

DAS KABEL

On Saturday, July 28 members were treated to a picnic lunch and social gathering graciously hosted by Robin and Gary Tyer at their beautiful riverfront home at Waterview on the Rappahannock River. The weather was warm and humid, but the predicted rain held off. Long-term members, as well as new members, were treated to a lunch of fried chicken, pulled pork barbecue, coleslaw, potato salad and Robin's world-famous cold bean salad. Desserts included a trifecta of chocolate cake, key lime pie and berry covered white cake. The view of the river from the front porch while dining was spectacular. Cars were parked on the backyard lawn to be admired by all. Door prizes of very nice Mercedes shirts were provided by John Tamborino, parts manager of Mercedes Benz of Midlothian. Even if you didn't win a shirt, no one went away empty handed as he had lighted Mercedes pens for everyone. An enjoyable afternoon had by all. - Owen "Chip Hughes"



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By Ken "I Don't Brake for Corners" Brasfield

A W-123 Goes to StarFest 2018



Six days before departing for StarFest 2018 a “thump, thump, thump” noise and slight “bump, bump, bump” began somewhere in the left front section of my 1984 300 Diesel Turbo Sedan (W-123). This was not good as I was about to depart on a 1600+ mile round trip to Birmingham, Alabama and drive Autobahn Laps at Talladega Super Speedway. I

telephoned Foreign Affairs (my Mercedes Benz repair shop), and Perry (their factory trained technician) said to bring it right in. The next day he informed me that after 34 years the car needed front brake calipers, pads, hoses, disks, inner and outer wheel bearings, ball joints, tie rods, and a sundry of bushings. The front end was realigned too. It took two days for all the parts to arrive and another two days of work. When I arrived to pick up the car Perry was out on a test drive. Upon his return, he said, “just a minute I want to adjust the steering box.” He went out again and returned happy with the results. When Perry is happy, I’m happy. I left the next morning (Thursday) with my good buddy and long distance vintage car navigator, Mahlon Web, for StarFest 2018.

The 700-mile drive from our Shenandoah Valley tree farm to Birmingham was uneventful as it should be in what many consider the best car Mercedes ever built, the W-123. These cars established the reputation of Mercedes Benz via their excellent engineering, build quality and ease of service. It was a time when luxury was defined by longevity, and being “screwed together” better than all the others; not by how many gadgets it has and by their “infotainment” systems. In fact, an advertisement at the time stated “All cars fall apart sooner or later. Ours fall apart later.” Oh how simple, elegant, and true.

The air conditioning was ice cold, and a blessing as July in Alabama is terribly hot and humid. The rebuilt front end was a pure luxury as this was the first time I had experienced

the W-123 properly set up as the factory intended. This is a testament to their advanced



engineering as I thought it drove better than most new cars before the rebuild! Friday morning found us at the Brand Immersion Center at 8:00 AM located on the grounds of the Mercedes Benz factory for our tour. Pictures were not allowed and security was tight. We were unfortunate in that the factory was scheduled to be shut down due to their supplier of aluminum/magnesium sub-frames suffered a fire. Fortunately, they saved enough parts to have a small section of the assembly line functioning for the C-Class so we could at least see some small part of their operation. They normally build the GLE SUV, GLS SUV, the C-Class and the GLE Coupe. All C-Class cars that are sold in the USA are built here. The factory site is 1,000 acres and it has more than 5 million square feet under roof.



The photograph above shows the Mercedes Benz Factory and Grounds. The Visitor's and Training Center Museum, and where the Concours was held can be seen in the lower left hand section of the picture.

After the tour we went back to the Visitor's Center and looked at the cars on display in their museum. The photographs below are some of these.



Friday night's reception was at one of two locations for Mercedes Benz of Birmingham (their newest) where they served a buffet in their gleaming service center. I must say that I am not a new car guy as I find them overly complicated, not particularly pretty, the quality of materials lacking and impair the driving experience by decreasing the skill one needs to be a good driver via "nanny devices." Never-the-less I was impressed by the organization and set up of the entire operation. The food was excellent!

Saturday at 9 AM I entered the Concours in the Preservation Class. I think it was smart of MBCA to create this class as a celebration of surviving cars that are at least 30 years old, well maintained, and graded as to originality and condition. Another aspect of the Preservation Class that I find attractive is that the cars are not competing against each other but against a standard set by the club for originality, maintenance, and care. I also noticed that this class, compared to the other classes in the Concours attracted younger folks; another smart move by MBCA. You are judged first by a two-person team who ticks off things like paint, interior, exterior lights, engine, wheels, tire size, tools, owner's manuals,

glove box lights, vanity mirror lights, dash and console lights, courtesy lights, windshield wipers, etc. They want to see the entire car function. After they finish, a senior judge does the final checking. A perfect score is 100, and you must achieve at least 65 to earn the Preservation Class Award. My car earned an 85 because 15 points were deducted for having an aftermarket radio. Pretty tough standards!

