter than the factory's standard light blue - and we're scratching our heads as to why. Sure, it's bound to split opinion and generate attention in equal measure, but what did you expect driving a 300 SL?

Casino Square style



It's inside where this car really steals our attention, though. The tasteful deep red leather contrasts beautifully with the exterior hue, which punctuates the snug and sculptured interior in the inlay of the bold dashboard. It seems everywhere you look the red is complemented by lashings of blue, and there's even some ivory vying for attention in the form of the steering wheel and gear knob. We lust to clamber into the cabin (with a little help from the folding steering wheel), nestle into those sumptuous buckets and go for a relaxed cruise around Monte-Carlo, perhaps even cocking a door skyward as we arrive in Casino Square.

A 1956 model, this 300 SL was extensively restored several years ago, and is on the button and ready to go. Why not buck the trend this summer, and try something different? You certainly won't find another cyan-coloured 300 SL at any of the events you'll be invited to, either - we're quite sure the same can't be said of silver...

Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2016

Gallery

