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# 1971 Mercedes-Benz W111/112 - 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet

280SE 3.5 Cabriolet

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Estimate	<b>USD 175 000 - 225 000</b>	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1971	Interior colour	Other
		Condition	Used
		Location	
		Fuel type	Petrol
		Exterior colour	Other

## Description

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

Estimate:

\$175,000 - \$225,000 US

In the early 1970s, Mercedes-Benz built what many people believe was the finest automobile in the world, and 1971 was the only year that this model was imported into the United States; 802 are reported entering the U.S. in 1971. For the buyers who wanted wind in their hair, there was no finer choice than the 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet, which, combined with the powerful 3.5-liter V-8, was the fastest, most lavish, and most expensive convertible that money could buy at a Mercedes-Benz dealership. It was a car that appeals, then and now, to great enthusiasts and admirers of the automotive form. Passengers are treated to the level of understated elegance that one would expect in a car of this caliber and financial investment.

Mercedes-Benz's second V-8, after their mighty 6.3, was a "hot rod" engine. Just as with a small-block American V-8, the compact, fuel-injected, 3.5-liter unit would fit under the hood, where a straight six would have previously been the top offering. The new 280SE Cabriolet looked like the six-cylinder 280, but it had big, reliable power propelling it into the 1970s and to 60-mph in under 10 seconds, with a 130-mph top speed behind its 230 horsepower. This wasn't musclecar territory, but it

was highly respectable for a full-on luxury cabriolet weighing over 3,600 pounds. The high-revving engine displaced only 213.5 cubic inches, and so, it easily covered the one-horsepower-per-cubic-inch barrier.

It was difficult to match the new Mercedes' mix of technology and quality. Fully-independent coil-spring suspension and four-wheel disc brakes meant that ride and handling with the long-wheelbase chassis were thoroughly modern; but unlike a car of the 21st century, the look was completely distinctive and completely Mercedes-Benz, or "fabulously handsome," as Road & Track called it.

Presented in what appears to be near-original condition, this rare 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet is finished in blue with a complementary blue interior that has its original leather. The cabin features large and plush bucket-type seats, center console with armrests, large rear seat center armrest, desirable Behr factory air conditioning, VDO instrumentation, seatbelts, Mercedes-Benz wheel covers; power four-wheel disc brakes, steering and windows. Other notable features consist of Ziebart rust-proofing from new that result in a solid, rust-free body; original toolkit, owner's manual in original pouch and new Goodyear whitewall radial tires.

In period, Car & Driver magazine staff spent two weeks of trying to find fault; they asked, "How can you fail to like it, when it keeps proving that it is your friend?" Mercedes' unique strength was to combine excellence in design, engineering, performance, and luxury into a package widely regarded as the best car in the world. Production of the model began in August 1969 and continued through to July 1971. In 24 months, total production was 3,270 coupes and 1,232 cabriolets, making these not only one of the fastest and most interesting Mercedes of their era but also one of the rarest and most expensive. The 3.5 has continued to gain even more respect as the years have passed.

1971 Mercedes-Benz 280SE 3.5 Cabriolet

## Auctions America

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