



San Francisco Bay Area Section, Mercedes-Benz Club of America

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June 2016 e-mail edition

FORTY AND STILL A SHINING STAR

by Derick B. TeeKing



In 1976, Mercedes-Benz introduced what would be an automotive celebrity, the W123 series. Today, the W123 sedan is highly regarded as one of the world's best engineered cars and a benchmark in automotive annals. The W123 is heralded for its design integrity, exceptional build quality, and practical luxury. At 40 years old, it is a star in the Mercedes-Benz history.

As a tribute to its longevity and popularity, the W123 will take center stage this month at the renowned [San Francisco Opera](#). Six W123's will have central roles in a modern interpretation of Georges Bizet's famous 1875 opera, Carmen, set in southern Spain, or possibly North Africa, in the mid 1970's. The cast of W123's includes three 300Ds, two 300CDs (one of which has been converted into a convertible) and a 240D.

The story of Carmen was first published in a novella by Prosper Mérimée in 1845, 30 years before Georges

Bizet adopted it for his opera. Internationally acclaimed Spanish theater director Calixto Bieito is working to create SF Opera's 20th century Carmen, based on a concept he originally developed in 2015 at the English National Opera. Suggestive of the deterioration of Franco's Spain in the 1970's, Bieito infuses masculine sexual energy rampant in a military outpost to create a modern interpretation of the classic.

The locale of Bieito's Carmen is Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in North Africa, across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain. About the size of San Francisco (seven square miles), Ceuta is one of the gateway port towns of North Africa. There W123s abound and thrive as liveries (a sea of blue and white taxis congest Ceuta and the region's other shipping and transport hubs) as well as serving as the vehicle of choice for nomads, gypsies and smugglers.



The W123's duties as a workhorse, caravan, and general part of daily life are a tribute to the car's build quality, ease of maintenance, and design integrity. It is a machine with purpose of practicality as well as prestige. These are the attributes worthy of the tri-star symbol that represent the durability engineered into a Mercedes-Benz. Remember, before there was "The Best or Nothing" there was "Engineered Like No Other Car in the World."

Chrome (under a layer of patina) still shines under the minimal stage lighting (as much of what happens in the opera is in the cover of night), the W123s make their entrance in a graceful and mesmerizing choreography of metal and humanity. The cars appear first in the famous seguidilla scene of Act II which Bieito has moved from a tavern in Seville in the traditional version, to a torch-lit desert party rendezvous; and again in Act III in the smugglers encampment. Each car enters the stage silently pushed by the performers. The cars perform a vehicular dance as they are maneuvered to their marks, captivating the audience and complimenting the

undertones of carnal pleasure and sexual energy of Carmen.

Finding (and Modifying) the W123s

Carmen's six W123s were sourced and modified by Janet Migliore's MB Garage in San Mateo, California, just south of San Francisco. Starting in late November 2015, Janet and her team began collaborating with Lori Harrison, the SF Opera's Master of Properties, to secure six W123 vehicles. They were able to find them throughout the Bay Area, where these most durable of Mercedes can be easily found. In some cases the cars were too old and neglected to drive away to MB Garage and required assistance from AAA. Over a three month period, Janet modified the cars for stage duty, delivering the last of them to the SF Opera in April.

As part of the brief Janet's team had to remove the cars' cast iron diesel engines, transmissions, drive shafts, and fuel tanks. Weight savings totaled over 800 pounds. As modified the cars weigh approximately 2,500 pounds-equivalent in weight to a new 2017 Mazda Miata with its driver.



The cars appear to ride slightly higher on their springs and shocks as a result of their weight loss program, giving them more bounce as the cast jumps, fights and dances atop the cars. Eventually the suspensions will be modified to compensate for their newly found lightness. The cars are easily and silently pushed on stage during performances by 3-4 chorus members (and in one case driven around with the aid of an electric motor powered by four car batteries and a converter). Each car's hood, trunk and roof have been reinforced with plywood and cushioning to allow the cast to dance, jump and battle without risk of significantly denting the sheet metal.