Below are some photographs of the Concours.



It was terribly hot, so we left after the judging and drove to the Barber Motorsports Museum and Park. Even if you are not into motorcycles this place is motorhead heaven as it has the world's largest motorcycle museum and world-class race track. Below are some pictures. The next morning we drove the Autobahn Laps at Talladega Super Speedway! After we were let onto the track property we all parked in the Paddocks for some welcome shade. They



recommended that tires be up to at least 44psi to better handle the 33° banking. They told us not to apply brakes in the corners and stay on the gas as speeds above 100mph are more comfortable on the banking than slower speeds. They said trust your car, no passing, and keep up with the pace vehicle. They let us out in groups of 15, and at least 5 groups were running. Our W-123 was the only vintage car on the track although other folks with vintage cars and all the people from the preservation class were there to watch. My primary concern was not getting in the way of all the modern AMG and non-AMG cars on the track. However, it was the other way around! The problem for me was that the modern cars can accelerate from 80 to 140mph quickly, I can't. So it is imperative for me to maintain a fast and steady speed as it takes a long time to regain lost momentum. Therefore, all the moderns were in my way as they braked in the corners and accelerated in the straights! I was able to drive the car for a total of 42 miles on the speedway, averaging around 95 MPH and hitting 115 MPH a few times. The 33° banking was disorientating at first but, all you had to do was trust them, stay on the gas, trust your car, and steer. It was safe, very well organized, a thrill, and professionally run. I just wish other vintage cars were out there too, and the moderns had stayed off their brakes. Here are some pictures.





That evening Mahlon and I went out alone and found a nice little bistro within walking distance of our hotel and consumed a couple bottles of wine to celebrate all we had set out to do and accomplish. Our drive home the next day was uneventful. Within 3 weeks of the trip's end, I received my Preservation Award Certificate from MBCA and a beautiful grill badge. I encourage all those who drive a Mercedes Benz that is at least 30 years old to find an MBCA sanctioned Concourse and enter your car in the Preservation Class and see how your unrestored classic stacks up. Remember, "All cars fall apart sooner or later. Ours fall apart later." Much later!





The Mercedes-Maybach Vision Concept SUV is one ugly duckling. There I said it. I came right out and told you the truth. Ungarnished, uncensored and entirely accurate. How on earth can a group of educated, style-concise car people sit down and say: *“Yep, that looks good. Let’s put it out there as our top-of-the-line SUV concept.”* ???

That said, once you get past the garish red paint and the gawd-awful styling and step inside, it becomes rather posh (or P.O.S.H. as in Port Out Starboard Home; the view from the First Class Cabins on luxury liners back in the day). There are two bucket seats front and rear separated by a wooden and leather console. The rear console even sports a tea kettle. Avril would love it. Everything about the interior is über premium, with white leather, wood and rose-gold trim surfacing the entire cabin. It even has K-Mart Blue Light Special lighting, although not explicitly mentioned, I expect you can scroll through a variety of colors and hues.

The MMVC sports massive 24-inch turbine-styled wheels and is powered by all-electric, all-wheel drive powertrain featuring four permanent-magnet synchronous motors, which put out 750 hp. The car is electronically limited to a top speed of 155 mph. Mercedes-Benz states the car’s range is more than 200 miles. They did not; however, explain why it is so damn ugly.

- Ed.



The face you make when you see the Mercedes-Maybach Vision Concept SUV for the first time.



By Brad Purvis

I've wanted a Mercedes-Benz SEC for over 30 years, or about half of my lifetime, ever since I saw my first one in California when they were all but new. So I did it. Sight unseen, except pictures over the Internet. Yes, I *know*. The car had issues and CARFAX said it was involved in a rear-end collision, and it has some small patches of rust in a couple of the usual areas. Yes, I *know*. But it is exactly what I wanted and it has some provenance. This car was once owned by the late, great Johnny Carson. **YES, I KNOW!** Now, I've never met Johnny Carson, but I did watch the Tonight Show back in the day. I had met a few celebrities in the past, mostly when I lived in SoCal, but I've never thought of them as extraordinary. Let's see, there was Chuck Connors, Jay Leno, Bruce Willis, Linda Blair, Clint Eastwood, Lance LeGault, Tommy Smothers and Murray Langston, just to name a few. Not that any of them would know me from Adam either then or now, and not sure this has anything to do with this story, but I thought I'd just throw it out there. Shameless name-dropping, if you will.

I'd been watching the car on eBay for a while, and when it was re-listed due to a non-paying buyer at what to me was an attractive *Buy It Now* price, so I bought it! The seller, Mike, who seemed like a nice, personable guy (more on that later), told me his wife began to cry when he told her I bought the car. I suspect she stopped crying when she saw the check. Over the next several days the deal was consummated via wire transfer and FedEx and all that was left was to go out to Los Angeles and fetch the car.

