
1959 Mercedes-Benz SL 190 - 190SL Roadster

190SL Roadster

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Estimate | USD 140 000 - 180 000 | Drive | LHD |
| Year of manufacture | 1959 | Interior colour | Other |
| Lot number | 157 | Condition | Used |
| | | Location | |
| | | Fuel type | Petrol |
| | | Exterior colour | Other |

Description

To be OFFERED AT AUCTION at Auctions America's Fort Lauderdale event, April 1-3, 2016.

Estimate:

\$140,000 - \$180,000 US

The Mercedes-Benz 300SL is perhaps one of the most well recognized and respected automobiles for its clever architecture, wondrous beauty and superb performance; excelling on the race track as well as the road. Its success and historical significance for Mercedes-Benz has resulted to their tremendous appreciation in the market, currently breaching the million dollar mark in value. The 300SL has certainly made its statement in the history books as well as the money they command, but its sibling is also beginning to arise as a force to reckon with. The 300SL's smaller counterpart is known as the 190SL, sharing several of the qualities that made the 300SL such an excellent car. On a technical basis, the 190SL offered plenty of the capabilities and racing inspired technologies that were utilized in the 300SL including double wishbone suspension system in the front and swing axles in the rear however, the 190SL boasted a smaller engine more applicable to the masses and casual use.

The 190SL is powered by a 1.9-liter inline four-cylinder SOHC engine that produces roughly 104-hp, and is based off of the 300SL's inline six. The engine is one example of the many alterations made to

the 190SL, for even though the 190SL and 300SL appear quite similar, the 190SL was much more cost effective, for the 300SL was priced at \$8,900 by its last year of production while the 190SL was priced at less than half of that at \$4,000 depending on the equipped options.

Options were a feature that were an extremely young concept in the automotive industry with Mercedes-Benz introducing what is known as an options list. This made the 190SL that much more attractive to the public for now it could be custom tailored to the individual enthusiast to suit their unique taste and cater to a larger audience. The available options ranged from ostentatious color schemes, soft and hardtops, accessories, seats, and for the true enthusiast, an extremely rare sports-racing option. This nimble two-seat roadster with its iconic, forward styling was the first Mercedes-Benz convertible to truly resonate with the U.S. market and began a full-fledged frenzy that still thrives to this day. All of these elements are what contribute to the 190SL's significance in the automotive world as well as their value.

Unfortunately, even though it still remains substantially cheaper than its older brother, the 190SL is still a significant investment for one that has been properly restored. This brings us to the example on offer, Chassis number 12104008502703, is presented as a complete nut-and-bolt restoration executed by Bob Platz, of Precision Auto Works. This particular example was delivered exactly as follows per its original Data Card:

Chassis number: 121 040 85 02703

Engine number: 121 921 85 02732

Body number: 121 040 85 01276

Transmission number: 2740

Front axle number, L: 2704

Front axle number, R: 2708

Rear axle number: 11875

Steering box number: 2680

Ignition key code: W 9619

Trunk/glove key code: SR 139

Door/tank key code: B 045

Exterior color code: 050 - white body / 040 black hardtop

Interior color code: not listed on data card

The example on offer was owned by Bob Platz himself and has been owned within his family for decades until it changed hands to its current owner in 2013. The complete restoration of this car has been thoroughly documented with receipts depicting each step of the restoration process.

Upon approach of this example the recent restoration becomes evident; the immaculate wine red paint wonderfully complements the elegant lines that the 190SL's possess. The consistency in the superb quality of the exterior is irrefutable with the only minor blemish to note being several "micro-nicks" in the paint of the front nose from necessary road use. Continuing with the assessment, the chrome trim pieces, windscreen frame, door handles, head and taillamp bezels, emblems, and bumpers are all crisp with the new rubber seals still fresh and supple.