Further modification of one of the two coupes was made in the form of a W123 convertible-perhaps, one of only a handful of W123 convertibles, albeit unsafe for road use. The cabriolet conversion was performed in-house by Lori and her prop team. Careful alterations had to be made to ensure that the convertible was safely converted and padded for their roles in the Opera.

Abbreviated History of W123s

The W123 was first introduced in Europe in 1976 and a year later to the United States. By 1977, the sedans were joined by a stylish two-door coupe and Mercedes-Benz's first factory production station wagon. The wagon was known as the "T" for "tourism and transport", and continued into production until 1986, overlapping deliveries of its sedan descendent, the W124.

Several engines were introduced with a wide range of engines from 4 to 6 cylinders, carbureted to fuel injected, gasoline to diesel. The North American market received an exclusive coupe - both diesel and turbo diesel variants of the 300CD were available only to the U.S. and Canada. Further, North American and Japan buyers were offered the opportunity to acquire the 300D turbo diesel sedans from 1981 to 1985. [Reference chart below for model designates and production volumes.]

In the W123's eleven yearlong production cycle nearly 2.7 million vehicles were produced (100,000 more than the W124 despite an extra year of production-1985-1996). Today, the W123 can be commonly found on U.S. interstates, country roads and urban streets. Abroad the W123 continues to serve as taxis and liveries. The series has forever been woven into the fabric of the automotive landscape. It is a car with star status.

The W123 was once a star of the Mercedes-Benz line-up, serving as an alternative to super luxury S-class.

The role of this mid-sized Mercedes in Carmen is a befitting fortieth anniversary tribute to one of Daimler-Benz's most successful and widely-favored, young timer classics. Happy 40th to W123-may its star power continue to shine. (See Side Bar below for additional information)

SUMMER IS ALMOST HERE





I can't believe how quickly 2016 is going by and that summer is just around the corner, but we've had some very exciting and well attended events this year and there are more to come. Remember to regularly check the website for updated information on scheduled events and First Sunday Drives.

One upcoming event this summer that is very exciting and fun, and have frequently attended is the Hillsborough Concours d'Elegance. This is not a section sponsored event, but one that we want to support. This is not just any car show, but the longest consecutively run Concours in the United States; if not the world. If that isn't enticing enough, the featured European marque this year is Mercedes-Benz. Do I need to say more? As Mercedes-Benz aficionados, imagine seeing beautiful Mercedes displayed on the lush grounds of the Crystal Springs Golf Course, as well other marques. So save the date and plan to either attend or participate in the 2016 Hillsborough Concours d'Elegance on July 17, 2016.

<p>2016 HILLSBOROUGH CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE</p>		<p>60TH ANNIVERSARY! CRYSTAL SPRINGS GOLF COURSE JULY 17TH, 2016 • 10 AM - 4 PM</p>
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Whether you have a Concours quality show car or a daily driver, there is nothing more fun than participating in a Concours. Mr. Rob Fisher, the Concours Chairman has been working closely with our section and is very excited to have our club members enter their cars. We are committed to having the marque well represented. Even though registration has officially closed, he has notified me that he's still looking for Concours quality cars to be entered; especially any pre-war Mercedes-Benz. I know that many of our members have beautiful cars, so why not enter your car in the 2016 Hillsborough Concours. If you do have a Concours quality car (pre-war or post-war) that you would like to enter, please let me know and I can arrange the contact.

Additionally, he has also made special arrangements for our section members to enter their cars in the German

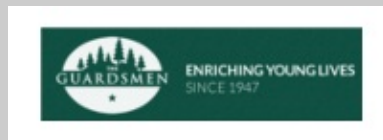
Car Corral, for those that wish to display their car and enjoy all the excitement and atmosphere of a Concours, but do not want to have their car judged. He has extended registration for The Corral up to and including the day of the show. There is room for 200 cars in The Corral section.

