

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [How one man found his dream Mercedes-Benz 190 E DTM car here on Classic Driver](#)

### Lead

A lifetime of affiliation and appreciation for these Mercedes-Benz racing legends led Australian-born Meon Nehrybecki to this moment, the acquisition of a period-raced 190 E 2.5 16v DTM car via our very own Classic Driver Market!



Mercedes has long been known for their bulletproof build quality, and the 190 E was one of the cars that helped cement the brand in history as manufacturers of road-going tanks with number plates. However, to fully understand how the wide-bodied, apex-hugging 190 E you see before you came to be, we need to rewind the clock.

The story starts in 1974, when Mercedes-Benz first started development on their 'baby model'. They spent a staggering 8 years and over £600,000,000 on R&D for the W201, a figure that still boggles the minds of many today. The result was a car that many agree was completely over-engineered, possessing the renowned comfort, safety, and refinement that defined every Mercedes-Benz during this era.



In 1982, the car was finally launched to immediate success. The model would run for 11 years, with production numbers totalling 1,879,629. Amongst those millions were a few choice special editions, one of which was homologated for the DTM, which leads us nicely onto the Evolution model, born out of a tooth and nail fight between Mercedes and their eternal rivals, BMW.

The rivalry between the two brands intensified in the late 80s, when the regulations within their racing divisions allowed engines up to 2.5 litres. BMW were the first to react with the M3 Sport Evolution. More power, better handling and less weight was a winning recipe, and the car could easily withstand the stresses and strains of intense touring car racing. Mercedes had to retaliate, launching the EVO I in race spec, with just 502 examples of road-going versions for homologation compliance. They sold well, and Merc decided to up the ante in 1990 with the EVO II, their most radical version yet. In true Mercedes fashion, it was incredibly over-engineered, featuring self-levelling suspension, an adjustable rear wing, and reduced drag thanks to its aerodynamic body styling.





When it hit the track, it was unstoppable. It was an era when spectators couldn't get enough of the aggressive racing and huge sponsorship deals and it was reported that the 1990 season eventually amassed over 152 million TV viewers.

They were all there for one reason: to watch legendary racers such as Hans Stuck, Joachim Winkelhock, and of course, Klaus Ludwig bang wheels going into The Karusell at the 'Ring. The sport was reveling in its own success, with sponsorship deals bringing vibrancy and glamour to these boxy machines. However, it was arguably one of the most subtle liveries that stood out the most, that of the Sonax 190 E EVO II, and it was this car that captured the imagination of the owner of the car you see here, Meon Nehrybecki.



Naturally, when it came to tracking down a Sonax 190 E EVO II, there was only one place Meon would look, the Classic Driver Market, of course! We caught up with Meon to find out more about his original race-ready example.

"My passion for cars and Motorsport started from my early Childhood, my father Henry was very involved in Motor racing from the 1960s to the 1980s, having worked for Lola in the UK and designing a few Championship-winning cars for the Australian Champion. Frank Match, as well as other winning cars from that era," Meon tells us.

"So, with that background I was naturally around motor racing circuits from an early age, and attended Bathurst for many years. I ventured into gravel rallying in the 1990s for 10 years until retiring to focus on Business and raising a Family. Once the business and family were more mature, I decided to return to Motor racing, and after attending a Sydney Motorsport Park Group A heritage Touring car event, I knew what I wanted to do.





While Meon is very casual about the acquisition of his iconic “Baby Benz”, we had to find out more about how he tracked down one of the most desirable motorsport Mercedes of the era.

“With the interest growing in the 190 E, I was keeping a keen eye on anything related to these cars online. The COVID-enforced lockdowns meant I had even more time to dedicate to my search, which was when I found this on the Classic Driver Market. It’s a 1991 ex- Mercedes-Benz Motorsport example that was used as a works car, and later lent to the MS-Jet team and driven by ex-F1 driver Jacques Laffite alongside Jörg van Ommen in the 1992 season. After the 1992 season ended, Mercedes then repainted the car in the famous Klaus Ludwig championship-winning livery as it is presented now. As a Mercedes-Benz dealer for some 27 years, it was a natural fit, and I just knew I had to buy it.”



As for the driving experience, we’ll leave it to Meon to fill you in: “My first practice in the car was at the Sydney Classic Heritage Touring Car event, and it exceeded my expectations. The car does everything you ask of it. It stops and corners like nothing I have driven before, and with the engine revving to 9000 RPM, there is no shortage of thrills when you push the accelerator pedal. It is obvious why the 190 E was a Championship winning model and one of, if not the greatest Touring car ever made.”

Photos by James Horne

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