The red soft-top is in impeccable condition that can be put up and down with ease. At the front, this example exhibits a rare feature for it is equipped with Hella, Euro-style foglamps, seldom seen on 190SL's. However, this is not the sole unique feature that this car has, for a glance down at the wheels will reveal Bullock knock-off hubcaps. These hubcaps were a dealer option, styled after the Rudge center-lock wheels that were used on the 300SL roadster and "Gullwing" and have a very authentic appearance. These hubcaps were a popular item in period, and were inexpensive at only \$34.95 per set and were made to fit a variety of makes from MG's to Porsche's. A complete walk-around of the car will show a "dead-straight" car with excellent panel gaps, contours, and fitment throughout which is attributed to the decades of experience and in-depth knowledge of the individuals whom performed the restoration.

Open the door on either side and after review of the jams, there are no abnormalities or flaws to note. The tan leather upholstery is absolutely divine, especially in combination with the wine red

exterior for they complement one another fabulously. Once seated, the driver is presented with the correct gauges and another intriguing feature that is also quite rare. This 190SL is suited with a period Nardi steering wheel, for the most valued examples have the month and year of manufacture stamped on the back face of the wheel. This particular wheel is stamped "5-75" indicating that this Nardi steering wheel was completed in May of 1975. There was a later production run in the late 1980s of these steering wheels, but with the omission of the date which are more common and less desirable.

The dash displays the 190SL emblem and houses its newly restored components that all operate, as they should. With the top up, it can be noticed that the soft-top frame has acquired some scoring in the chrome from use, expected from a car that is used and enjoyed on occasion. The gear shifter sports a new boot and has been fitted with the correct knob, which depicts the shift pattern on the knob face. The rugs have been installed with evidence of a high level of expertise and have received no mistreatment whatsoever. Everything about the car's interior hints to a proper restoration; it is well-completed and genuine in its fit and finish.

The engine bay of a 190SL always gives hint to the quality of the rest of the car as there are so many little nuances that make up a correct 190SL engine bay and this one is no exception. The 1.9-liter powerplant has been tended to not only mechanically but cosmetically as well, sporting brand new hoses, clamps, harnesses, seals and a polished valve cover. The addition of Weber carburetors provides for a touch more power and an enhanced sound from the car. Webers really can make the difference when driving a 190SL and they are one of the more popular and acceptable modifications. Furthermore, the engine contains all the correct stampings and plates along the firewall as well as the frame rail on the passenger side. While there has been a conversion to the Webers, the other elements of the engine bay show as nicely restored.

The trunk on a 190SL is Spartan, simple matte black finish, a few stickers and a rubber mat generally complete the trunk. While this 190SL is nicely finished with lots of correct spot welds, proper coatings and a mat as well, one addition stands out, luggage. Fitted luggage is quite expensive to source and buy as original. Even having a set produced can be costly; this example has a beautifully made matching collection that sets off the presentation. Also located in the trunk is the original spare wheel. Inspection of the underside will show that the wheel wells have been painted that correct color, the same as the body, with the remainder of the underside finished in the correct light brown color.

The 190SL is not exactly known for their straight-line speed, but for being perky roadsters that have a nimbleness to them that is enjoyable. The example on offer has been sorted mechanically and runs very well, with all systems executing their assigned duties without any negative feedback. Even when cold, the car starts without much hassle. This example preforms sublimely and the Weber carburetors make a lovely tone during acceleration. Once on the road, the oil pressure gauge indicates good pressure that builds, as it should when accelerating, and is also strong at idle. This car has not run hot at any point and at optimal operating temperature stays right within the middle range, as it should.

In short, this Mercedes Benz 190SL is a prime candidate for consideration and credited to its expert restoration is something to marvel at. The 190SL exercised breakthrough, track-bred technologies, and implemented them for road use. It was also a gorgeous roadster that gave the enthusiast the ability to extensively customize them from the factory utilizing the revolutionary options list. The 190SL's close relationship to the 300SL, historical significance, and desirability certainly make it a vehicle of value and the example on offer being well optioned with accessories that are unaccustomed to the majority of U.S. models, make it genuinely special.

1959 Mercedes-Benz 190SL Roadster

Auctions America

Title Ms

First name Megan

Last name Boyd

5536 County Rd.

Auburn 46706 Indiana

United States

Phone +1 (888) 554-2131

Fax +1 (260) 927-9799

<http://auctionsamerica.com/events/event.cfm>

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/mercedes-benz/sl-190/1959/366372>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.