But aside from displaying your car at the Concours on Sunday, July 17th, there are additional related events that shouldn't be missed. The festivities for the Concours weekend start on Friday, July 15th, with a charity Cocktail Reception at the famed Carolands Mansion in Hillsborough featuring gourmet food, adult beverages and music in a grand setting.



The weekend festivities continue with the annual Tour Drive on Saturday, July 16, that will take you to the Keller Estate Winery and Collection for wine tasting, lunch and a private tour of outstanding Mercedes-Benz automobiles. You do not need to enter your car in the Concours to attend either of these two events. Additional information and ticket purchase is available on their website. www.hillsboroughconcours.org

Most importantly, the net proceeds from the Hillsborough Concours benefits several worthwhile causes.



Enter your car now and enjoy the day talking with other auto enthusiasts about your car and the marque. I'll be there and hope to see you as well!

Lou Piccinini

Special Note: Website Revisions

Our website is being revised by the National Office.
Please bear with us as we get things under control!

The Cobra Experience



A small but enthusiastic group of Golden Gate Stars enjoyed a unique opportunity to learn about the career of legendary racer and builder Carroll

Shelby. In an unexpectedly large and complete automotive museum hidden away in Martinez, we wandered among two dozen wonderful race and sports cars, covering the evolution of the Shelby Cobra through its earliest hand-made models to the Ford-powered Shelby Mustangs and GT's.

Board member Chris Barker and other attendees shot hundreds of photos, and were treated to a visual and audio thrill during a 20-minute film in the state-of-the-art theater. The video begins with a camera placed at pavement level in the middle of a roadway, in a quiet setting (probably nearby Briones Reservoir). Slowly, the faint sound of a powerful engine approaching builds, growing in intensity to a near ear-shattering growl, and then the camera records a Cobra flashing overhead, rapidly receding into the distance. The video then took us through Shelby's life and accomplishments, including the only time an American builder won the coveted international competition for race car manufacturers.

Welcome New Members

Roger & Victoria Evans, Foster City, CA
Matt Frymier, Belvedere, CA
Kevin Larrier, Castro Valley, CA
John Larsen, Montara, CA
Michael Parisi, Rio Vista, CA

TECH SESSION - CARBONITE DETAILING

June 30 - 10:00 AM

Ever wonder how they get these new and used cars so clean? Everything is just perfect isn't it? Come and join us for a demonstration by Ian Osgood who started detailing cars after school at the age of 13. He continued doing this through college. He went on to work at Tesla in their detail department and produced videos and manuals they use to detail their new cars. In Aug. of 2015, he started his own business and will show us some of the processes he uses to get older cars looking like new. In addition to his professional techniques, he will show us things we can do at home, many of which use very little water, to keep our cars looking like new. Past President, Gloria Loventhal, and husband Richard, will have their 1960 220 cabriolet on site. Ian will use their car to show us his various techniques to rejuvenate older finishes. You will be amazed at how good it looks.

So come join us for this very informative demonstration.

Carbonite Detailing, 1029 American St., San Carlos
Cost is \$15.00 and you will need to sign up on [Motorsport.Reg](#)

Contact Peter Judy for more information: 408-348-2239 or prjudy1@verizon.net

One very special feature of our tour was the presence of "JL" Henderson, Shelby's long-time right-hand man and associate, who shared personal stories of the various Shelby enterprises. JL also brought and donated a stack of cancelled checks from Shelby American, Inc., from 1964, at the height of Shelby race car production. Each attendee was given a check, and reviewing the payees and amounts is a fascinating history lesson. One check reflects lodging expense for a race event in the Nassaus; another records a payment of \$2.20 to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph...the monthly phone bill. JL, who began his life-long automotive career racing jalopies on Southern California dirt tracks, casually commented that he, too, owns a rare leather Shelby racing team jacket like the one displayed in a glass case. (One of our tech-savvy members Googled it and whispered, "Those things are worth \$5,000!")