About two weeks later I flew a trip with a scheduled layover in LAX. When I got in, instead of going to the hotel I Ubered (Is that a word?) directly out to Chino to pick up the car from Mike. It was pissing down with rain, and the LA traffic was all the worse for it. To the butt-head who said it never rains in California... *bite me*.

As it was we were late getting into LAX due to ATC delays for the weather in the first place, all this put me a bit on the back foot because I had to then get the car back across town from Chino to Culver City during a wet rush hour. Joy! But I get ahead of myself.

As I say with these types of purchases, on faith, over the Internet, they are seldom as good as you hope, but rarely as bad as you fear. I'd say this was a little closer to the latter. There were a few items which just seem to happen from the time of purchase to the time of pick-up. Go figure. I wouldn't say Mike actually misrepresented the car; however, he wasn't as forthcoming as he could have been. The condition of the cladding and the wheels were enough of a surprise as these defects did not show in the pictures. The interior was not terrible, but worse than I expected with a loose headliner and a faulty seatbelt retractor. I knew about the recalcitrant pax window when I bid on the car.

Anyway, I didn't have as much time to go over the car as I would have liked as time was running short, so after a quick look and chat with Mike it was off to Rafi's Autotech. I found Rafi's on BenzShops.com. Again, it takes a bit of faith to choose a repair shop 2,600 miles away online; however, I vaguely remember reading something about this shop some time

ago and, the reviews were good , I took a chance. I did ring them up before heading west to discuss who, what, where, when and how and Rafi was completely open to helping me out.



Despite the LA rush hour traffic and rain, I was able to get it to the shop with twenty-five minutes to spare on a Friday afternoon, almost getting killed only once along the way. Some Butt-head in a white Porsche Cayenne with a Porsche Downtown LA tag in the license plate frame pulled right out in front of me as he kept darting in and out of traffic. Whether he was a mechanic or salesman or just some doofus-headed delivery boy, I'll never know. Fortunately, my brakes worked well enough and so did the person's behind me. Upon arrival, much to my chagrin, I found another defect on the exterior of the car. Some paint was bubbling on the rear of the hood. I neglected to see it when I picked up the car in all likelihood due to the rain. Oh well, by that time it was a moot point. I handed the keys off to Keith at Rafi's and after a bit of an explanation of what I wanted, I Ubered off to my layover hotel.

Early the next week (I was back home by now), I received a work-order of all the things Rafi thought needed doing. It was about twice the amount I thought would be required to drive across country, but what are you going to do? Turns out the car was more neglected than

loved of late. It's all good though as I think of this as something other than an investment. Almost a calling, if you will, to save an icon. At the end of the day, this will again be one fine automobile. It's not always about the money. Heck, if I played golf I'd spend more on green's fees, clubs, balls, memberships and the 19th Hole. I don't. This is my thing.

Ten days later I was on the first flight out of IAD to LAX. After landing about 20 minutes early, I caught Uber to Rafi's Autotech in Culver City to pick up Johnny. Ronny met me as I walked in and handed me off to Bob, the mechanic who did all the work. He even had the name tag *Bob*, so I knew it was him. What a great experience. Bob showed me all the old parts, and we had a bit of a chat about the car. They did quite a lot of work including replacing the right side passenger window. Bob showed me the completely rotten window cassette, and they saved the old window in the event I need it in the future. As I said, there was a lot of other items addressed, including the tie rods, steering box, etc., etc. I would highly recommend this shop to anyone in SoCal needing some work done to their Mercedes-Benz.



I headed out to Beverly Hills to see if I could get a picture of Johnny at his point of origin, but coming across Mercedes-Benz of Beverly Hills it was apparent it was a new building and not the facility from which Johnny was delivered. I contemplated a picture anyway, but there simply was not a good vantage point, so I headed to Fullerton to visit my step-daughter, Sherri. At least Johnny had a chance to visit his old stomping grounds in the posh section of LA, albeit briefly.

I can't say the drive was without its maladies. The weather in LA was beautiful, so I rolled down all the windows to enjoy the SoCal air and sunshine. Once I got on the Santa Monica Freeway, I went to put the windows back up to cut down on the noise, and when I pushed the button for the right rear window, the switch fell down into the console. Bugger. That would have to be resolved when I got to Fullerton. In addition, about half way there the car's alarm system started going off. Lights were flashing and

the horn was sounding for 30 seconds at a time and then silent for 30 seconds. I managed to pull off at a local shopping center hoping if I shut the car off it would reset. No luck. I checked the fuse box to see if there was a fuse I could pull. No luck there either. Finally, after locking and unlocking the car a couple of times the system reset. No further problems.

