


CLASSIC DRIVER



1957 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL

Lot sold	USD 0	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1957	Condition	Used
Lot number	019	Location	
		Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Other

Description

PROVENANCE

Current Owner (acquired by consignor's father in 1957)

THIS CAR

Following the unbridled success of the Mercedes-Benz flagship sports car, the 300 SL Gullwing, the company released the Roadster version in the 1957 model year, and the company built 1,858 examples over the next seven years. Thought by some to be more user-friendly than the coupe, the Roadster featured a lower door sill and a redesigned rear swing-axle suspension, but still traced its roots to the W194, the dominant postwar road racer from Mercedes-Benz.

Within months of the Roadster's introduction in 1957, this well-equipped example was purchased by its first owner, the consignor's father, and it has been a stablemate to the consignor's Dunkelgrün Gullwing (Lot 18) ever since. The Roadster was finished in the very pleasing shade of Light Blue Metallic (DB 353) with a light gray leather interior and an Elfenbein (Gray-Beige) top. Unusual for the time, the Roadster's factory build sheet also lists an optional exterior mirror for the right side, in addition to the standard left-side mirror. Also listed on the build document is the extremely rare two-piece set of leather Karl Baisch luggage, matched to the interior; this luggage remains with the car today, essentially unused.

Following the consignor's inheritance of the two cars in 1964, the Roadster saw more time on the road than the Gullwing, as he and his wife would enjoy it with the top down on jaunts around the countryside, first in his native Illinois and then in California, after their relocation. Now showing just under 38,000 miles, the Roadster is stated by the consignor to retain its original paint, and the

original interior has developed an amazing patina, with the natural tone of the old Rosser hides showing through the gray surface.

The smooth, non-aerated leather surface, as well as the lack of an exterior lock cylinder on the passenger door, announce chassis 7500180 to a 300 SL devotee as an early production example. In fact, by its chassis number, the car was the 101st built - Mercedes-Benz having started Roadster production with chassis 7500080.

Interestingly, the original purchase documents, which accompany the car, are drawn on Daimler-Benz of North America Inc. letterhead, confirming that the car was not retailed through a Mercedes-Benz dealer. Furthermore, the paperwork refers to the car as "used," even though the November 1957 date of purchase is fewer than 90 days after the manufacture date listed on the factory build sheet. One 300 SL historian believes that these dates, as well as the direct sale, indicate that this Roadster may have been exhibited at an auto show or briefly used as a press car.

The 300 SL Roadster has firmly established itself in the hearts and minds of collectors as one of the most enjoyable and versatile classic Mercedes-Benz cars to drive, as their advanced engineering allows them to be used in modern traffic. Also, these cars have proven themselves time and again on modern-day, spirited rallies such as the Copperstate 1000, California Mille, and Colorado Grand.

It is unlikely that many one-owner, unrestored examples of the vaunted 300 SL are left to be discovered. This example's outstanding color combination, low mileage, and remarkable state of preservation combine to elevate it to be among the most special of them all.

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& COMPANY**

Title Mr

First name Charles

Last name Blonigan

1517 20th Street

Santa Monica 90404 California

United States

Phone +1 (310) 899-1960

Fax +1 (310) 526-6594

<http://www.goodingco.com/>

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