Lunch was announced by museum co-founder Drew Serb firing up the throaty un-muffled V-8 of a GT, throttling it through the different rev ranges, causing our Treasurer Mauna Wagner to plug her ears. Click [here](#) for a video. The rest of us suffered the audible battering with foolish teenage-boy grins. After a hearty lasagna meal with JL sharing tales of yore, we visited the gift shop with its amazing collection of Shelby books and memorabilia, at surprisingly reasonable prices. As the event ended, members were provided brochures and directions to the John Muir Home Historic Site, located less than a mile away.

The Cobra museum is a gem of automotive racing history, and more information is available at www.cobraexperience.org.

Jack Weir

Mt. Diablo First Sunday Drive

June 5, 2016

Meet at 9:30am; Depart at 10am



Our starting point for this drive is Peet's Coffee in Castro Valley, located at 20439 Redwood Road. From Hwy 580 west-bound, take the Castro Valley off ramp, and proceed about 1.5 miles on Castro Valley Blvd to Redwood Road; turn right into Peet's. From Hwy 580 east-bound, take the Redwood Road off ramp; turn left and proceed across Castro Valley Blvd; turn left into Peet's.

After gathering, we'll travel through Castro Valley to San Ramon, and then out to Blackhawk, from there up the Southgate Road to the summit of Mt. Diablo State Park, down the Northgate Road to Walnut Creek, and on to Clayton, where the ride will end and we'll have lunch at Ed's Mudville Sports Bar and Grill.

For additional details, click [here](#).



Monterey Car "Week" - August 8th - 21st

Do you have a favorite event or pictures to share?



Send your suggestions, experiences, or recommendations along with a few photos to: David Sears (dv.sears@gmail.com) and have them included in our annual GG Star Car Week Preview and Member Recommendations article for 2016.

Volunteers and Judges Needed at Legends of the Autobahn Friday, August 19th

We are seeking volunteers and judges for Legends of the Autobahn, on Friday, August 19th at the Nicklaus Club in Monterey. Volunteer jobs include set up on Thursday afternoon, August 18th, vehicle check-in, field placement, hosting in the MBCA tent, assembling registrants' gifts bags, and clean up. If you can volunteer, contact Allen Stephens atallen.c.stephens@gmail.com or 503-708-0397.

If you'd like to be a judge, contact Richard Simonds at (650) 592-7613 or rsimonds@pacbell.net.



Your suggestions for club activities are always welcome! Please feel free to contact your Officers to talk about any club-related matter!

Visit our club website for up-to-date information on club events.

sfba.mbca.org

Officers

President: [Lou Piccinini](#) (650) 291-2805

Vice President: [Eric Wee](#) (650) 406-9078

Secretary: [Sally Hinds](#) (408) 480-6826

Treasurer: [Mauna Wagner](#) (925) 934-7220

Membership:

Newsletter: [Denise Sheehan](#) (925) 683-2708

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Remembering Michael Sweeney

Michael & Irene ~ the cheerful couple who always brought their good spirit to an event, we could always count on them! We met them at the Oktoberfest in 1996 and later again in '97 at our home in Monte Sereno. At the First Midsummer Night's Dream party was Laura Simonds in the



National Events

Starfest 2016, Hosted by MBCA Minuteman Section



Celebrate Classic Performance at
Legends of the Autobahn®



lead. It was a new type of event and among the guests was the couple enjoying the surroundings, the pool, the vineyard and the chardonnay! It was just before the party, and I had to have some quick repairs ordered on our long driveway which turned out to be only so-so. Not knowing that Michael was quite knowledgeable on the subject I was apologizing for it. He gave me short, but very good advice on how to have the problem solved; especially how to deal with the contractors! As the event was developing we found friendship which lasted through the years for the Sweeneys were delightful guests at all the following six Mid-Summer

parties. At the end of the parties, they helped clean up, and we always discussed the event with them with the last glasses in hand, waving farewell to the guests, still cheerful at 2 AM. Months later, as I talked with contractors about the driveway one of them asked me with a surprised face "How did I learn so much about this?" I answered, "I have a good friend, Mike."

