

CLASSIC DRIVER

Why this Mercedes-Benz 300 SL ‘Outlaw’ shouldn’t be exiled

Lead
Customising classic cars is always somewhat polarising, especially when doing so to automotive icons. But, if there was ever a case for the tastefully, purposefully modified classic, it may well be this 300 SL, complete with roof chop, Ostrich leather interior, and a special history with its owner...

Breaking barriers



The term ‘Outlaw’ is commonly associated with the 356 and 911 Porsches of US specialists and customisers, but it’s slowly becoming less of a Porsche-specific term and more a description of an ethos of modification often aesthetically reminiscent of racing models of the past — combining killer attention to detail with superb craftsmanship to create unique versions with attitude. One could easily assume, then, that this Gullwing was a recent Outlaw convert, but, in fact, the modifications on this example were carried out over 20 years ago...

Das hot rod





Under the custodianship of a hobbyist racer in the USA, this Gullwing was subjected to some modifications more commonly found on hot rod American muscle cars than German racing supercars. Externally, the car received a roof chop, a hot rodding staple, losing some eight centimetres from the roofline — that may sound like a lot of metal lost, but as the photos show, the effect is more streamlined beauty than lead-sled custom. This led to a new problem for the racing owner: the reduced headroom was impractical for wearing helmets inside, but, as with every detail on this car, the solution was utterly gorgeous. Zagato-esque ‘bubbles’ now adorn the tops of those famous doors, which is yet another perfectly proportioned and complementary addition to the already beautiful design.

Show and go



Other touches, such as the bumper treatment, integrated fog lights, and sports side mirror, effortlessly embellish the sculpted lines, while the purposeful Rudge wheel and meaty tyre combination offers a superb stance to support that slender body. Changes under the skin reflect the graceful yet powerful attitude of the car and include the Koni sport suspension, a racing clutch, an uprated ignition system, and an SLR-style side-exit exhaust, as well as an aluminium racing fuel tank with a racing filler and fire extinguisher system.

Ostrich meets Gullwing





Despite the aforementioned changes, it's the interior of this Gullwing that is perhaps the biggest talking point. As with the exterior, the changes may sound somewhat garish, but in reality, they are nothing short of spectacular. Racing may have been his hobby, but the American owner's main focus was his ostrich farm (no doubt an ideal way to fund his automotive dalliances), and as such, the interior received leather touches from the costly bird. Not one to do things by halves, the seats, dashboard, and even the roll cage were covered, the texture of which mixes with the smooth Cognac leather, creating a spellbinding environment for the lucky owner, which is finished off with a handmade four-spoke steering wheel.

Family affair



Owning any Gullwing, never mind a unique example such as this, is special enough, but, for Thomas Rosier, the connection with this car goes beyond its beauty. As the owner of [Rosier Classic Sterne](#), Mercedes-Benz Classic-certified classic car restoration facility and dealership, Thomas was offered the car towards the end of 2014. Instantly captivated by the car's looks, he then discovered, in an incredible twist, that the car had previously been owned by his father — it was meant to be. After purchasing the car in 1986, Thomas's father sold the car to the USA in 1989, and in early 2015, it arrived back in Oldenburg, Germany, wearing not only its special modifications but also Thomas's father's original number plates. Now, under the loving ownership of Thomas, this Gullwing boasts not only a unique style but also a history to match...

Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2017

Gallery

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