After fiddling around long enough to retrieve the window switch and close the window, I took off for the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Irvine, just so I would know where it was so I could pay a visit the next day. As it was well after 4:00 pm by the time I arrived they were closed for the day, but while I was outside a gentleman came out, saw the Virginia license plates, and asked me if I had come a long way. He offered me a chance to go inside for a

brief visit; however, I declined and said I would be back the next day to have a proper look. Very kind of him though.



Looking back, it seems like my initial drive in Johnny when I collected the car from Mike was kind of like a first date. You're not really sure what to expect and hope that it will not be a complete disappointment. It wasn't. Retrieving the car from Rafi's was akin to the second date, which is full of anticipation and although not all was perfect, and even a bit awkward at times what with the window switch and errant alarm system, it was still a lot of fun, and I learned a bit more about my latest acquisition. Johnny still had a long way to go, literally and figuratively, but I came away very satisfied, and I'm looking forward to a long-term relationship. At the end of the day, I was left thinking this will probably be the best car I have ever or will ever own. Time will tell.

To be continued...

EVENTS

Mercedes & Muskets

September 7-9, 2018
Williamsburg, VA
Hosted by MBCA Carolinas Section
Contact: Nick Pasquine
NickPasq@aol.com

Roar & Soar Car & Aircraft Show

September 8, 2018
11:00 am - 4:00 pm
New Kent County Airport
6901 Terminal Road
Quinton, VA 23141
roar-soar.com

CVS Tech Session

September 15, 2018
Mercedes-Benz Midlothian
12200 Midlothian Turnpike
Midlothian, VA 23113
Chip Hughes
olhughes@hssi.net

Governor's Capital Classic Car Show

September 15, 2008
9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Capital Square
Richmond, VA 23219
<https://dgs.virginia.gov/onthesquareVA/special-events/governors-capitol-classic-car-show/>

12th Annual Stratford Hall Wine & Oyster Festival Car Show

Sunday, Sept 16th, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm
Stratford Hall
483 Great House Road
Stratford, VA 22558
Jack Ashburn: 804.435.6171
jackashburn@verizon.net

MBCA Stuttgart Fall Tour*

September 24-30, 2018
Contact: Jim O'Sullivan
osullivanj55@gmail.com
843.671.2079

23rd Annual Wings, Wheels & Keels

Saturday, September 29, 2018
Hummel Airfield
310 Plainview Road
Topping, VA 23169
"Rusty" 804.286.4049
info@wingswheelskeels.com
<http://www.wingswheelskeels.com>

ECW AutoFest

Saturday, October 13, 2018
Williamsburg Jamestown Airport
100 Marclay Drive
Williamsburg, VA 23185
757.220.9660
<https://www.eurocarswmbg.com/car-show>

16th Annual Virginia Fall Classic

October 26, 27 & 28 (Show on Saturday)
Newport News Park
12500 Jefferson Ave., 23603
vafallclassic.org

CVS MBCA Holiday Party

January ??, 2019
12:00 pm to 2:00 pm
Bavarian Chef
5102 S. Seminole Trail
Madison, VA 22727

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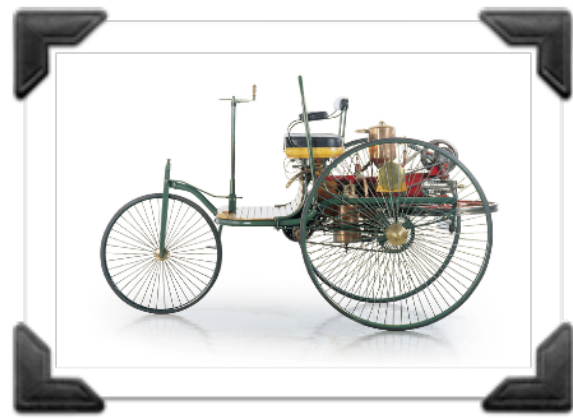
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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William Miranda - Fredericksburg

Gary Ramsey - Rocky Mount

Troy Allen Rutherford - Fishersville



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We encourage our members to submit articles, stories and pictures for publication in *Das Kabel*. We kindly ask you follow the specifications listed below. To submit an article, please send to bradpurvis@mac.com. Make sure you reference *Das Kabel* somewhere in the subject line.

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15th of the month preceding the issue month,
i.e.,

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Text: any Arial, Verdana or Helvetica

Font Size: 10-12 pt

Format: Word, Pages or Text file

Photos: max size 1MB, jpeg or gif
(min 800 x 800 pixels)

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ERATTA

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respectability, nobility, purity, ethics and good character. Any modifications possibly affecting emissions or safety are just silly and should not be attempted. Neither this publication nor this organization, Editor or his minions will assume any liability for ensuing consequences for your inept application of those techniques described herein. *So there. (photo courtesy of Daimler AG)*

- Editor



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