Sandor Drobilisch

Tech Session Event - Mercedes of Marin



The number 13 has always been regarded with fear and suspicion and is considered unlucky by many. But for 13 members of the San Francisco MBZ club who attended a tech session at Mercedes of Marin in San Rafael, CA, it was a lucky day. After saving up a refreshingly



Legends of the Autobahn® returns to Monterey Car Week on Friday, August 19th at the Nicklaus Club. Be a part of the celebration of the world's pre-eminent German vehicle brands - Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi.

MBCA Members are invited to enter their automobiles in the judged Concours classes, the display-only corral, or the Silver Star Preservation class.

For 2016, Mercedes-Benz at Legends of the Autobahn will feature a special performance class for cars that have been modified or tuned. This includes cars that have been modified for performance and/or appearance, such as pre-merger models from AMG, or modified Mercedes-Benz from Lorinser or Brabus. Mercedes-Benz automobiles used in racing are also invited to participate. To be eligible for this class, your Mercedes-Benz must be manufactured prior to 1997.

Register your Mercedes-Benz at www.legendsoftheautobahn.org. The deadline to register is July 31st. For more information contact Allen Stephens at 503-708-0397 or orallen.c.stephens@gmail.com.

a lucky day. After serving us a refreshingly delicious breakfast, we gathered under a new Mercedes with its right front brake exposed. For more than an hour and twenty minutes we were spell bound listening to Joe Shirado, who's been with this dealership since 1991, and were treated to an explanation of how a brake "job" is done and how the brakes function. Mr. Shirado is more than an expert. His presentation was excellent and he took questions from our curious members and delivered in depth responses to all of them. It was a memorable event enjoyed by all.

We are in debt to the dealership and owe them a sincere thank you for a job well done.

Martin Perlmutter



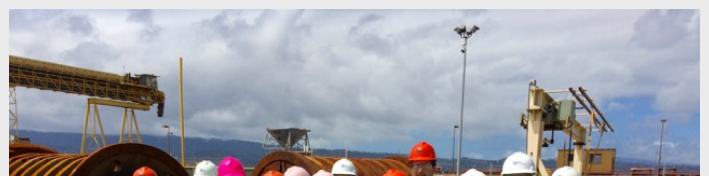
Other Events of Interest



Patrick Ottis's 1934 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
WELCOME TO FIRST SATURDAY

Sims Metal Management Yard

On April 27, 14 members gathered at the Sims Metal Management yard for a tour of the facility. We started off with a talk by General Manager Jim Banigan and a video about the operations at the yard. He was very enthusiastic and answered all our questions with complete knowledge; so nice to have someone who loves his job.



Biscotti and Cars

First Saturday Each Month
Sausalito



Canepa Cars and Coffee

April to October
Second Saturday
8:00 to Noon

The 2016 California Lincoln Highway Classic Car Tour

September 23-26, 2016

Click [here](#) for additional information.



At this point we all donned hard hats and safety vests and had a very complete tour around the yard. I think we were all impressed with the amount of scrap that comes in everyday and has to be processed into orderly mountains to be shipped around the world. We watched as the grapple operator took a large wad of cyclone fencing and used it as a giant broom to sweep up the platform where the trucks dump their loads. He made it look so easy, like us brushing crumbs off a table. I think everyone had memorable day.

Peter Judy

SIDE BAR

I Want My MTV (and W123)

Carmen is not the only lyrical diva who has been captivated by Mercedes W123s. The car can be seen in contemporary MTV videos with modern artists as well. The car has made cameo appearances in two billboard topping music videos alongside award winning artistic mavens the likes of Madonna and Adele. A Petrol Blue/Blue Green Metallic coupe can be spotted in "4 Minutes (to Save the World)", featuring Madonna and Justin Timberlake. Madonna dances her way thru the two-door W123 to escape the impending apocalypse.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAQZPBwz2CI> starting at 1:27]



Madonna exiting a W123 coupe, "4 Minutes" (2008)

And in Adele's second single, "Chasing Pavements", from her 2008 debut album, 19, she begins her

soliloquy in a Midnight Blue sedan. The car can be seen throughout the video.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08DjMT-qR9g>].

These two examples of the W123 reinforce the W123 influence on contemporary culture.



Adele waiting in a W123 sedan, "Chasing Pavements" (2008)

W123 STATISTICS

Mercedes-Benz 123 series - Production figures

Models	Internal designation	Production period: preproduction to end	Number of units
Saloon			
200 D	W 123 D 20	1976 - 1979	378 138
220 D	W 123 D 22	1976 - 1979	56 736
240 D	W 123 D 24	1976 - 1985	448 986
300 D	W 123 D 30	1976 - 1985	324 718
200	W 123 V 20	1976 - 1980	158 772
230	W 123 V 23	1976 - 1980	195 920
250	W 123 V 25	1976 - 1985	114 796
280	W 123 V 28	1975 - 1981	33 206
280 E	W 123 E 28	1975 - 1985	126 004
200 (M 102)	W 123 V 20	1980 - 1985	217 315
230 E	W 123 E 23	1980 - 1985	245 588
300 D Turbodiesel*	W 123 D 30 A	1981 - 1985	75 261
Station wagon			
230 T	S 123 V 23	1978 - 1980	6 884
250 T	S 123 V 25	1978 - 1982	7 704
280 TE	S 123 E 28	1978 - 1986	19 789
240 TD	S 123 D 24	1978 - 1986	38 903
300 TD	S 123 D 30	1978 - 1986	36 874

200 T	S 123 V 20	1980 - 1986	18 860
230 TE	S 123 E 23	1980 - 1986	42 284
300 TD Turbodiesel	S 123 D 30 A	1980 - 1986	28 219
Coupe			
230 C	C 123 V 23	1977 - 1980	18 675
280 C	C 123 V 28	1977 - 1980	3 704
280 CE	C 123 E 28	1977 - 1985	32 138
300 CD**	C 123 D 30	1977 - 1981	7 502
230 CE	C 123 E 23	1980 - 1985	29 858
300 CD Turbodiesel**	C 123 D 30 A	1981 - 1985	8 007
Long-wheelbase saloon			
240 D long	V 123 D 24	1977 - 1985	3 841
300 D long	V 123 D 30	1977 - 1985	4 679
250 long	V 123 V 25	1977 - 1985	5 180
Chassis			
240 D	F 123 D 24	1976 - 1985	794
230	F 123 V 23	1976 - 1980	265
230 E	F 123 E 23	1980 - 1985	294
Long-wheelbase chassis			
240 D	VF 123 D 24	1976 - 1985	1 159
300 D	VF 123 D 30	1976 - 1985	2 602
250	VF 123 V 25	1976 - 1985	2 888
280 E	VF 123 E 28	1977 - 1985	371

Official total 2 696 914

* Export to North America and Japan

** Export to North America

Source: Daimler.com

Local Shops

San Francisco





Pete's Inc., 1745 Clay Street, San Francisco, 415.441.5896

Mid-Peninsula, San Mateo



MB Garage, 2165 Palm Ave., San Mateo

South Bay, Campbell



Al Bernal
(408) 394-3057

155 Kennedy Avenue
Campbell, CA 95008

Mercedes Connexion, 155 Kennedy Ave., Campbell